

# **BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORT ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT OMICRON VARIANT. EFFECTIVE FROM 30<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2021.**

## **Introduction**

1. This guidance is intended to support Babergh and Mid Suffolk based businesses applying to Babergh District Council or Mid Suffolk District Council for a grant from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Fund, originally announced by the Government on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and most recently updated 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021 in light of rising cases of the Omicron Variant. This support will take the form of a one-off grant.
2. This guidance sets out the criteria under which businesses will qualify to make an application to the ARG, and the evidence required to support an application, this is aligned with the Government guidance issued in December 2021. ([Additional Restrictions Grant: guidance for Local Authorities \(updated 30 December 2021\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#))

## **Scope and approach of scheme**

3. The Government guidance gives the Council discretion over the grant scheme, and its decisions regarding the scheme will be final.
4. Businesses with hereditaments subject to business rates that are eligible for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG) should apply for this grant and will not be eligible to apply for funding under the ARG scheme. More information on eligibility for the OHLG can be found <https://www.babergh.gov.uk/features/our-covid-19-response/businesses/> .
5. It has been determined that with effect from the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2021 the fund will be utilised to:
  - Provide a discretionary grant to support businesses who have been severely impacted by the Omicron Variant of coronavirus throughout December 2021 and January 2022 who are not eligible for the OHLG grant.
6. Applications to the Additional Restriction Grant Omicron Variant are invited from businesses who fall into the following criteria:
  - Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation businesses who are excluded from the OHLG scheme who have been severely impacted by the rise of the Omicron variant.
  - Businesses within the personal care sector who can demonstrate they have been severely impacted by the rising Omicron variant.
  - Wholesale businesses who supply over 51% of their goods to the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sector.
7. To ensure eligible businesses have opportunity to apply for the scheme, the Council are administering an application-based approach to the grants

scheme to assess the eligibility and evidence as set out in this guidance.

8. Applications will be assessed after the application closing date of 18th February 2022, applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application on or before 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
9. Due to the value of grant funding received for distribution to businesses it is anticipated that we will not be able to fund all applications received.
10. 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.

### **Eligibility**

11. To be eligible to apply for a grant under this scheme, a business must:

- Have been trading up to and including 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021
- Have been severely impacted by the rise in the Omicron variant
- Be trading from within either Babergh or Mid Suffolk District area

### **Exclusion**

12. Businesses are excluded from these schemes if:

- They are eligible for support under the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG) scheme.
- They have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of subsidy allowance permitted.
- They are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made.

### **Evidence Required for all**

13. To be considered for funding under these schemes, we require businesses to provide:

- A brief statement of the impact of the omicron variant on the business to include detail of significant impact, financial or otherwise and how any grant funding received under this scheme will be used. Where supporting documentation is available this should also be supplied as part of the application process.
- Proof of current business insurance certificates.
- Copy of bank account statement for the business dated within the last 3 months
- Detail of all previous COVID grant funding received as part of the confirmation of Subsidy Allowance compliance.

**If you are unable to provide satisfactory evidence your application will not be considered.**

## Subsidy Allowance

14. There is a requirement for all grants made under this scheme to comply with Subsidy Allowance guidelines, please see the further guidance on this at this link – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities>

## Additional information

15. The Council has access to limited funds from Government for this scheme, it is anticipated that we will be unable to support all applications received.
16. This is a limited fund, meeting the criteria will not guarantee payment under this grant.
17. To ensure eligible businesses have opportunity to apply for the scheme, the Council are administering an application-based approach to the grants scheme to assess the eligibility and evidence as set out in this guidance.
18. 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.
19. Grants up to a maximum of £6000 will be awarded to qualifying businesses seeking support from the Additional Restriction Grant Omicron Variant fund.
20. Generally, only one award will be made per business irrespective of multiple sites or premises, however the authority reserves the right to consider multiple application in exceptional circumstances.
21. If the fund is oversubscribed with the applications received, the Council reserves the right to amend the grant levels, based on the applications received and approved.
22. Evidence to support the application will need to be uploaded as part of the application process. The evidence will be in accordance with section 13.
23. Applications for the grant must be made online and payments will be made directly to approved recipients' bank accounts by electronic transfer.

The timeline for these schemes:

- Applications open – with immediate effect
- Applications to this phase of funding closes on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- All decisions will be made and communicated with applicants as soon as possible after the application closure date.
- Payments will be made to successful applicants by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.
- Program closes 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 in line with government requirements.

## Other information

24. Grant income received by a business is taxable therefore funding paid under the Additional Restriction Grant will be subject to tax. Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.

25. 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.
26. As a requirement from government fraud checks will be completed on all applications, these include company checks and bank account checks. Any businesses that do not pass these will have their applications declined.
27. 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.

### **Decision making Process**

28. No grant will be paid without an application being made.
29. Grant decisions will be made by panel.
30. There is no appeal process.
31. Enquiries about the schemes can be emailed to [discretionarybusinessgrant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:discretionarybusinessgrant@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk)