

£25,000 Business Support Grant Scheme

Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

Section 1	About the Scheme – Summary Information
Section 2	Information for those who have made an application
Section 3	Eligibility Criteria
Section 4	Rental Properties
Section 5	State Aid
Section 6	Verification documentation (provision of bank statement and proof of business ownership)
Section 7	Specific Ratings Scenarios
Section 8	Appeals Procedure
Section 9	Support for businesses who are not eligible for the Grant
Section 10	Reporting Fraudulent Payments
Section 11	Data Handling

(1) About the Scheme – Summary Information

When did the Business Support Grant run?

The £25,000 Business Support Grant Scheme was launched on 20 April 2020 and closed at 23.59pm on 20 May 2020.

Will applications be accepted after 23.59pm on 20 May 2020?

The £25,000 Business Support Grant Scheme closed at 23.59pm on 20 May 2020. New applications will not be accepted after the closing date.

It should be noted that those businesses who occupy a rental property and registered on the online rental properties form, who meet the pre-eligibility criteria, will have to complete a second stage application to enable full details to be captured and verified. Applicants in this situation will be contacted in due course with further instructions following the closure date. In these cases, registration on the rental properties form must have been undertaken before 23.59pm on 20 May 2020.

In cases where the application needs to be updated to accommodate any changes to a rate account, to reflect the correct occupancy status (Occupancy ID) as at the 17 March 2020, or where a change to the Total Net Annual Value (NAV) is due and the valuation review is at a sufficiently advanced stage, this can be dealt with using the existing application from the business and there is no need for the application to be resubmitted.

In cases where the online form did not allow you to submit an online application and you contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020, and it was subsequently established that you are eligible to apply, the date that you first contacted the Business Grants Team about the application will be considered to be the date of your application. In this case, you will be contacted to provide further information to support your application. This criteria also applies to any applicants who experienced issues registering on the online rental properties form. Please note that for these applicants, the date you first contacted the Business Grants Team about the registration will also be considered to be the date of your registration.

In case of any dispute about the date of the first contact, the onus will be on the applicant to provide clear evidence that they contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020.

What was the aim of the scheme?

This scheme was provided to support businesses that are experiencing financial hardship, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and have a need for financial relief under the terms and conditions of the Business Support Scheme.

The overarching aim was to help protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery.

Why are other sectors, outside hospitality, retail, tourism and leisure, not eligible for the cash grants?

The Covid-19 pandemic is unprecedented and has had an immediate and significant impact on the Northern Ireland Economy.

The Executive agreed to deliver the Business Support Grant to help protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery across the retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors, as these have, to date, been some of the most significantly affected industries.

This is in line with the £25,000 Business Support Grants being delivered in England, Scotland and Wales where the Business Support Grants are available for eligible businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The Northern Ireland Executive included businesses within the tourism sector in the NI Grant as it experienced some of the most immediate impacts.

Applicant responsibilities

Businesses are responsible for providing true and accurate information.

Businesses were asked to note that:

- Providing wrong or misleading information is an offence and any such information may be used against you in any subsequent criminal investigation. The information provided on this claim form may be made available to other departments/agencies for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime.
- Any payment must be declared to HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) as appropriate as part of the tax return for the business. For further information, you can contact HMRC's Coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline.
- The grant constitutes State Aid that falls within the scope of the EC's de minimis Regulation. You will be asked to provide information on other de minimis support your company has received and confirm that you agree to the State Aid conditions when completing the online form. If DfE cannot pay your grant on a de minimis basis, they will pay this on the basis of the UK's COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK authorities (SA.56841). If this becomes necessary, DfE will contact you to request additional information.
- You will be asked to certify that all the information provided in this application is correct and you agree to repay on demand to DfE all of the funding received from this scheme, if DfE, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), DfE Internal Audit Services (IAS) or their representatives decide after investigation, that the grant was awarded on the basis of wrong or misleading information provided when making my application to this scheme.

