

SMALL BUSINESS ADAPTATION GRANT GUIDANCE

Deadline for claims 31 January 2026

1. Introduction

The **Small Business Adaptation Grant** is one of the business grants available under the Derbyshire Dales Rural Innovation Grant scheme. The scheme aims to assist business diversification, growth, adaptation and long term resilience.

The Small Business Adaption Grant is open to applications from micro and small sized businesses with a trading address in the Derbyshire Dales.

To be considered for grant support, potential applicants are required to complete a registration form/expression of interest to check the eligibility of their business and project. We advise applicants to read the [Registration Form Guidance](#) prior to completion. **Please note: completion of the registration form is not an application for funding.**

This grant scheme is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The Funds aim to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business and people and skills. For more information, visit [UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025-26: Technical note - GOV.UK](#) or [Rural England Prosperity Fund: prospectus updates for 2025 to 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

2. Objectives

The objectives of the grant scheme are to:

- stimulate enterprise and innovation.
- enable micro and small enterprises to access new markets.
- enhance business productivity.
- enhance business resilience.
- enable the creation of higher skilled/higher paid roles.
- encourage green business growth and use of low carbon technologies and techniques.
- develop the visitor offer, enhancing the quality, value, growth potential and resilience of the visitor economy.

3. Core Eligibility Criteria

Qualifying micro and small businesses – including any economic entity with which the business is linked, whether as a subsidiary of that entity or forming part of a group of linked companies– are eligible to apply.

To qualify as a micro business, a business must satisfy two or more of the following requirements in a year:

- Turnover: not more than £632,000
- Balance sheet total: not more than £316,000
- Number of employees: a headcount of staff of not more than 10

To qualify as a small business, a business must satisfy two or more of the following requirements in a year:

- Turnover: not more than £10.2 million
- Balance sheet total: not more than £5.1 million
- Number of employees: a headcount of staff of less than 50

All applicant businesses must:

- have a trading address within the Derbyshire Dales
- be able to evidence trading for a minimum of 12 months at the time of application. (businesses trading for less than a year may apply to the Business Start-Up Programme: [Derbyshire business start-up support scheme - Derbyshire County Council](#))
- fall into one of the following categories: registered as a limited company, a sole trader, a partnership or a limited liability partnership. Businesses must be registered either on Companies House or with HMRC and have a Unique Tax Reference Number
- be able to demonstrate it has sufficient financial resources available to cash flow the project upfront and provide the match funding required.

4. Required Outcomes

Applicants should demonstrate that grant investment will contribute to the following outcomes (applicants will be required to quantify proposed outcomes within their application):

- Improved business productivity
- Businesses adopting new to the firm technologies or processes
- Energy consumption reduced

NB. This must be calculated using the [Carbon Trust calculator](#) which uses the [BEIS conversion factors](#) which are required to be used under UKSPF and amount of CO2 must be shown in tonnes

- Jobs safeguarded within the applicant business as a direct result of grant support i.e. a permanent and paid job that was at risk prior to support being provided. The applicant will be expected to upload written evidence of this via the completion and submission of a Jobs Safeguarded form found at **Annex 1**.
- Improved use of digital technology
- New jobs created i.e. the number of new, permanent, paid, full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created as a direct result of grant support.

Applications will be assessed and scored on the number and quality of proposed outcomes and if the proposed outcomes offer value for money for the amount of grant requested. Outcomes should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific (SMART) with a baseline and explanation provided to explain the basis of the outcome. As an *example*:

% increase in business production:

20% forecast increase in production from baseline 1000 units in 2024/25 to 1200 units by 25/26

Reduction in CO2

A reduction in CO2 from 1000 tonnes equivalent at (insert current date) to 800 tonnes equivalent by 31 March 2026.

An explanation needs to be provided to explain the basis of each outcome.

Approved outcomes will be included and monitored as a condition of any grant award. **Please note:** monitoring of outcomes cannot go beyond 31 December 2026 so must be able to be achieved by this date.

