

The Blaenau Gwent Business Development Grant is funded by the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund and managed by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The Business Development Grant aims to support the growth and development of existing businesses in Blaenau Gwent.

WHO CAN APPLY

- Businesses operating in the manufacturing sector or providing services to manufacturing, either based in Blaenau Gwent or relocating to the area
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), defined as employing fewer than 249 people
- Sole traders, partnerships, limited companies, co-operatives, and limited liability partnerships
- Businesses operating on a full-time basis (minimum 35 hours per week) and serving as the applicant's primary source of income
- Businesses operating from commercial premises within the Blaenau Gwent Council area, with ownership or a formal occupational agreement in place
- Businesses undertaking projects that deliver at least one of the key project outputs listed below

KEY PROJECT DELIVERABLES

Applications will be evaluated against a defined set of strategic outputs that align with the objectives of the funding programme. The scale of grant requested will be directly linked to the level of deliverables expected, ensuring proportionality between investment and impact. To qualify for the full grant award, applicants must successfully deliver at least five of the six core project outputs outlined in this programme.

Job creation is a key priority and is a mandatory requirement for businesses that have previously received support through the scheme. This elevated threshold reflects the programme's commitment to supporting high-impact initiatives that generate measurable economic and social value.

1. **Jobs Created** (including apprenticeships)
2. **Jobs Safeguarded** – protection of roles demonstrably at risk within six months of application
3. **Growth and Future Proofing** – measurable increase in turnover, market expansion, or business resilience
4. **Innovation & Technology** – adoption or development of new technologies or processes to improve productivity or service
5. **Economic Impact** – contribution to the local economy, including supply chain development and sector strengthening
6. **Green Energy & Decarbonisation** – implementation of sustainable practices or technologies that reduce environmental impact

PROJECT EXPENDITURE

Examples of eligible capital costs: -

- **Capital Expenditure:** Machinery and equipment; green-energy factory vehicles (e.g., electric forklifts); IT hardware (e.g., laptops, screens, PDAs); upgrades to lighting/heating systems with green alternatives; internal fixtures and fittings; marketing materials; website and e-commerce development
- **Revenue Expenditure:** Training (in-person or online); consultancy fees; advertising and marketing support; software licences; social media optimisation; app development

Examples of ineligible costs: -

- Staff salaries or wages
- Vehicles (non-green or general transport)
- VAT or other taxes
- Building works (internal or external)
- Replacement items (like-for-like), repairs, or maintenance
- Hire or lease purchases, extended credit agreements, or finance leases
- Contingency fees or working capital (e.g., rent, rates, admin, stock)
- Statutory compliance costs (e.g., legally required works)
- Any expenditure incurred prior to grant approval

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

GRANT SUPPORT

- Up to **50%** of eligible and reasonable costs, to a maximum grant of **£50,000** (minimum total project spend: £100,000)
- Minimum grant award: **£2,500** (minimum project spend: £5,000)
- Applications may include both capital and revenue costs

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Submit an initial Expression of Interest outlining the proposed project
2. If accepted, complete the full application form and provide the following supporting documentation:
 - Two comparable quotations for each item requested
 - 12-month cash flow forecast
 - Financial accounts (audited or 12 months of management accounts)
 - Payroll list (including job titles and weekly hours; personal details must be anonymised)
 - Evidence of match funding (e.g., business bank statement)

Applicants must read and understand the full guidance notes before submitting an application.

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION

- Applicants will be notified within **4 weeks** of submitting **all** required documentation
- Successful applicants must sign and return the Certificate of Acceptance within **14 days** of the offer letter
- Grants will not be awarded to businesses in arrears with any payments to the Local Authority
- The Blaenau Gwent Business Development Grant is discretionary and subject to available funding. There is no statutory entitlement and no right of appeal. The Council is not obliged to provide reasons for refusal.

PAYMENT OF GRANT

- All approved items must be purchased within 8 weeks of grant approval
- All relevant statutory procedures (e.g., planning consent, building regulations, food hygiene) must be in place before funds are released
- Grant payments will be made directly to the applicant's business bank account upon submission of:
 - Signed Certificate of Acceptance and Subsidy Control Notification documents
 - Copies of all invoices/receipts for good/services purchased
 - Copies of bank statements confirming payment of invoices/receipts
 - Completion of satisfactory internal checks i.e., no outstanding arrears to Blaenau Gwent CBC
- If the project does not proceed within the timeframe specified in the offer letter, the grant will automatically lapse

MONITORING

- Applicants must provide documentary evidence of job creation and/or safeguarding, such as:
 - Payroll records showing increased headcount
 - Employment contracts
 - Self-declarations or other supporting documentation
- Blaenau Gwent CBC will continue to monitor project outputs and may request updates periodically.
- Successful applicants may be featured in marketing materials or case studies.
- Future applications may be considered, subject to successful delivery and monitoring of previous grant-funded projects. New applications are expected to result in additional job creation.