

ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT GUIDANCE - APRIL 2021 (ARG)



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The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) is a discretionary grant which will be administered, by Plymouth City Council within the Unitary Authority area. The grant will offer a lifeline to businesses which are struggling to bounce back following nationally imposed restrictions and resulting in loss of trade and income due to the Covid 19 crisis.

The total funding allocated to Plymouth is £1.213,895 million. This is likely to be the final allocation of discretionary grants (ARG) from the government. This fund is for businesses based in Plymouth and we are looking to help businesses which have been affected by Covid to recover as quickly as possible. We are particularly keen to hear from any business which has not received any other support to date and has fallen outside the support network.

The government have expanded the eligibility criteria. Local Authorities are encouraged to support businesses from all sectors that may have been severely impacted by restrictions but are not eligible for the Restart Grant scheme. This may include, but is not limited to, group travel and tour operators, other tourism businesses (including B&Bs and event industry suppliers), wholesalers, English language schools, breweries, freelance and mobile businesses (including caterers, events, hair, beauty and wedding related businesses), wraparound care providers, and other businesses that may have not received other grant funding. This list is not directive nor exhaustive, and Plymouth City Council continue to issue grants at their discretion, based on local economic needs.

Funding

It is proposed that 66% (£800,000) will be allocated directly to businesses.

If the funding is not all allocated in the first call the Council will run a second call over the summer.

The remaining 34% will be allocated to supporting wider economic development activity and supporting key institutions who provide an economic benefit to the city. Awards to this pot will be at the discretion of a panel lead by the Section 151 officer.

This split between tranches and businesses/wider economic development, will be reviewed in June 2021 by the section 151 Officer and the leader of the Council. Any revisions will be incorporated into updated guidance held on our website. We will also communicate any changes in our business newsletter.

Eligibility

We will prioritise funding to those businesses that have not received funding to date. If businesses can secure funding from other grant schemes, we will redirect them towards those pots.

This fund is designed to try and plug the gaps. We will prioritise funding to businesses that have not received funding since November. This funding is not meant to replace lost income, there are other schemes that are available to support this such as the furlough scheme and self-employment support. This funding is focused on supporting businesses with fixed costs to enable them to reopen.

The funding will be delivered in tranches, the first tranche will be solely for businesses which have not received any funding since November and are in the priority sectors identified below and the second tranche will focus on businesses in the identified priority sectors. If there are any funds left after these two tranches, we will do a final call and review our criteria.

To be eligible businesses will need to meet the following criteria:

- The business must have been trading on or before 1st April 2021.
- Must be a micro or small business with up to 50 employees.

- Businesses should have ongoing fixed monthly business costs in Plymouth, such as mooring fees, rent, rates, insurances, utilities, equipment rental etc
- Have not exceeded state subsidy levels.
- Businesses that are in administration, insolvent or where a striking off order has been made, are not eligible for funding under this scheme
- Can confirm they have been significantly affected by Covid.
- Plymouth home based businesses are eligible but must be registered with HRMC and provide their Company Unique Taxpayer Reference. And a copy of their most recent tax return.

For Plymouth, we will prioritise the following businesses for grants:

- Boat based businesses; this includes businesses in the supply chain for the fishing/marine sector with fixed business costs of over £500 per month
- Childcare providers with fixed business costs of over £500 per month
- Businesses who supply music venues, weddings, events, hospitality, leisure and tourism with fixed business costs of £500 per month
- Creative and event businesses who work from home, this includes freelance practitioners and consultants with fixed business costs of over £500 per month
- Businesses who are located in packaged rent and rates who are in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors and not eligible for the restart grant with fixed business costs of over £500 per month

We do not envisage that this fund will support the following types of business.