On the online application form, businesses were asked to certify that:

- The business on which this application is based is currently experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and has an evident need for financial relief under the terms and conditions of DfE's Business Support Scheme. DfE will as usual use a risk-based approach to compliance.
- Any grant received by the business, under the terms and conditions of DfE's Business Support Scheme, will be used only for the purpose intended - ie to help alleviate the financial pressure of the recipient business and to the exclusion of any other individual or third party gain.
- The information provided as an authorised applicant for the business is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and I agree, should DfE, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, or their representatives, determine that the grant was awarded on the basis of wrong or misleading information, the grant will be subject to recovery in full.
- They accept that acceptance of this grant means that any officer/agent of DfE or Northern Ireland Audit Office or their representatives at any reasonable time to enter its premises to interview the applicant and inspect, copy, record and take away any accounting or other record, including original documents, as may be required for the purposes of confirming the eligibility of the applicant.
- They understand that providing wrong or misleading information to secure public money is an offence and may lead to criminal investigation and prosecution.
- They understand that the information provided on this claim form will be made available to other government departments and their agencies for the purpose of detecting and preventing crime.
- They understand that if DfE approves this application, these terms and conditions shall be enforceable on the basis of a contract between me/the business and DfE.

(2) Information for those who have made an application

How can I get support with my query about the grant?

A helpline was available on 0300 200 7809 between 27 March and 12 June to deal with enquiries about the Business Grant Support Schemes, including enquiries from ratepayers about their rate account IDs, queries about the validation process or to provide information on any errors in your original application. The helpline is now closed. Updates on your application will be provided by email. Please ensure you regularly monitor your email account (including the junk folder).

If you have enquiries about the £25,000 grant scheme please email business-support-grant-scheme@economy-ni.gov.uk

Provision of verification documentation

If you have already applied for the scheme and provided details using the online form, your details will be issued for validation and checking. Be assured that we will undertake the validation process as quickly as possible.

A business bank statement (covering the 15 March 2020 period) is an essential part of the validation process and failure to provide this will result in rejection of your application. Further detail is available at section 6.

Validation processes will aim to confirm that your business was trading solvently at the 15 March 2020 and was trading in an eligible sector. Therefore, additional information may need to be requested from you. It is therefore essential that you monitor your email account (including the junk folder) and respond quickly to requests.

Once everything is in order, the grant payment will be sent directly to your bank account and you will receive an email confirming that the grant payment has been issued. If you are not eligible to receive the grant or if there has been a problem with your registration, you will receive an email explaining why.

For rental properties: as part of your registration, you will also be asked to provide proof of business ownership if your business is not already registered on the Companies House database in your name. This evidence could include a franchise agreement or other legal document. A letter from your solicitor/accountant confirming that you are the business owner will also be accepted.

Confirmation from your landlord that they are content that you as business owner can apply for and receive the grant (in the form of a letter/email) should also be submitted.

Can I receive my payment by cheque?

To avoid unnecessary social contact, payments are being made directly into bank accounts. Issuing payment by cheque would require people to go to banks to make lodgements, as well as slowing down the payment process for everyone. Therefore, cheques will not be issued unless absolutely necessary.

(3) Eligibility criteria for the grant

Eligible businesses/ properties

Businesses must operate in a premises in the retail, hospitality, tourism or leisure sectors, in one of the following:

Amusements	Garden Centre	Race Track
Arts Gallery	Golf Driving Range	Restaurant
Auction Mart	Harbour	Retail Warehouse
Bakery	Ice Rink	Riding School
Bingo Hall	Laundry	Shooting Range
Bowling Alley	Leisure/Gym/Fitness Centre	Shop
Café	Market	Showroom
Camping Site	Museum	Sports Club
Car Wash	Office (in eligible sector)	Taxi Depot
Caravan Site	Outdoor Centre	Theatre
Cinema	Petrol Filling Station	Tourism Accommodation
Entertainment Centre	Play Centre	Visitor Centre
Exhibition Venue	Post Office	
Funeral parlour	Public House	

Businesses/ properties excluded from this grant:

- Vacant properties;
- Public bodies;
- Premises used for manufacturing purposes;
- Properties with a Total Net Annual Value of under £15,001 or over £51,000;
- Businesses which, as of the 15 March, were dissolved or about to be dissolved, are not eligible;
- Businesses which, as of the 15 March 2020, were insolvent or for whom insolvency action had been instigated, are not eligible;
- Businesses that were dormant as of the 15th March 2020, i.e. not trading but not insolvent;
- Businesses that are being used for the provision of the following services to visiting members of the public:
 - Financial services (e.g. banks, building societies, cash points, bureaux de change, short-term loan providers)
 - Medical services (e.g. vets, dentists, doctors, osteopaths, chiropractors)

