

Press notice: South East Midlands Kickstart Grant Scheme opens for applications 14th September

The new South East Midlands Kickstart Grant Scheme will open for applications from local businesses at 9am on Monday 14th September.

As part of national Government-funded grant programme, the purpose of the grants is to help businesses who have been affected by COVID-19.

There are two grant schemes available, providing grants on average of between £1,000 and £3000. One is specifically aimed at tourism-related businesses, while the other is open to any small or medium-sized business. Both grants will use the same application form and can be accessed through the SEMLEP's Growth Hub website.

Given the value of the grant programme allocated to our area by the Government, it is expected to support around 200-220 local businesses, depending on grant sizes requested by businesses and the meeting the of eligibility criteria.

Vicky Hlomuka, SEMLEP's Growth Hub Manager, said: "Throughout this period we have been working with businesses to help them deal with the impacts of the outbreak.

"These grants can be helpful to support local businesses diversify and access the expert professional support to move forward.

"There has been huge interest in these grants already and we do recognise that unfortunately we are not going to be able to support every business that wants to apply. We are aware that in some other areas, the Growth Hub's application capacity was met in under an hour of their online form going live.

"We strongly recommend going to the SEMLEP's Growth Hub website in advance to read through the FAQs and use the sample questions to prepare ready for the application portal to open."

The Growth Hub recommends that any business that may be interested in applying, to get prepared.

The applications will be processed in the order they have been received. To manage expected demand, the Growth Hub will close the application process when the first 250 applications have been submitted through the online form. The Growth Hub will appraise these applications in line with eligibility guidance in the FAQs and requirements in the application form within two working weeks.



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Connected Business Support

The grants can be used to fund specialist professional advice such as accountancy, HR, legal, financial or IT support. It can also be used to purchase equipment or new technology in order to continue to deliver or diversify business activity.

Businesses must be based in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire or the Milton Keynes area and be a small or medium-sized enterprise. As part of their application, businesses will have to provide a quote for any work or purchases they intend to fund, and work must not have started on the project or goods being purchased.

Businesses are asked to check their eligibility and prepare application answers before the online form goes live. They can do this by visiting this page to the Growth Hub website: <https://www.semlepgrowthhub.com/covid-19-business-grants/>

If successful, the business will need to pay for the work or goods and then claim the money back once the project has been completed.

The grants are fully-funded through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The grants for the South East Midlands are being managed on behalf of UK Government by SEMLEP's Growth Hub. The Growth Hub provides free and impartial help to businesses in Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes, signposting them to business support and advice.

To find out more about the COVID-19 recovery grants visit <https://www.semlepgrowthhub.com/covid-19-business-grants/>. This page contains all the information currently available, including a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document and a sample of the application form questions.

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Notes to editors

For more information please contact

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