5. Exclusions

The following exclusions apply:

- Businesses which are dormant, in administration, insolvent or subject to a striking off notice.
- Businesses that have already received public aid equal to the maximum permitted level of subsidy under the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) subsidy allowance (see section 12).
- Post office sorting offices, take-away only businesses, landlords and property developers, primary agricultural activities, educational establishments, GP practices, market stallholders and mobile catering outlets without fixed building costs and not paying a regular rent, Self-catering accommodation providers which do not qualify as a Furnished Holiday Let (with an SA105 tax return) B&Bs not registered as a food

business with Environmental Health, insurance agents, financial advisors and other financial services including banks, building societies, bureaux de change and loan providers, vacant premises and car parks (list not exhaustive).

- Businesses which are part of national chains or franchises
- Sole Trader/Partnerships where the income from the business does not represent the individual(s) primary source of income (ie represents less than 50% of their total income – including employment, pensions and all other income)
- Organisations whose activities are contrary to the vision and values of the District Council [Corporate Plan - Derbyshire Dales District Council](#)

6. Eligible Costs and Grant Amounts

Eligible expenditure includes the following costs where it can be demonstrated that the proposed investment will directly support the objectives of the grant scheme
Proposed expenditure needs to be new to the business and not ongoing costs:

- new equipment or technology required to adapt/develop/diversify the business inc. new to the firm technologies or processes, more efficient production processes and expenditure to enhance energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the business. **Please note** – in exceptional circumstances, secondhand equipment may be considered; please contact us ukspf@derbyshiredales.gov.uk to discuss further.
- digital adoption inc. investment in e-commerce and on-line booking systems
- buying in specialist consultancy services to adapt / develop / diversify the business*
- buying-in bespoke training necessary to upskill the workforce and address skills shortages inc. training for business owners, employers, managers or employees*

**either unavailable through other externally funded provision or cannot be obtained in a geographically close location.*

| Total project cost | Maximum Grant (up to) |
|---|---|
| £2,500 - £10,000 Excluding reclaimable VAT | £6,500 NB. Scoring will determine grant intervention rate offered; see Section 9 |

The remainder of the funding must be provided by the applicant business. Only one application per qualifying business/linked businesses will be accepted.

Eligible businesses will be expected to fund 100% of the project costs upfront.

You will be asked how much grant funding you require. Consideration should be taken of the level of grant requested as this will be used to assess value for money.

For example, if the project is to create 1 full time equivalent job and is requesting £6,500/65% grant it would be considered lower value for money than a project creating 1 full time equivalent job and requesting £3,250/50% grant.

Grants will be paid in arrears. The eligible grant amount will be reimbursed on production of receipted invoices / evidence of payment from the business bank account and evidence of delivery / completion of the project. Please note that photographic evidence will also be required. Grant payments will normally be made in a single payment upon completion.

Any expenditure committed or incurred prior to the grant award will not be eligible.

7. Excluded Costs

Ineligible costs include (list not exhaustive)

- costs incurred prior to grant approval
- ongoing business overheads including routine marketing and promotion; equipment leasing costs; recurring license fees; subscriptions and service charges; repairs and maintenance; banking; insurance; legal and accountancy fees
- purchase of stock
- wage costs and related employment costs
- costs associated with capital build projects e.g. land and consents
- relocation costs i.e. the costs of moving the business from one premises to another
- like for like replacement equipment including computers; general software and printers (N.B. upgrading of equipment resulting in improved business productivity is eligible for consideration)
- soft furnishings, beds, tables, chairs, cutlery and crockery, curtains, televisions and audio equipment etc.
- vehicles for use on the public highway
- energy saving measures e.g. solar panel installation on business premises that could potentially revert to domestic premises e.g. self-catering premises
- core agricultural business costs
- projects carried out to meet a legal/statutory requirement.
- contingency costs
- in-kind contributions e.g. using your own labour, vehicle and office space

- single items of equipment costing less than £250
- recoverable VAT.

8. How to Apply for a Grant

Applicants must first complete an [online registration](#) for UKSPF support. District Council officers will verify registration information and businesses potentially eligible for grant support will then receive an email link to apply for grant funding

Please refer to the [Guidance for UKSPF Registration](#) if you have not already registered.

Please also refer to the [Grant Process for Applicants](#) for information about the overall application process.

