

Highland Council has announced today that a New Discretionary Grant Scheme has opened with funding from the Scottish Government.

This Grant is aimed at businesses who have suffered a significant reduction in trade (be that goods or services) but can only be claimed by businesses who have not received a grant from other Scottish Government COVID-19 support schemes.

The Discretionary Grant Scheme is geared to:

1. Businesses which were trading on Monday 2nd November.
2. Micro and small businesses who employ fewer than 50 employees
3. The business must be able to demonstrate a significant reduction (at least 50%) in trade.
4. The business is based in the Highland Council area.
5. Helping businesses who have not received a Grant from any other Scottish Government scheme since October 2020

The Discretionary Grant is for a fixed sum of £2,000.

As the Scottish Government has made available a fixed sum of at £1.5m to the Highland Council, applications will be dealt with on a **first come first served basis** until the fund is spent. Hence it is **crucial** that business's get their applications in urgently and **fully** complete the application attaching **all** the relevant supporting documents.

Reduction in Trading

I am pleased to say that we as a BID were influential in getting the Council to accept that as the trading patterns of businesses vary so much, there needed to be flexibility with regards to periods for which businesses could demonstrate a reduction in their trading – as you will see they have now adopted the following:

1. If your trade was affected by the Boxing Day 2020 lockdown then all you need to do is demonstrate the reduction in trade (of at least 50%) from January 2021 in comparison to January 2020 or
2. Alternatively the comparison could be made in the reduction in trading from the 1st of October 2020 to the 31st of January 2021 compared with the same period in 2019/20 or
3. If a business is seasonal in nature the reduction, in a full year trading can be compared with 2019 or
4. There are special rules where a business was set up during 2020 but a 3 month comparison still needs to be provided.

The following link takes you to the relevant part of the Highland Council website for the Discretionary Grant

Scheme: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/962/discretionary_grant_scheme

On that page **do please ensure** that you click on the following links for further information before you apply:

1. [How to apply](#)
2. [Once you have applied](#)
3. [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\)](#)