- Any premises where the Council consider that a Bed and Breakfast business is “home sharing” and advertised solely online through “home sharing” websites will not be eligible for this fund.
- Storage containers, which are only used for storage are not eligible. Where a storage container is used to run a business (e.g. a café run out of a shipping container), that would be eligible.
- Buy to let properties
- SBRR premises for which are only used for personal use e.g. riding stables

Only one Discretionary Business Grant will be awarded to any business, however if businesses operate from multiple Plymouth premises, they may be eligible for additional payments at the discretion of the 151 officer.

How much grant will be payable?

If you have premises, your business will receive funding in line with the values under the restart grants scheme. Total payment for the third round of ARG payments are set out below:

Eligibility	Amount (one off payment)
Businesses with high fixed business costs (over £500 per month)	£2,667
Affected Ratepayer - RV 0 - 15k	£2,667
Affected Ratepayer - RV 15 - 51k	£4,000
Affected Ratepayer - RV 51k+	£6,000

How will grants be administered?

The Council has to gather data to administer these funds, information supplied will be kept confidential. Data will be retained so that we can undertake regular reporting to Government. The processes to administer this grant include:

- An online application form - we will have a separate ARG application process, we have designed this to be as simple as possible, in line with the governments reporting requirements
- Businesses may have to provide an up to date bank statement (for the account used by the business – must contain name of account, SC and ACC no for verification purposes) This is to reduce fraud
- Spotlight and NFI checks must be undertaken before payment is released.
- We require evidence of fixed costs e.g. bank statements, contracts, invoices etc.

We will hold the application process open until we have applications which use up the £800k funding available, we will then close the application process. Therefore, if there is a strong demand the application process may only be open for a few days. It is important that businesses/applicants apply early. Communications need to be clear that this is our approach and will be listed on invest in Plymouth, our city council website and all our social media platforms.

Evidence to support your application

We will undertake checks to make sure you are a business.

- Taxi drivers must provide their licensing number from PCC
- Guest houses/BnB's should be registered with Plymouth City Council licensing
- Evidence that you are trading business could include social media, records on companies' house, HMRC tax returns
- Furlough records
- We may ask for photographic evidence, if we do, please show pictures which show the context of your business
- Additional evidence may be requested i.e. additional bank statements or photographic evidence

We will check that you have fixed costs examples include

- accountancy costs to prepare accounts,
- rent,
- rates,
- mooring fees,
- equipment leases,
- insurance costs,
- mobile phone contract costs)
- In addition we will help support with fixed reopening costs (fitting of covid secure screens, purchasing contactless payment)

The following do not count as fixed costs

- Petrol
- Tyres,
- Telephone call charges
- Wages and salaries
- Stock
- Personal/household Food
- Fuel
- Personal rent/mortgage
- Delivery and transportation of goods sold

When will business be paid?

- Evidence of need required, therefore retrospective payments only
- Scheme opens on 26 April, payments end of the following week and onwards

Exceptional awards

Exceptional awards may be made in individual cases, by certification of the S151 Officer.

These may include additional discretionary support to extend funding provided to businesses under the LRSG (closed) grant scheme. The Council may also look to support businesses through activities such as supporting key organisations which have a wider economic multiplier effect (e.g support to Business Improvement Districts to fill empty shops).

In order to qualify for an extra ordinary award, you must meet the following criteria

1. Be a business that has a reach and impact which extends beyond its own activity (e.g. Business Improvement Districts)
2. Can demonstrate a drop income – guide 30% drop in income
3. Have fixed costs

In order to qualify for this fund, you will need to have a discussion with Economic development team

Wider Business Support

This is activity which provides business support and aids recovery, we are proposing that £400K is allocated, commissioned and spent by March 31st 2022. Where this activity will be delivered by PCC, it will be delivered in line with ARG guidance it will not be used to displace PCC funding, fund exiting roles or compensate for loss of income from falling revenue, it will be focused on activities which provide direct support to business and each of these projects will be required to provide returns detailing the businesses they have helped

Review of decisions

The Council will operate an internal review process only. We reserve the right to close the scheme at short/no notice – potential applicants should apply without delay.

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome of an application by email. There is no right to appeal a decision.