

Guidance for Additional Restrictions Grant Applications In Respect of Impact of Omicron Variant from December 2021

Introduction

1. This guidance is intended to support Hillingdon based businesses applying to London Borough of Hillingdon for a grant from the top up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) fund announced by the government on 21 December 2021. Local authorities have been provided with limited funds and been asked to implement a discretionary grant scheme to help those businesses which are severely impacted by effects of the Omicron variant.
2. The Council had previously introduced an Additional Restrictions Grants scheme for businesses impacted during the latest round of restrictions that do not qualify for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant introduced by the government in December 2021.
3. This guidance has been updated on 14 February 2022 to expand the criteria to a wider range of business sectors. Those businesses which have previously applied for the Omicron Additional Restrictions Grants need not reapply, all applications will be reconsidered under the new eligibility.
4. The council intends to use the latest allocation of funding to support businesses based within Hillingdon that meet the guidance-based criteria under a series of streams, (as in the earlier guidance which ranged from Stream A to F).
5. This new funding will be focused on businesses within the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sectors outside of the rating system and those businesses that supply to these sectors which may be both rated or unrated.
6. The council recognises that businesses supplying to the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors may be similarly impacted.
7. The council also recognises that there has been a further impact on travel and tourism due to the rise of the Omicron variant.
8. As with the previous scheme, support will remain available to hospitality, leisure and accommodation businesses outside the Rating system and therefore do not qualify for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. Stream G
9. Stream H will continue to support those business both Rated and Non-Rated within the travel and tourism, events and weddings sectors and include wholesalers/supply chain to the hospitality and leisure and events sectors. This stream will be expanded to cover Gyms and Fitness studios. The amount awarded will be based on the rateable value or fixed property costs of the premises to mirror the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.
10. The council will be offering a fixed rate payment to those businesses within the Personal Care sector. The level of payment will be determined based on the number of applications received and the level of funding available. Stream I
11. The current grant funding is being made available to support those business where social mixing of customer's is required or those that supply to these businesses only.
12. This guidance sets out the criteria under which businesses will qualify to make an application to the Additional Restrictions Grant Fund and is aligned with the Government guidance issued on 3 November 2020 and revised in March 2021 and again December 2021.
13. Further updates have been made in February 2022 to expand the guidance in respect of funding for the effects of the Omicron variant.

Scope and Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria (Stream G)

14. This stream is aimed at providing support to those businesses **not** in the Rating List which operate within the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sector who do not have access to the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.
15. In addition, your business must provide an “in-person” service which has been affected by the Omicron variant due to a reduction in social mixing and attendance at venues where hospitality, leisure and accommodation services are provided.
16. The level of support will be in line with the level of funding available to those businesses in the Rating System

Level of Grant Payable under Stream G

	Grant Amount
Businesses with rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of £15,000 and under	£2,667
Businesses with rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of over £15,000 and under £51,000	£4,000
Businesses with rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of over £51,000	£6,000

Eligibility Criteria (Stream H)

17. This stream is aimed at providing support to those businesses both Rating paying and Non-Rate paying who supply to those businesses under stream G
18. Support will be available to the travel and tourism industry impacted by the recent rise of the Omicron variant and the impact on social mixing. Such businesses to include those businesses travel such as travel agents, and tour operators with fixed property costs. This grant is not a wage/income replacement scheme.
19. In addition, the scheme has been expanded in February 2022 and support will be available to Gyms, Fitness and Dance studios where group classes are offered at a business premises.
20. The level of support will be in line with the level of funding available to those businesses in the Rating System

Level of Grant Payable under Stream H

	Grant Amount
Businesses with rateable value or rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of £15,000 and under	£2,667
Businesses with rateable value or rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of over £15,000 and under £51,000	£4,000

Businesses with rateable value or rent, mortgage, and fixed property costs of over £51,000	£6,000
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Eligibility Criteria (Stream I)

21. This stream is introduced in February 2022 is aimed at providing support to those businesses both Rating paying and non-Rate paying businesses within the Personal Care Sector from the remaining available funds from the “omicron” top-up received in December 2021.
22. The payment amount for this stream will be determined after the closure of the above streams (28 February 2022) and remaining funds will be distributed equally amongst all qualifying businesses received during the application window. NB the payment amounts will be capped at the amounts under Stream H but dependant on level of funding available and demand the payments may not reach the capped levels.

Exclusions from this grant scheme

23. Businesses not trading on 30 December 2021.
24. Businesses that have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of State aid permitted under the de minimus and the Covid-19 Temporary State Aid and Framework.
25. Businesses that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.
26. Businesses which operate from a domestic property

The Council’s approach

27. The council will invite applications from businesses that meet the criteria for the eligibility streams by way of an online application (insert link)
28. The timeline for the scheme is:
 - Application open: 14 February 2022
 - Applications close: 28 February 2022
 - The council will aim to make payments as soon as possible after assessing all applications received.
29. The council reserves the right to vary the terms of the scheme at any time, and without notice, should it be necessary to do so.
30. Payments will be made in line with the tables above, the council reserve the right decrease or increase these figures due to the limited funds available

Evidence Required

31. We require businesses to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria of each stream which will include declarations that the business requires social mixing and

- therefore affected by the increase of the Omicron variant. Such evidence will include trading accounts, latest bank statements, evidence of fixed costs and registrations.
32. In addition, all businesses will also be required to provide details for government reporting requirements to demonstrate the types of businesses receiving support. To do this you will need to provide via the online application form:
 - a. Name of business
 - b. Business trading address
 - c. Unique identifier (Company House reference number, VAT registration number Self-Assessment Number, Registered Charity Number, National Insurance Number)
 - d. SIC Code ([Nature of business: Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) codes \(companieshouse.gov.uk\)](https://www.companieshouse.gov.uk))
 - e. Nature of Business
 - f. Date Business established
 - g. Number of Employees
 - h. Confirmation of State Aid Compliance
 33. All payments must be made into a UK bank account, evidence to confirm account name, address, sort code and account number
 - 34.

Other Information

35. There is a requirement for all grants made under this scheme to be subsidy allowance compliant, please see the further guidance on this at this link – Complying with the UK's international obligations on subsidy control: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
36. Grant income received by a business is taxable therefore funding paid under the Additional Restrictions Grant Fund will be subject to tax. Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.
37. The Government guidance issued gives the council discretion over the grant scheme, and its decisions regarding the scheme will be final.
38. The Government and the council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any business caught falsifying their records to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as may any grants paid in error.
39. The Council does not accept any liability for any issues that may arise for businesses because of applying for, receiving, or not receiving grant payments under this scheme.
40. Enquiries about the scheme can be made via email only.
Grantsforbusiness@hillingdon.gov.uk There is no contact centre for these schemes as limited resources will be focused on processing applications and making payments