

Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme

Part A Guidance Notes

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDANCE

This document provides guidance on the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS) including eligibility criteria, application process and evidence required to apply. If you are considering applying for this scheme please read this document carefully before submitting an application.

OVERVIEW

The Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme is a new support scheme from the Department for the Economy. It is designed to provide support to those businesses directly impacted by the latest Northern Ireland [Health Protection Regulations](#) which came into force on Friday 16 October.

The scheme is administered by Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI) on behalf of the Department for the Economy (DfE).

The scheme will operate in two parts:

Part A – A business that is required to close/cease trading under the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) but is not eligible for the [Local Restrictions Support Scheme](#)

Part B – A business which has not been required to close/cease trading, but is part of the supply chain to a business that is forced to close/cease trading under the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#), and as a result it has been severely impacted.

Part A of the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme opens for online applications at 6pm on Wednesday 28 October 2020. Eligible businesses will receive a grant equivalent to £600 for each week the initial [Health Protection Regulations](#) are in place. This will be paid in one lump sum.

The Scheme will remain under review for as long as the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) are in place.

Further details on Part B of the scheme will be released as soon as possible.

THE REMAINDER OF THESE GUIDANCE NOTES ARE RELEVANT TO THOSE APPLYING TO PART A OF THE COVID RESTRICTIONS BUSINESS SUPPORT SCHEME ONLY.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Businesses should ensure they meet the following criteria before applying to the fund:

1. The business is named within the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) as required to close/cease trading, but is not eligible for the [Localised Restrictions Support Scheme](#) (LRSS).

Examples of this might include a business that delivers its product or service on a mobile basis or operates from their home, or their customers' homes, for example: a driving instructor or mobile hairdresser or beautician.

2. The business is operating in Northern Ireland and was trading at the time the restrictions came into effect on 16 October 2020*.

*For businesses based in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area this date is 5 October 2020. (Based means your business address must have a Derry City & Strabane District Council postcode).

3. The income lost as a result of your business having to close or cease trading is your main source of income, accounting for more than 50% of your income.

Restrictions

A business will not be eligible for the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme if:

1. It is not listed in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#).
2. It is eligible for support under the [Localised Restrictions Support Scheme](#) (LRSS).
3. The grant to be paid to the business will mean it will exceed the maximum levels of State Aid permitted under the [EC's de Minimis Regulation](#).
4. The business has failed to comply with a COVID-19 prohibition notice, served by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), under regulation 7 of [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020\(b\)](#).

Further conditions

The business must be able to demonstrate it is a business that has been required to close or cease trading in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#), and that it was operational and trading up to and including 16 October 2020*, when the [Health Protection Regulations](#) came into effect.

*For businesses based in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area this date is 5 October 2020.

See **Information Required** under **How to Apply** for more details on what is required to demonstrate eligibility for the grant.

HOW TO APPLY

If you have reviewed the criteria and believe your business may be eligible for the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme **Part A** you should use the online [eligibility checker](#) to complete the pre-application process. This checker will ask key questions in relation to the scheme's criteria.

If it appears the business may be eligible then you will be directed to an application form to apply for support. You will need to provide the necessary information to allow us to verify business eligibility, and provide bank details. To prevent fraud, you will also be required to provide valid photographic proof of identification.

You will also need to provide a number of details including the trading and legal names of the business, contact details and bank details.

You will be asked to provide a declaration confirming you will comply with State Aid rules and other terms and conditions outlined within the application form. See **Information required to submit an application** below for details.

Eligibility checker

To apply for the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme you must complete the [eligibility checker](#). This online checker will ask key questions in relation to the scheme's criteria and you can quickly check whether you may be eligible. If this is the case, you will be directed to the online application form.

Complete the [eligibility checker](#) now.

Information required to submit an application

- Your business name
- Your contact name and number
- Your business address and postcode
- Your bank account number and sort code for a UK/Sterling account used for trading purposes
- Your 10 digit HMRC Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR)
 - For the Self Employed this is linked to Schedule D earnings from any trade or profession
 - For Limited Companies this is linked to Corporation Tax
- HMRC VAT Registration Number
- Your Company Registration Number (if you have one), issued by Companies House
- Confirmation that the CRBSS grant payment will not take your business over the De-Minimis funding threshold.

You will also need to provide the following documents electronically:

- A scanned or photograph copy of a HMRC document showing your Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR), as well as your name and address.
- Evidence to confirm you are a business required to close or cease trading as a result of the [Health Protection Regulations](#), for example, official documents that confirm the nature of your business, such as evidence of registration with a public or professional body.
- Evidence to confirm your business was trading up to, and including 16 October 2020. For businesses based in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area, this date is 5 October 2020.

