



## **East Devon District Council**

### **Discretionary Restart Grant (ARG3) Scheme**

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Version 1**

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## **Contents**

Q1. What is the purpose of the Discretionary Restart Grant? .....	3
Q2. What are the eligibility criteria? .....	3
Q3. Which businesses are not eligible to apply? .....	3
Q4. How are applicants prioritised? .....	4
Q5. Do applicants have to be in a particular sector to apply? .....	4
Q6. What are the grant bands? .....	4
Q7. How will applicants know which sector they are in?.....	4
Q8. How can businesses prove which sector they operate in/supply?.....	5
Q9. How long does it take to receive the grant once approved? .....	5
Q10. How will an applicant know if they have been successful? .....	5
Q11. Who will be evaluating the applications?.....	5
Q12. What is the definition of 'severely impacted'?.....	6
Q13. I have already received a Restart Grant, can I apply for a Discretionary Restart Grant too? .....	6
Q14. Can a business apply for more than one Discretionary Restart Grant? .....	6
Q15. Can a business with two or more premises in East Devon apply for two or more Discretionary Restart Grants? .....	6
Q16. Can an owner/director of more than one business apply for multiple Discretionary Restart Grants? .....	6
Q17. Does the applicant need to pay business rates to be eligible? .....	7
Q18. Is there scope to provide grants to businesses without commercial premises costs?.....	7
Q19. Can the self-employed/sole traders apply? .....	7
Q20. Can those who work from home or work on a mobile basis apply? .....	7
Q21. Will non-commercial organisations be eligible for this fund? .....	7
Q22. Is there a rateable value limit for businesses receiving this fund?.....	7
Q23. Is there an absolute limit of employees for businesses receiving this fund? .....	7
Q24. Can the Council provide an application form in paper format? .....	7
Q25. What supporting documents will applicants need to provide? .....	8
Q26. Why are applicants being asked to provide so many reference/account numbers? .....	8
Q27. I have not been severely impacted by the national restrictions as such, but my business has been affected by COVID-19 pandemic generally. Can I still apply? .....	8
Q28. What happens if an applicant forgot to upload adequate information and wants to send additional documents post-application? .....	8
Q29. My business cannot provide evidence of a fixed cost from the last three months. What should I do?.....	8
Q30. Businesses based in a residential dwelling may interpret 'fixed business costs' to include their house mortgages etc. Could support be given to these businesses? .....	8
Q31. Will grant payments to a particular applicant be paid out all in one go or in smaller portions over time? .....	9
Q32. Do applicants need to pay back the grant? .....	9
Q33. When will the scheme close? .....	9
Q34. Will there be additional funding available for the remainder of the national restrictions period? .....	9
Q35. How will any remaining funds be allocated?.....	9
Q36. How should applicants fill in the Subsidy Control declaration? .....	9
Q37. What further guidance is available?.....	9

## **Q1. What is the purpose of the Discretionary Restart Grant?**

This grant is aimed at two types of business:

- Businesses which were legally required to close during the national restrictions period from 1 April 2021 onwards, but which do not pay business rates.
- Businesses which were not required to close (rated and non-rated) but which were severely impacted by the national restrictions and have a certain amount of fixed business costs.

## **Q2. What are the eligibility criteria?**

Eligible businesses should have been solvent and engaged in business activity (trading) on the 5 January 2021 and:

- were required to close from the 1 April 2021 onwards and are not registered for business rates;
- can evidence being severely impacted by the national restrictions from 1 April 2021 onwards (not through seasonal fluctuations or other non-pandemic related losses);

## **Q3. Which businesses are not eligible to apply?**

The following businesses will not be eligible for the scheme:

1. Businesses which can obtain a Restart Grant for the period of national restrictions from 1 April 2021 onwards
2. Businesses which have already received grant payments that equal the maximum levels of subsidy permitted
3. Businesses that were in administration, insolvent, where a striking-off notice had been made or were not trading prior to the 5 January 2021
4. Businesses that do not primarily operate and trade within East Devon
5. Business that cannot evidence at least one fixed (non-residential) business cost in 2021
6. Businesses that were not forced to close who cannot evidence a significant drop in turnover as a direct consequence of the national restrictions
7. Any properties or parts of properties used for personal use (for example, riding stables)
8. Buy to let properties
9. Any premises where the Council consider that a Bed and Breakfast business is basically “home sharing” and advertised solely online through “home sharing” websites such as Airbnb
10. Charitable or non-commercial organisations that are not engaged in business/commercial activity
11. Businesses whose primarily trade comprises:
  - a. Show homes
  - b. Car parking
  - c. Storage containers
  - d. Containers
  - e. Storage premises, Yards, land or properties used for storage only
  - f. Advertising or advertising stations or hoardings

