

West Berkshire Council: New Business Grants scheme - December 2021

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The Government has released initial information on a new £1 billion Business Grants scheme to support businesses that have been impacted by the Omicron variant, the ongoing impact of staff absences due to Covid, and lower consumer demand.

Although the announcement has just been made, local councils are awaiting further information on how the scheme will work, the eligibility criteria, application process and funding allocations from Government. Once these have been provided, we will start the process to distribute these grants as soon as possible and help support those local businesses who are eligible under the scheme.

The scheme guidance so far indicates that those businesses supported will include hospitality (defined as accommodation, food & beverage services) and leisure premises will benefit from targeted grant support. Those eligible businesses with a rateable value under £15,000 will be entitled to £2,700; a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000 will receive £4,000; and those with a rateable value over £51,000 will receive £6,000.

There will also be some additional funding to boost the Additional Restriction Grant (ARG) scheme, which allows us to allocate discretionary funding to businesses most in need. Details and allocations need to be confirmed on this new boost but we are currently running the [ARG Challenge Fund](#) for businesses in West Berkshire to support green growth and recovery.

The Government will also cover the cost of Statutory Sick Pay for Covid-related absences for small and medium-sized employers across the UK.

Councillor Ross Mackinnon, Executive Member for Finance and Economic Development at West Berkshire Council, commented: “This further support for businesses is very welcome at what we know is a difficult time for those businesses operating in hospitality and leisure.

“The Council has worked tirelessly to distribute previous grants as quickly as possible with funds being released rapidly to help support local businesses. As soon as we have final detail and guidance on the scheme we will get started on delivering the grants and assisting businesses across the district.”

More information can be found on the Gov website here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-billion-in-support-for-businesses-most-impacted-by-omicron-across-the-uk>

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