

The Kick Start Plus Grant is joint initiative funded by UKSE and UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and managed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The scheme aims to complement the existing business start-up grant initiative by supporting businesses that have been trading from 6 months to 3 years to develop and grow within Blaenau Gwent.

### **WHO CAN APPLY**

- Businesses based in Blaenau Gwent that have been trading from 6 months up to 3 years.
- Small and Medium Sized Businesses e.g., those employing less than 249 people.
- Sole traders, Partnerships, Limited Companies, Co-operatives, Limited Liability Partnerships
- Businesses that operate on a full-time basis (minimum 35hrs per week) and main source of applicant's income.
- Businesses with projects that meet at least one of the below key project deliverables.

### **KEY PROJECT DELIVERABLES**

Applications will be assessed and scored against the following key outputs of the scheme (at least one priority must be met in order to meet the minimum score, for projects requiring maximum grant, at least half of the priorities must be met, including job creation).

1. Jobs created (including apprenticeships)
2. Jobs safeguarded (jobs at risk within 6 months at time of application).
3. Growth, Increase in turnover, future proofing.
4. Use of Innovation & Technology to improve productivity or service.
5. Economic Impact i.e., local supply chain opportunities.
6. Green Energy & Decarbonisation.

### **PROJECT EXPENDITURE**

#### **Examples of eligible capital costs: -**

- **Capital** - machinery & equipment; IT hardware – laptops, screens, PDA; upgrade of existing lighting /heating systems to green options; Marketing materials, internal fixtures & fittings, Website & ecommerce site.
- **Revenue** – training - face to face or online, consultancy fees, purchase of advertising, licences, Marketing Support, Social Media support including optimisation of existing, Development of Apps

**Examples of ineligible costs: -**

- Staff costs, vehicles, VAT, or any other taxes, internal or external building works, replacement of items (like for like), repairs and maintenance, hire/lease purchases, extended credit agreements/finance leases; contingency fees, working capital costs such as rent, rates, admin, stock; costs of works being carried out as a legal statutory requirement, costs that are committed or spent before the offer and acceptance.

**No expenditure should be incurred before grant approval, as the grant cannot be awarded retrospectively.**

**GRANT SUPPORT**

- 50% of eligible and reasonable costs up to a maximum of £2,500.00 (total project spend at least £5,000.00).
- Applications for both revenue and capital costs will be accepted.
- Minimum grant £500.00 (project spend at least £1,000.00).

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

- Initial expression of interest form providing an outline of project, if accepted then: -
- Application form and cash flow forecast accompanied by:
  - 2 comparable quotations for each item included in application.
  - 12-month cash flow forecast.
  - Financial accounts i.e., audited accounts or 12 management accounts.
  - Payroll list (to include job title and number of hours per week - personal details to be anonymised).
  - Evidence of match funding i.e., business bank statement.
- The application guidance notes should be **read and understood in full** before application is submitted.

**OUTCOME OF APPLICATION**

- Applicants will be notified within 4 weeks of submission of **all** application documentation.
- Successful applicants must accept the terms and conditions of the grant by signing and returning the certificate of acceptance within 14 days of the date of the offer letter.
- Grant will not be offered or paid if the business is in arrears with any payment to the Local Authority

The Kick Start Plus Grant is discretionary and dependent on the availability of funds. It is not a statutory function and there is no right of appeal. The Council is not obliged to enter any further discussions for the reason for refusal.

#### **PAYMENT OF GRANT**

- All items listed in the application must be **purchased within 8 weeks of grant approval.**
- Confirmation that all statutory procedures (e.g., building regulations, planning consent, food hygiene, etc.) must be in place before grant is awarded to the business.
- The grant money will be paid direct into the bank account of the applicant business after receipt of original invoices, bank statements to confirm payment and satisfactory completion of monitoring visits.
- Should the project not proceed within the period stipulated in the offer letter the grant would automatically lapse.

#### **MONITORING**

- Applicants will be required to provide documentary evidence for any jobs that have been created and/or safeguarded as a result of funding i.e., payroll list highlighting increase in head count, contract of employment, self-declarations, and any other information requested.
- Blaenau Gwent CBC will continue to monitor the outputs of awarded grants and will contact you to request updated information as and when required.
- Successful applications may be included in follow up marketing and case studies.

Further applications may be considered subject to successful claim and monitoring/outputs from previous application being achieved. However, it is expected that new applications will result in job creation due to the outputs and outcomes associated with the relevant intervention of the SPF Levelling Up fund.