Information Required to Support your Application

- Your UKSPF Unique Registration Number
- Details of permissions, consents or licences in place or required
- Current management accounts and/or most recent tax return and most recent bank statement. The bank statement must be for the last month, with no information redacted ie it must show all details and transaction information. Screenshots of balances from banking apps will not suffice.
- **three written quotations** (or screenshots with dates, amounts and suppliers clearly visible) for each item of expenditure. **All quotations must be dated within 6 months of the application.** Only formal quotations from other registered businesses or sole traders can be considered. Quotations will need to be uploaded during the application process.
- **A short specification (explanation) for each item of expenditure** which explains what it needs to do or provide. This makes it easier to compare quotes.
- Details of previous public aid / assistance received.

Please ensure you answer the questions completely and accurately. Applicants will need to provide sufficient detail to warrant the level of the grant applied for and to justify the award of public funds. Applications providing limited information and not fully answering the questions will be scored accordingly and may not meet the minimum threshold. As part of your application, you will be required to complete a table with the details of the items/services you wish to purchase; this will expand as you enter each item. If you are applying for a number of items, these must be shown individually.

Businesses will be required to make a series of declarations to confirm their eligibility for grant assistance, including subsidy compliance and information on any current enforcement activity eg planning, licencing or environmental health, and that the information they have provided is accurate and complete. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Information provided by businesses will be subject to both pre and post payment checks by District Council officers, including the District Council's Auditor where appropriate. The District Council reserves the right not to proceed any further with an application if there is doubt over the evidence provided.

9. How Your Grant Application will be Assessed

Grant applications will be assessed and scored by District Council officers.

Grant awards will be based on the information submitted and declarations made by a business within their application.

The application process is competitive and each application will be assessed and scored on its own merits against the grant criteria.

Scoring will assess:

- fit with fund objectives / priorities eg decarbonisation
- need for the project and grant
- deliverability of the proposals and risks
- value for money and additionality of the grant.
- the business's sector

Applications will be scored out of 58 and a score of 30 must be achieved in order for grant to be awarded. The intervention rate will be determined by the score achieved:

Score 49 – 58 65% intervention rate

Score 40 – 48 50% intervention rate

Score 30 – 39 40% intervention rate

Under 30 – unsuccessful

Consideration will also be given to:

- other areas of your project e.g. environmental benefits including biodiversity measures where appropriate
- the total grant funding available under the scheme.

10. Grant Award Process

The District Council aims to assess fully completed applications within 15 working days. A record will be made of the decision, the grant awarded, or the reasons for rejection.

Successful applicants will be issued with a grant offer to sign and return within 5 working days.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive a letter explaining the reasons why their application has been unsuccessful. Applicants can ask the Derbyshire Dales UKSPF Partnership Board to review their decision if they can evidence that:

- the decision was based on an error of fact
- the decision was wrong in law

All grant funding decisions are subject to availability of funds. The Council may close the application process at any time due to the number of applications received.

The Government and the District Council will not accept deliberate manipulation or fraud. Any business providing false or misleading information to gain grant money will face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to clawback, as may any grants paid in error. Clawback of grant funding may also apply should project outcomes fall significantly below application forecasts at monitoring stage.

11. Grant Claim Process

Applicants must submit a grant claim form within 10 working days of the project completion date as stated in the application.

Payments will only be made upon receipt of:

- a fully completed grant claim form.
- compliant evidence of eligible expenditure incurred to be provided with the claim form:

For equipment purchases: photographic evidence of delivery and installation will be required and a delivery note from the supplier.

For the provision of services, evidence of the work completed will be required.

For training, evidence of booking onto training courses will be required, copies of training certificates to be submitted on completion of the course.

All project expenditure should be made and evidenced through the business bank account. Cash payments, personal credit card or PayPal payments are not deemed an eligible payment method and will not be considered.

The District Council will aim to pay fully completed claims within 10 working days.

12. Subsidy Allowance

All grants provided under the Rural Innovation Grant scheme must be compliant with UK subsidy rules.

Subject to a successful application, grant assistance under the Rural Innovation Grant scheme will be offered / paid under the **Minimal Financial Assistance** subsidy

allowance which allows an enterprise – including any linked entities together constituting a single economic entity engaged in economic activity – to receive up to £315,000 in financial assistance during any three fiscal year period.