- Professional services (e.g. estate agents, solicitors, accountants, insurance agents/ financial advisers and quantity surveyors)
- Providers of childcare
- Construction services

Further conditions

- Businesses with multiple premises meeting the Total Net Annual Value criteria outlined above are only eligible for one grant of £25,000.
- Businesses who have already received a £10,000 grant under the Small Business Grant Scheme, and who have an additional property which falls within the £15,001 to £51,000 Total Net Annual Value and meets the other eligibility criteria for the £25,000 Business Grant Scheme, are eligible.
- Business that have already received the £10,000 grant on the basis of their Total Net Annual Value in the 7th valuation list at the 15th March, who become eligible for the £25,000 grant on the basis of their Total Net Annual Value in the 8th valuation list at 1st April 2020, will only be entitled to receive the balance of £15,000.

Multiple businesses/ business premises with a number of occupying businesses.

Eligibility for the business support grant is based on the Total Net Annual Value (NAV) of the property, as published in the Valuation List (either in the 7th Valuation List on 15 March or in the 8th Valuation List on 1 April – whichever is more beneficial). This means that:

- Each property within the Valuation List has a unique Property ID and a Total Net Annual Value. The size and extent of each property is based on information held in the Valuation List in relation to each unique Property ID. In simple terms, the size and extent of the property is reflected in the current rate bill – one rate bill for each property. Note that the property can be made up of a number of different buildings or units. You cannot ask to have a property split into separate units, or 2 properties joined into one larger property, for the purposes of accessing the business support grant.
- Eligibility is based on the Total Net Annual Value - this is the overall valuation for the property for rates purposes. Any further breakdown of the Total Net Annual Value into distinct parts, such as parts of the property used for retail or manufacturing, is not relevant in terms of the Total NAV eligibility bands for the grant schemes (Total NAV of £15,000 or less for the £10,000 grant and NAV between £15,001 and £51,000 for the £25,000 grant).

In general, only one grant can be paid in respect of each property and only one grant can be paid to each eligible business, irrespective of how many properties the business occupies.

For individuals who own a number of separate businesses and/or properties this means that:

- If separate businesses are operating from separate properties, then a grant can be registered in relation to each separate business that occupies a separate property.
- If the same business occupies a number of different properties, then only one grant registration should be made in respect of the business.
- For limited companies, each separate business registered with Companies House will have a unique Company Number. Otherwise, further information may be requested from applicants to validate business and property details.

Validation checks have been put in place to ensure that multiple grants aren't paid to the same business or to the same property. Deliberate multiple entries may be considered to constitute an attempt to claim ineligible grant support and be actioned accordingly.

A number of businesses occupying one property

If a business rents part of a property from the main occupying business (such as hiring desks within a serviced office workspace or hiring space within a hair salon or gym), the business ratepayer who is named on the rate account and receives the business rate bill directly from Land & Property Service (LPS) is considered to be the occupying business for the purposes of the grant. Only one grant payment can be paid in relation to each property. Other support available for the self-employed. See <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>

(4) Rental Properties

For rental properties, the scheme was designed to benefit the business who occupies the property and not the landlord or managing agent who is responsible for paying the rates. An online rental properties form was launched on 15 May 2020 for businesses who occupy rental properties and meet the eligibility criteria, outlined below, to register for the grant. The closing date for registrations was 20 May 2020.

- The business meets the eligibility criteria for the scheme including having a Total Net Annual Value (NAV) of between £15,001 and £51,000; and operates in the retail, hospitality, tourism or leisure sectors (as set out in section 3) and;
- The business is the sole tenant of a rental property where the landlord receives the rate bill or
- The business is the sole tenant of a rental property and the business receives the rate bill.

Other information:

- If the property is not rented from a landlord or letting agent, but a business rents part of the property from the main occupying business (such as hiring desks within a serviced office workspace or hiring space within a hair salon or gym), the business ratepayer who is named on the rate account and receives the business rate bill directly from Land & Property Service (LPS) is considered to be the occupying business for the purposes of the grant. Only one grant payment can be paid in relation to each property. Other support available for the self-employed. See <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>
- If the business is not operating from business premises it was not eligible for the business support grants, but other support is available for the self-employed. See <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>

How does the process to capture rental property details work?

