

Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme Part B 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. It sets out the information and evidence required to demonstrate that the business meets the eligibility criteria. Please read this document carefully before submitting an application.

There are also detailed [FAQs](#) to help answer questions you might have regarding providing some of the information and evidence.

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 that is not named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#), but which supplies goods or services to such a business, or is reliant upon such a business being open and fully operational in order to trade.

If you missed applying before the Scheme previously closed you can now apply. If successful, any grant payment will be backdated to the date your business was impacted as a result of the Health Protection Regulations.

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

PART B ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The information and evidence requested as outlined in the following **Eligibility Criteria** and **How to Apply** sections is necessary to validate the applicant and business to ensure public funds are managed properly. Please take time to read this carefully before applying.

Part B eligible businesses are subdivided between those paying business rates and those not paying business rates. **Grant payments will cover each week that your business is impacted by the Health Protection Regulations, up to Wednesday 31 March 2021.**

Eligible business paying business rates

For business paying business rates directly to LPS (this means that the rates bill must be in the name of the entity that has submitted the application), the grant payable will be based on the Net Annual Value of the property.

- If the NAV is less than £15,000, the grant will be **£400 per week**
- If NAV is greater than £15,000 but less than £51,000, the grant will be **£600 per week**
- If the NAV is greater than £51,000 the grant will be **£800 per week**.

Eligible businesses not paying business rates

Business not paying business rates will receive a grant of **£300 per week**.

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

1. The business supplies goods to a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#). This includes businesses that supply the goods directly or via a wholesaler or intermediary.

If you are a food business or drinks producer your businesses must be registered or approved by your local council in order to be eligible to apply for support.

OR

The business provides services to a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#). This includes businesses that provide the services directly or via a subcontractor.

OR

The business is dependent on a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) being open and fully operational in



order for it to operate. For example, businesses that supply services for weddings or events that have been cancelled/postponed due to the restrictions being in place.

2. The business is operating in Northern Ireland and was trading at the time the restrictions came into effect on 16 October 2020.
3. The business must be your main source of income, i.e. must generate at least 50% of your total income.
4. The business must have experienced at least a 40% reduction in turnover as a result of the restrictions being in place.
5. The business must be able to provide the following:
 - A HMRC Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) Number
 - VAT Registration Number (if applicable)
 - Company Registration Number (if applicable)

Restrictions

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

1. It is not based and operating in Northern Ireland.
2. It is a Primary Agriculture Producer, i.e. primarily concerned with crop or animal production, or forestry, or logging, or fisheries, or aquaculture.
3. It is eligible for support under other NI Executive restrictions support schemes including:
 - a. The Department of Finance [Localised Restrictions Support Scheme](#) (LRSS)
 - b. Part A of the Department for the Economy [Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme](#)
 - c. The Department of Infrastructure [Support Fund for Taxi Drivers and Private Coach and Bus Operators](#)
 - d. The Department for Communities [Covid-19 Culture, Languages, Arts and Heritage Support Programme](#).
4. 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](#).
5. 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\(b\)](#).

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 B** 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 submit evidence to demonstrate that your business meets the eligibility and provide bank details. To help 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 (or your own name if this is what you trade under)
- Your contact name and number
- Your business address and postcode (this can be your home address if used for business correspondence)
- 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 ([if applicable](#))

- Your Company Registration Number (if you have one), issued by Companies House. This does not apply to self-employed applicants.
- Your LPS Non-Domestic Ratepayer ID and Occupancy ID if you pay business rates directly to LPS (this means that the rates bill must be in the name of the entity that has submitted the application).
- Confirmation that your turnover has declined by at least 40% due to a business that you supply, or rely upon, having had to close or cease trading as a result of the [Health Protection Regulations](#). You will also be asked to explain how this has impacted on your business.
- Confirmation that the business is your main source of income, i.e. the business accounts for more than 50% of your income.
- Confirmation that the CRBSS grant payment will not take your business over the State Aid De-Minimis funding threshold.

You will also need to provide the following evidence electronically:

- A clear and legible scanned, photograph or screenshot copy of your HMRC SA302 or tax calculation document, or your SA250 document, which demonstrates that you are a business. This should show your [Unique Taxpayer Reference \(UTR\)](#), as well as your name and address.

This is required to demonstrate that the business is a legitimate business.

- Evidence to confirm your business either:
 - provides products or services, either directly or indirectly, to a business named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#),
 - or**
 - relies on a business named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#) being open and fully operational in order for it to operate.

The onus is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that it meets this criteria. Evidence might include, for example:

- copies of invoices or receipts for products or services provided either directly or indirectly to businesses named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#);

and/or



- evidence of cancelled orders/bookings relating to the period of the restrictions as a result of a business named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#) either closing or having to operate under restricted terms.

This evidence is required to demonstrate that your business is in the direct supply chain to a business named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#).

- Evidence of recent trading, i.e. trading between September and December 2020.

A clear and legible scanned, photograph, or screenshot copy of a bank statement that covers the month prior to the date your business was impacted as a result of the Health Protection Regulations must be provided as a minimum.

- 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 must also be provided to demonstrate active trading. Evidence might include, for example:

- copies of invoices or receipts for products or services provided either directly or indirectly to businesses named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#);

and/or

- evidence of cancelled orders/bookings relating to the period of the restrictions as a result of a business named in the [Health Protection Regulations](#) either closing or having to operate under restricted terms.

This evidence is required to demonstrate that the business has been trading in advance of the [Health Protection Regulations](#) coming into force.

- If you pay Business Rates directly to LPS (this means that the rates bill must be in the name of the entity that has submitted the application), for the non-domestic premises you operate from, your LPS Non-Domestic Ratepayer ID(s) and Occupancy ID(s) and a scanned, photograph, or screenshot copy of your Non-Domestic Rates Bill(s) must be provided. (Domestic rates details should not be provided – doing so may significantly delay processing of your application).

This is required to verify you pay business rates directly to LPS.

- A form of Photographic ID as proof of your identity, such as a clear and legible scanned, photograph, or screenshot 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).

This is required to verify the identity of the applicant.

To strengthen your application, we strongly recommend that a registered accountant completes the [template provided](#) using their official letterhead. This will provide independent verification of the information you have provided in your application and although not mandatory, it will strengthen your application.

This letter confirms that:

- Your business supplies goods or services to a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) or relies on such a business being open and fully operational in order for it to trade.
- Your business is NOT eligible for support under the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme (LRSS).
- Your business is based in Northern Ireland and was trading at the time the restrictions came into effect on 16 October 2020.
- The business is your main source of income, i.e. accounts for more than 50% of your total income.
- The businesses has experienced at least a 40% reduction in turnover as a result of the restrictions being in place.

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 is not named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) but has been severely impacted and is one of the following:

A business that supplies goods to a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#). This includes businesses that supply the goods directly or via a wholesaler or intermediary. (If you are a food business or drinks producer your businesses must be registered or approved by your local council in order to be eligible to apply for support).

OR

A business that provides services to a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#). This includes businesses that provide the services directly or via a subcontractor.

OR

A business that is dependent on a business named in the [Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(No.2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) being open and fully operational in order for it to operate. For example, businesses that supply services for weddings or events that have been cancelled/postponed due to the restrictions being in place.

- 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.