This must include a scanned or photograph copy of a bank statement that shows business transaction information and, as a minimum, covers the period 16 September to 16 October 2020. For businesses based in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area, this will need to cover the period 5 September to 5 October 2020. The account must be a UK or Sterling account used by your business for trading purposes.

- This must be the same account to which the CRBSS grant payment will be made.
- The statement must clearly show your business address; account name, number and sort code; and date of issue of the statement.



- In addition to the bank statement, other evidence will be required to demonstrate active trading, for example: invoices, receipts issued or received during the same period as outlined above.
- A form of Photographic ID as proof of your identity, such as a scanned or photograph copy of a valid passport or a current (full or provisional) driving licence photocard. All NI full driving licences with an expiry date between 1 February and 31 December 2020 will be treated as valid for a further eleven months (N.B. This does not apply to provisional driving licences).

To strengthen your application, we would recommend you also provide a letter from a qualified and registered accountant, lawyer or a current bank manager confirming that:

- Your business has been required to close/cease trading as a result of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.
- Your business is NOT eligible for support under the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme (LRSS).
- Your business operates in Northern Ireland and was trading at the time the restrictions came into effect on 16 October 2020. For businesses based in the Derry City & Strabane District Council area this date is 5 October 2020. (Based means your business address must have a Derry City & Strabane District Council postcode).
- The income lost as a result of your business having to close/cease trading is your main source of income, accounting for more than 50% of your income.

To attach documents to your application, please click the '**Attach Documents**' button at the relevant section. You will need to provide a description of the document to identify the document provided.

Please note the maximum size of each attachment is 3MB. If you are using a camera or mobile phone, you may need to change the camera setting to reduce it to a lower resolution in order to meet the file size requirements.

Self-certification and Declaration

Applicants will also be required to complete a declaration and with the authority of the business, accept all of the terms and conditions and confirm that if Invest NI approves this application, these terms and conditions shall be enforceable on the basis of a contract between the applicant business and Invest NI.

Please review the [Terms and Conditions](#) of the scheme.

By completing both the online application and declaration, the applicant certifies that:

- They are authorised to make the application on behalf of the business;
- The business has been directly impacted by the latest COVID-19 restrictions and has been required to close/cease trading under the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#)
- Any grant money received by the business, under the [Terms and Conditions](#) of Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme, will be used only for the purpose intended – i.e. to help alleviate the financial pressure of the recipient business and to the exclusion of any other individual or third party gain;
- The business certifies that the information contained in the application form is true, accurate and not misleading as at the date of submitting the application form, and that Invest NI is entitled to rely on that information;
- All the information provided in the application is correct and you agree to repay on demand to the Department for the Economy (DfE) and/or Invest NI all of the funding received from this scheme, if DfE, Invest NI, 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 your application to this scheme.

Helpline

If you are unsure if your company is eligible then you can contact the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme Helpline on **0800 952 4422** open Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5:00pm or via our online [enquiry form](#).

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

You are responsible for providing accurate and true information on your application.

Businesses should 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 grant awarded through the CRBSS will be taxable. Any payment must be declared to HM Revenue and 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 de minimis aid that falls within the scope of the [EC's de Minimis Regulation](#). The maximum amount of de minimis aid a company can receive in a three year period as indicated is €200,000. If this grant results in a breach of this ceiling or there is any contravention of de minimis or other State Aid rules, irrespective of whether this was a deliberate or otherwise deception or error or as a result of any misleading statements given on the application, this grant will be recoverable in full and may be subject to legal action.

Please review the [Terms and Conditions](#) of the scheme.

DATA HANDLING AND PROTECTION

This fund is being delivered by Invest NI on behalf of DfE. Both organisations will have access to the information you provide as part of your application; both as a means to assess your eligibility and also to conduct any post scheme governance assessments.

As this financial support is sourced from public funds Invest NI will, in the interest of openness and transparency, proactively [publish limited information](#) on the scheme including:

- Name of applicant;
- Application title;
- Amount of assistance.

Both organisations will handle your data in compliance with applicable laws including the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

For further details on each organisation's data handling practices please see their respective Privacy statements:

[Invest NI Privacy Notice](#)

[DfE Privacy Notice](#)

We also recommend that you read the [Privacy Notice](#) appended to the online application process for specific data handling nuances of this fund.