You should note that completion of the rental properties form constituted **pre-registration** for the scheme. Completion of the pre-registration on the rental properties form closed on 20 May 2020.

What if I think my landlord has applied for the grant or received the grant but I think I am the eligible business who is entitled to receive the grant?

You should contact the Grants Team at business-support-grant-scheme@economy-ni.gov.uk so that the details of the landlord grant application/payment can be investigated.

(5) State Aid

What do you mean by State Aid?

State aid is any advantage granted by public authorities through state resources on a selective basis to any organisations that could potentially distort competition and trade in the European Union.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/introduction-state-aid>

Although the UK has left the European Union, the European State Aid rules still apply during the Transition Period.

This grant is State aid that complies with either the European Commission's [de minimis Regulation](#) or, if this is not possible, the UK's COVID-19 Temporary Framework for UK authorities ([SA.56841](#)). The UK scheme operates under the European Commission's Temporary Framework to support the economy in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak and is conditional on eligible businesses confirming they were not in difficulty on 31.12.19 (as defined in Article 2 (18) of the Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014).

(6) Verification documentation

Collection of bank details

In order to complete the verification process, applicants were required to provide a copy of their business' bank statement. Following completion of the application form, applicants were required to provide a copy of the bank statement that:

- Covers the period including 15th March 2020.
- Allows us to read the name of the account holder, the property address, the sort code and account number.
- This will be used to validate that business transactions were occurring at 15 March 2020. Applicants were advised that they could redact any other transactions that they considered to be irrelevant.

Applicants received an application reference number when they made their online application. They were asked to email a copy of the bank statement and their contact name, **quoting their reference number**, to the following email address:

Business-support-grant-bank-validation@economy-ni.gov.uk

Applicants were asked to note that the reference number is required to ensure that it is associated with their application. Not adding the reference number may result in the application being refused.

Please note that any outstanding verification information not provided by the scheme's closure date of 20 May 2020 should be sent as soon as possible to ensure your application can be assessed for eligibility as quickly as possible.

Requirement to supply a bank statement

In order to complete the verification process, applicants were required to provide a copy of their business' bank statement.

It was advised that where the applicant did not have access to online banking systems or have a copy of their statement that covers the period at 15th March 2020 and matches the other bank statement requirements set out above, they should contact their bank to obtain a pdf copy of their statement. If the applicant could only provide a paper copy, it was advised that a photograph of their statement could be provided as a last resort – applicants were asked to note that the Department for the Economy reserves the right to ask for other corroborating evidence if required.

Applicants were asked to contact the following mailbox Business-support-grant-bank-validation@economy-ni.gov.uk if there was an exceptional circumstance which meant they could not provide a bank statement and the verification team would discuss options with you.

I made an error in entering my bank details when I submitted the online form. What should I do?

If you have emailed your bank statement to the Business-support-grant-bank-validation@economy-ni.gov.uk address already and this relates to an incorrect bank account, please send the correct statement via another email to Business-support-grant-bank-validation@economy-ni.gov.uk. **Please ensure that you include your application reference number** and add the word **URGENT** into the subject line for faster processing.

If you have not already emailed your bank statement to the Business-support-grant-bank-validation@economy-ni.gov.uk address please send a statement for the bank account into which you wish to receive payment. **Please ensure that you include your application reference number.**

The team verifying your bank details will then get in touch with you to advise you on the next steps.

I made an error when I submitted the online form that is not related to my bank details. What should I do?

You should contact the Grants Team at business-support-grant-scheme@economy-ni.gov.uk to advise of the error that has been made, noting the reference number of the application you made an error on. Note that mechanisms are in place to ensure that multiple grant payments are not made to the same ratepayer.

(7) Specific Ratings Scenarios

How do I know the Total Net Annual Value of my property?

You can find the Total Net Annual Value of your property by searching the **non-domestic Valuation List**. See <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/property-valuation/valuation-lists>

What if I my property hasn't been valued for rates?

Businesses that are eligible for the scheme are those with a Total Net Annual Value of between £15,001 and £51,000 in the retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors either in the 7th valuation list at 15 March 2020 or in the 8th valuation list at 1 April 2020.