To confirm the business is eligible to receive this assistance, you must declare the full amount of: Government assistance (inc. COVID business grants); EU assistance (inc. De Minimis) and any other public sector aid (inc. free or subsidised advice or consultancy services) you have been awarded in the current and previous two fiscal years.

Businesses applying for assistance will be required to confirm that in accepting a grant, the business, including any linked entities together constituting a single economic entity engaged in economic activity will not exceed the Minimal Financial Assistance threshold.

Recipients will also need to declare any grant funding awarded to any other aid awarding body who requests information on how much public aid you have received.

13. Privacy Notice

Derbyshire Dales District Council takes your privacy seriously. We will treat all personal and business information provided in confidence and store it securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations and the Council's [Data Protection Policy](#).

Your information will be used for the purpose for which it was intended, i.e. to enable us to process business grant applications and payments under the Rural Innovation Grant Scheme and will be stored for no longer than 10 years, according to the UKSPF data retention requirements.

Your data may be shared with other departments within the Council, Government departments responsible for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Rural England Prosperity Fund and third party processors operating on our/their behalf. We may also share information with other enforcing authorities for the purpose of preventing fraud, misuse of public funds and any legal or statutory requirements.

For more information on how we process your personal data and your rights as a data subject, visit www.derbyshiredales.gov.uk/your-council/data-information/data-protection

14. Other Important Information

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

Grant claims will be processed through a series of checks, including checks against our business rates database. The District Council reserves the right to verify/put on hold any application to enable detailed checks to be carried out. Any suspected cases of fraud will be investigated by the Council's Auditor and may be passed onto relevant the relevant Government agency.

The Government guidance on which this document is based has been subject to change and, as such, this document may also be subject to change. The District Council does not accept any liability should any of the changes affect the eligibility of any business for Small Business Adaptation Grant support. In addition, the District Council does not accept any liability for any issues that may arise for businesses because of applying for, receiving, or not receiving payments under this grant scheme. Funding awarded through the Small Business Adaptation Grant is subject to receipt of UKSPF funding to Derbyshire Dales District Council.

The District Council reserves the right to publicise business projects receiving support from the Small Business Adaptation Grant. A condition of grant is that grant recipients must cooperate in any media or photography activity organised by or agreed by the District Council.

Enquiries regarding the Grant can be emailed to UKSPF@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

ANNEX 1 - Derbyshire Dales UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Jobs Safeguarded Form

Within your Small Business Adaptation Grant application, you have indicated that the investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund will safeguard jobs within the business.

In order to safeguard a job, the position needs to be at risk of being lost within the six months after applying for a grant. The job must be paid and a permanent position – so individuals who are in temporary positions or coming to the end of a contract are not eligible.

A sole trader and any business owners can be included in the total if the positions meet the same criteria as for staff members.

The investment from the grant needs to form part of the reason why the job can subsequently be safeguarded (for example it will increase turnover, will allow staff to be retained, will develop new services staff could be redeployed onto or prevents the businesses needing to outsource a function).

A safeguarded job must be an existing job at the time of submitting an application and not be a job that will subsequently be created after the investment. It is possible to both safeguard and create jobs through a project.

In order to include these jobs as an output within your project we need the business to provide the information set out below.

Derbyshire Dales District Council will treat all information provided in confidence and store it securely in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations and the Council's Data Protection Policy. Please inform us if any commercially sensitive information should not be included.

By completing this form you understand and agree that the data contained within will be held by the District Council for the purpose of processing business grant applications funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and may be shared with other departments within the Council, Government departments responsible for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund / Rural England Prosperity Fund and third party delivery partners / processors operating on our / their behalf. We may also share information with other enforcing authorities for the purpose of preventing fraud, misuse of public funds and any legal or statutory requirements.

**Name of
Business**.....
.....

**Address of
Business/Postcode**.....
.....

.....
.....

How many hours are there in a normal working week for any full time staff?

How many Full Time Equivalent jobs do you plan to safeguard?

| Title of each Job at Risk | Reason why the job is at risk | Number of hours worked | Reason why the grant will safeguard this specific role |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Please note the number of proposed jobs safeguarded will form part of your grant agreement and monitoring should your grant application be successful.

**Name of Person Completing the
Form.....**

**Position in the
Business**.....
.....

Date.....
.....

Signed.....
.....

NB Please print and provide a wet signature on form before uploading