

## UK Shared Prosperity Fund

### Early Stage Growth Grant

#### Eligibility & Guidelines

The aim of the Early Stage Growth Grant is to improve the survivability of early stage businesses in West Dunbartonshire. The fund has been developed as part of a package of activities for businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

The Early Stage Growth grant will provide 50% up to a maximum of £1,500 to support new businesses with the higher start-up costs associated with operating from commercial premises and/or with the costs associated with the employment of full time employees. It also aims to encourage new start businesses to become more sustainable helping them to grow more quickly.

A business or individual is limited to one successful application to this fund, which is proposed to run from April 2023 through to March 2025, or until the annual budget is fully utilised.

#### Eligibility

- All types of business entities may apply, i.e. Sole Trader, Partnership or Limited Company, social enterprise, etc.
- Businesses must be located and the grant funds invested in West Dunbartonshire
- Businesses must not have any debt owed to the Council.
- Businesses must have started up within **18 months** of date of application
- Businesses must be able to provide evidence of trading
- The grant will be awarded to early stage businesses with commercial premises which are present on the Scottish Assessors Office business rates register, or where they can provide evidence of a formal lease agreement for the premises –Please note eligible businesses must be the main occupier/lease holder for the premises.

and/or

Can provide proof of a Full Time Equivalent employee, paid through PAYE (clearly dated within the 3 months prior to application), employee must be someone other than the owner/manager of the business.

Applicants must either be:

- A registered business with a business bank account;
- Or a constituted group with registered bank account with at least two signatories.

#### Conditions

- Purchases / expenditure must NOT commence before approval is given as the grant cannot be awarded retrospectively.
- Evidence of expenditure must be provided by submitting paid invoices/receipts and business bank statements showing payments. Payments made by cash or credit card will not be eligible to claim.
- Grant must be claimed within 6 months of award letter
- Staged payments can be made, however a maximum of 3 claims will be processed for each grant offer

## Eligible Expenditure

The Early Stage Growth Grant can assist businesses with any combination of the following type of business expenditure:-

- Rent costs.
- Employees Costs (these must not be supported through any other public sector funding and must relate to someone other than the owner/manager of the business).
- Capital expenditure – purchase of equipment or machinery (excluding vehicle costs).
- Costs associated with marketing & promotion of the business.

## What is the level of the Grant?

- 50% of eligible costs up to a maximum of £1,500 can be awarded to the business, providing the eligibility criteria and conditions can be met (see above).

Funding available for this grant is limited and applications will be reviewed and approved on a first come first served basis until the annual budget is fully utilised.

## Approval

Once the grant is approved the applicant company must confirm acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant within 4 weeks of approval.

Approval of the Grant is at the sole discretion of Council Officers and will only be given when all conditions have been met and evidence of eligible spend has been received.

Successful applicants will be required to report on outputs and outcomes in alignment with the objectives of this grant. The grant must be fully claimed within 6 months of approval.

The Council reserve the right to recover misused funds and may, at its absolute discretion, withhold further instalments which were to have been made, or may cancel completely the payment of any further sums to the Organisation.

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to sharing good practice and promoting examples of service delivery that meet the needs of communities. The Council reserves the right to use details of the project for publicity for the programme and share information with any parties appointed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this funding.

The Council may be required to make any application or project proposal for this funding available for public scrutiny under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The applicant should make the Council aware of any parts of its application or project proposal, which may prejudice its interest if it were made public.

## Subsidy Control – Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA)

The UKSPF Business Recovery and Growth Grant being applied for by your Enterprise is classified as a Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy under the [Subsidy Control Act \(2022\)](#).

To be eligible for the support, you **must not** have already exceeded receipt of £315,000 in MFA subsidies over this and the previous two financial years.

**Note: Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) is a relatively new term which you may have previously seen referred to as “De Minimis” or “Special Drawing Rights” (SDR).**

Before making any payment, written confirmation that receipt of the payment will not exceed your company’s MFA threshold of £315,000 cumulated over this and the previous two financial years, as specified in section 36(1) of the Subsidy Control Act (2022), is required.

This means you must confirm you have not received more than **£315,000 minus the value of this grant** in MFA subsidies or comparable types of subsidy (see section 42(8) of the Subsidy Control Act (2022)) in the current or previous 2 financial years.

We take this opportunity to remind you that you are required to keep a written record of the amount of MFA you have received and the date/s when it was received. The written record must be kept for at least three years beginning with the date on which the MFA was given. If your application is successful at the point of claiming the grant, we will issue you with an email which you can use as your written confirmation. This will enable you to respond to future requests from public authorities on how much MFA you have received and whether you have reached the cumulative threshold

#### **How to Apply:**

Complete the West Dunbartonshire Early Stage Growth Grant application form and submit it with the following enclosures:

- Businesses must provide a copy of a Business bank statement, clearly dated within the past 3 months.
- Proof of commercial premises and / or proof of a Full Time Equivalent employee paid through PAYE from the past 3 months.

To receive an application form or to receive additional information, please contact the Business Support Team at West Dunbartonshire Council on:

Telephone: 01389 737 777 or Email: [business.support@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:business.support@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.west-dunbarton/business/grant-and-loan/>

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