



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Discretionary Grants Scheme

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Introduction

1. In response to the Coronavirus (COVID19), the Government announced there would be support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors, delivered through the Small Business Grant Fund (£10,000) and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant Fund (2 grants, one of £10,000 and the other of £25,000).
2. This additional discretionary top up grant fund is aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs who were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund.
3. The Government have published their own guidance on this at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885011/local-authority-discretionary-grants-fund-guidance-local-government.pdf. Whilst the Council will have discretion they must follow specific criteria in this guidance so this local Epsom & Ewell Borough Council scheme must be read with the Government guidelines.
4. The Government are asking local authorities to prioritise small businesses in
 - shared workspaces
 - regular market traders that are not separately assessed for business rates
 - small charity properties that would meet the criteria for Small Business Rates Relief if they did not receive Charitable Relief
 - Bed and Breakfasts that pay council tax rather than business rates.
 - However, local authorities may choose to make payments to other businesses based on local economic need.
5. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will be responsible for administering and delivering grants to eligible businesses within the borough.
6. Local Authorities that will be responsible for making payments to businesses will receive funding from the Government to cover the cost of this scheme.

Amount of funding available

7. The Government have provided a limited amount of funding to local councils for this scheme.
8. Although the Government allows local councils to make awards of up to £25,000 in Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, grants awarded under the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund will be capped at £10,000.
9. We are expecting applications for this grant funding to be oversubscribed and have therefore decided to reduce the award cap to £10,000 in order that we are able to help as many local businesses in the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council area as possible.
10. At the end of the application period, grants will be awarded on the level of need and the number of qualifying applications received.

11. In taking decisions on the appropriate level of grant, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will take into account the number of employees, whether businesses have had to close completely and are unable to trade online and the consequent scale of impact of COVID19 losses.
12. Only one grant will be awarded per businesses that qualifies. If a number of businesses operate from one property we will need the annual fixed costs of each individual business.

Qualifying businesses

13. These grants are primarily and predominantly aimed at small and micro businesses, as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006.
14. To be a small business, under the Companies Act 2006, 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.
15. To be a micro business, under the Companies Act 2006, a business must satisfy two or more of the following requirements:-
 - 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
16. Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19 crisis.
17. Business with fewer than 50 employees (full-time equivalent).
18. Businesses that were trading on or before 11th March 2020.
19. Businesses in the Supply Chain to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality that did not qualify for business grants.
20. Travel companies and businesses in the supply chain to the travel, holiday and airline sector that did not qualify for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure business grants.
21. Cafes, shops, restaurants and other food and beverage outlets within shared premises who did not have their own rating assessment in order to qualify for the RHLG.
22. Private businesses providing a mixture of wellness and/or medical support, that have been effectively closed due to social distancing measures.
23. Properties used for the provision of temporary living / boarding accommodation to animals (eg, catteries and kennels) that were closed or saw a significant reduction in income due to the Covid-19 restrictions on human travel.
24. Businesses providing wellbeing services for animals.

25. Businesses that provide cultural, arts and tourism services that did not qualify for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grants.
26. Businesses with a total rateable value or annual fixed costs of less than £51,000
27. Discretionary grants will only be paid to local businesses who meet the criteria above and can demonstrate that they trade and do business in the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council area.
28. Businesses whose property was in the valuation list on the 11 March 2020 (If applicable).

Non-qualifying businesses

29. Any business qualifying for a Small Business Grant or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant is not eligible for this discretionary top up grant.
30. Businesses that are in administration, are insolvent or where a striking off notice has been made are not eligible for funding under this scheme.
31. Businesses which have received cash grants from any central Government scheme are ineligible for funding from the Discretionary Grants Fund. Such grant schemes include but are not limited to:
 - Small Business Grant Fund
 - Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant
 - The Fisheries Response Fund
 - Domestic Seafood Supply Scheme (DSSS).
 - The Zoos Support Fund
 - The Dairy Hardship Fund
32. Businesses operating under Airbnb.
33. Businesses operating from a domestic property (unless as a registered as a Bed & Breakfast).
34. Businesses whose only premises are listed below
 - Car Parking spaces.
 - Land use for storage or leisure.
 - Properties used for storage purposes only
 - Advertising rights.
 - ATM's.
 - Blue tooth boxes
 - Telephone communication masts
 - Show homes
35. Businesses with a total rateable value or annual fixed cost in excess of £51,000.
36. Businesses whose premises were empty prior to the 11 March 2020.

Application Process

37. There will be a closing date of Friday 19 June 2020 (5pm) for businesses to apply for discretionary grant funding.
38. The application for the Business grant is available on our website at www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/businessgrants2020-21. We are only able to accept applications in this format.
39. On receipt of your application you may be requested to provide additional evidence to support the information you have given in your application.
40. This application process will allow Epsom & Ewell Borough Council to undertake pre-payment checks to confirm eligibility and to allow us to determine how to use its discretion in relation to the appropriate level of grant.
41. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will use their discretion in identifying the right person to receive this funding, based on their application process.

Decision making Process

42. Applications will be determined by the Revenues Manager under the delegated authority of Epsom & Ewell Borough Councils's Section 151 Officer.
43. Payments will be made as soon as practicable after the closing date of the 19 June 2020.
44. All applicants will be e-mailed to confirm if their application has been successful or not. If you are due an award you will also be informed when you can expect the grant to be available in your nominated account.
45. All payments of grant will be made by a BACS transfer to the company or business nominated bank account which must be quoted on your application form.

Appeals

46. There is no statutory right of appeal against a decision regarding discretionary business grants.
47. However, the Council recognises that ratepayers should be entitled to have a discretionary decision reviewed if dissatisfied with the outcome. Only the ratepayer or authorised agent may appeal against the decision not to award relief or the level of relief awarded. Appeals must be made within two weeks of the notification of decision.
48. The appeal process for this relief will follow our current appeal procedure for business grants:-

- Appeals must be in writing specifying reasons why a decision should be amended and supported by relevant new or additional evidence.
- An appeal will be deemed to be discontinued if further evidence requested from the ratepayer has not been received within two weeks of the request.
- Appeals against decisions made under delegated authority by Revenues Manager will be considered by Head of Digital and Service Transformation and the Council's Section 151 Officer.

Managing the risk of fraud

49. In making an application businesses confirms that they are eligible for the grant scheme, including that any payments accepted will be in compliance with State aid requirements.
50. Epsom & Ewell Borough 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.
51. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will also investigate if any business applying shall be liable for Business Rates, if not already liable, if applicable. Conditionality of funding will be dependent on the business applying being committed to this.