If the property has not yet been valued for rating purposes, the Total Net Annual Value will not yet be known so it will not appear in either the 7th or 8th Valuation list. In most cases, you will be unable to access the grant as the Total Net Annual Value of the property has not yet been determined and therefore the scheme eligibility requirements cannot be met.

The only exception to this is where a request to value the new property has already reached an advanced stage in the valuation process whereby it can be determined that the Total Net Annual Value falls between £15,001 and £51,000.

In cases where the online form did not allow you to submit an online application but you contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020 and it was subsequently established that you are eligible to apply because the request to value the new property has already reached an advanced stage in the valuation process whereby it can be determined that the Total Net Annual Value falls between £15,001 and £51,000, the date that you first contacted the Business Grants Team about the application will be considered to be the date of your application. In this case, you will be contacted to provide further information to support your application. In case of any dispute about the date of the first contact, the onus will be on the applicant to provide clear evidence that they contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020.

If you have not previously made a request to have your property valued for rates, there is no facility to submit a new request now for the purposes of accessing the grant. You should however request to have the property valued for rates purposes. A delay in having the property valued for rates may lead to a backdated rate bill which may be more difficult to repay. You can make this request at: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/business-rates-valuation-new-property>

What if I am ineligible based on my current Total Net Annual Value but I am waiting for the outcome of a valuation review and this may impact on my eligibility for the grant scheme? OR

What if I am ineligible based on my current Total Net Annual Value/Capital Value but circumstances have changed and my property valuation for rates needs to be updated?

There may be scenarios where the Total Net Annual Value of the property as published in the 7th list on 15th March 2020 or 8th list on 1st April 2020 needs to be updated and a review of the Total Net Annual Value has been requested – for example if the property is rated as a domestic property but is now being used for non-domestic purposes, where there is a request to split or join premises for rating purposes or where there is a challenge to the Total Net Annual Value for other reasons.

As the outcome of the valuation review is unknown, we cannot determine whether this review will have any impact on eligibility for the grant scheme. You will therefore be unable to access the grant in most cases.

The only exception to this is where a review request has already reached an advanced stage in the valuation process whereby LPS could have determined that the Total Net Annual Value falls between £15,001 and £51,000. In this case, the existing application can be updated to reflect the updated Total NAV, so there is no need for the application to be resubmitted.

In cases where the online form did not allow you to submit an online application but you contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020 and it was subsequently established that you are eligible to apply because the request to value the new property has already reached an advanced stage in the valuation process whereby it can be determined that the Total Net Annual Value falls between £15,001 and £51,000, the date that you first contacted the Business Grants Team about the application will be considered to be the date of your application. In this case, you will be contacted to provide further information to support your application. In case of any dispute about the date of the first contact, the onus will be on the applicant to provide clear evidence that they contacted the Business Grants Team before the scheme closed on 20 May 2020.

If you have not previously made a request to have your Total Net Annual Value reviewed, there is no facility to submit a new request now for the purposes of accessing the grant.

You should however request to have the property valuation updated for rates purposes if circumstances have changed. A delay in having the property valuation for rates updated may lead to a backdated rate bill which may be more difficult to repay. You can apply to

have your valuation reviewed at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/property-valuation/valuation-lists>

What if the Total Net Annual Value of the property is correct, but the business rate account details need to be updated, for example where a property is recorded as vacant but the business was operating in the property before COVID social distancing measures were put in place ?

Eligibility for the grant scheme will be considered if you can demonstrate that you were operating in the property on 17th March 2020.

In cases where the grant application needs to be updated to accommodate any changes to a rate account or to reflect the correct occupancy status (Occupancy ID) as at the 17 March 2020, this can be dealt with using the existing application from the business and there is no need for the application to be resubmitted.

Those wishing to update their rate account were advised that they would be asked to provide proof of occupation and that any changes will be reflected in your rate bill.

I pay rent to a landlord/managing agent/another business who occupies the same property and my business isn't registered on the rate account. Can I still access the grant?

For rental properties, the scheme was designed to benefit the occupying business and not the landlord or managing agent who is responsible for paying the rates. Businesses who are sole tenants were able to complete a pre-registration process on the online form for rental properties until 20 May 2020.

If a business rents part of a property from the main occupying business (such as hiring desks within a serviced office workspace or hiring space within a hair salon or gym), the business ratepayer who is named on the rate account and receives the business rate bill directly from Land & Property Service (LPS) will be considered to be the occupying business for the purposes of the grant. Only one grant payment can be paid in relation to each property. Other support available for the self-employed. See <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>

Businesses with significant overheads but who do not have premises – e.g operating from home or from a vehicle

These businesses would not be eligible for the grant, but there is other support available for the self-employed.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>

I am behind in my rates payments. Will any outstanding rates be deducted from my grant?

No, outstanding business rates will not be deducted from the grant payment.

I pay my business and domestic rates on one single bill. Will I still be eligible for the grant?

As long as you are eligible for the non-domestic part of your bill, you were still eligible for the grant even if your business rates are shown on the same bill as your domestic rates.

My Total Net Annual Value changed on 1st April 2020 due to Reval2020. How does this affect entitlement to the grant?

This is not a normal rating year because the new non-domestic Valuation List came into effect on 1 April 2020, following the **non-domestic Revaluation (Reval2020)**.

Ministers want to be as inclusive and supportive of business as possible to ensure that no individual business is disadvantaged by the change, so each business affected by the Reval2020 will get the grant on the basis of whichever valuation list would benefit them the most – i.e. the Total Net Annual Value recorded on the 7th valuation list on 15th March 2020 or the Total Net Annual Value recorded on the 8th valuation list on 1 April 2020.

LPS undertook a special exercise to identify these cases. This means that:

- Businesses (other than retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure) that became eligible for SBRR from 1 April 2020 were entitled to £10,000.
- Retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure premises whose Total Net Annual Value decreased to £51,000 or less on 1 April 2020 were eligible for the £25,000 grant.
- Retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure premises whose Total Net Annual Value fell to £15,000 or below on 1 April 2020 still got the £25,000 grant.
- Retail, hospitality, tourism and leisure premises whose Total Net Annual Value increased to over £15,000 got the £25,000 rather than £10,000.
- Businesses that have already received the £10,000 grant on the basis of their Total Net Annual Value in the 7th valuation list at the 15th March 2020, who become eligible for the £25,000 grant on the basis of their Total Net Annual Value in the 8th valuation list at 1st April 2020, were only entitled to receive the balance of £15,000.

(8) Appeals procedure

What is the Appeals Procedure?

Appeals will no longer be accepted from unsuccessful applicants who did not submit their appeal within 2 weeks of their rejection notice.

All applications were assessed fairly and consistently. The Department reserved the right to reject applications that do not fully meet the eligibility criteria. In these cases written notification was sent as soon as the rejection decision was made. These notifications clearly detailed the reason the application was declined.

The Department gave applicants every reasonable means of providing the information needed to validate eligibility. However, if, when requested, you have been unable to provide sufficient information, then your application may be rejected. Should there be any dispute with the decision made, the applicant will have the right to ask for an independent review to be conducted.

Details on how to submit an appeal were included in the rejection notice. The request had to be lodged within two weeks of the date of the rejection notice.

Please note that this appeals procedure only applied where an application has been submitted, processed and rejected.

(9) Wider support for businesses

What other support is available?

The NI Executive is putting a range of support measures in place to support businesses during this challenging time. You can find further details about these measures at:

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/covid-19-managing-business-finance-tax-rates-and-insurance>

Support available for the self-employed.

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-support-and-advice-self-employed>

Help available for business rates

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/covid-19-emergency-rates-package-businesses>

A full list of available support at a NI and UK-wide level is available at

<https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/business-support/coronavirus>

(10) Reporting Fraudulent Payments

How can I report concerns regarding potentially fraudulent payments?

If you have any concerns about fraudulent payments relating to this Scheme you can contact the Department for the Economy using the following email address raising.concerns@economy-ni.gov.uk

You can view the Department for the Economy's Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan at the links below:

Fraud Policy - <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/fraud-policy>

Raising Concerns – Whistleblowing guidance - <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/raising-concerns-whistleblowing-guidance>

(11) Data Handling

How will my data be handled?

You should note that your data will be shared and handled in line with the **Department for the Economy's Privacy Notice**