- g. Communication stations or telecommunication equipment
- h. Solar panel sites
- i. ATM's, cash machines or equivalent
- j. Schools / Academies / Educational establishments and premises (which are publicly funded)
- k. Lockers; Beach huts or similar structures

**Q4. How are applicants prioritised?**

Grants will be issued to eligible applicants on a first-come-first-serve basis until either the scheme deadline or when our allocation for this scheme has been exhausted, whichever occurs first.

**Q5. Do applicants have to be in a particular sector to apply?**

Businesses which meet the eligibility criteria from any sector can apply for the grant, but businesses that operate within or supply the most affected sectors will receive higher grant amounts.

**Q6. What are the grant bands?**

Grants will be awarded at the fixed levels as displayed in the table below:

<b>Discretionary Restart Grants (ARG3)</b>				
<b>Sector</b>	<b>Affected or Closed Non-Ratepayer</b>	<b>Affected Ratepayer RV £0-£15k</b>	<b>Affected Ratepayer RV £15-£51k</b>	<b>Affected Ratepayer RV £51k+</b>
Non-essential retail	£1,067	£1,867	£2,800	£4,200
Personal care	£1,067	£1,867	£2,800	£4,200
Accommodation	£1,067	£1,867	£2,800	£4,200
Driving & transport	£1,067	£1,867	£2,800	£4,200
Hospitality	£3,200	£5,600	£8,400	£12,600
Leisure & events	£3,200	£5,600	£8,400	£12,600
Gyms & sport	£3,200	£5,600	£8,400	£12,600
Other	£467	£467	£700	£1,050

**Q7. How will applicants know which sector they are in?**

We understand that many businesses may not neatly fit into each of the sectors. It is up to the business to accurately identify which sector they primarily operate in or supply. A few examples are listed below to give applicants an idea of what sector they should select in the application form:

- Non-essential retail: where the primary purpose of products or services provided are not necessary to the health and well-being of the public. For example, clothes shops, homeware stores, book shops, florists and technology stores.
- Personal care: providing a service, treatment or activity for the purposes of personal beauty, hair, grooming, body care and aesthetics, and wellbeing. For example, mobile hairdressers and beauticians.

- Accommodation: a business whose main lodging provision is used for holiday or travel purposes. For example, non-rated B&Bs and campsites.
- Driving & transport: providing a service for the purpose of transporting or teaching people to drive. For example, taxi drivers and driving instructors.
- Hospitality: a business whose main function is to provide a venue for the consumption and sale of food and drink. For example, mobile food stalls/vans and food & drink suppliers.
- Leisure & events: providing opportunity for culture, recreation, entertainment, celebratory events, days and nights out, betting and gaming. For example, tourist attractions, event organisers and wedding photographers.
- Gyms & sport: a business providing for physical exercise or training or where athletic and physical activities are participated in competitively or recreationally on an individual or group basis. For example, non-rated gyms, instructors and sports clubs.

If your business does not clearly belong to any of these categories, simply select 'Other' when applying.

#### **Q8. How can businesses prove which sector they operate in/supply?**

Businesses can evidence the sector they operate in or supply to by providing:

- A copy or screenshot of a current/active licence or insurance document which is specific to your type of business
- A copy or screenshot of a tax return clearly showing the 'Description of business' section
- A screenshot of a Companies House page clearly showing the 'Nature of business (SIC)' section
- A copy of an invoice or proof of sale clearly showing goods exchanged or services provided

#### **Q9. How long does it take to receive the grant once approved?**

Assessment of the grant applications will take some time, depending on the number received and the required information being provided. Once assessed and approved, grants will be dispersed within three working days of the grant application being approved. If you submit an ARG3 application and receive an FS-case number reference, you have successfully submitted your application and do not need to contact us - a decision will be made as soon as possible and if anything is missing from your application we will contact you.

#### **Q10. How will an applicant know if they have been successful?**

The applicant will be notified by email as to whether they;

- 1) have been successful and when they can expect to receive payment;
- 2) whether their application requires additional information; or
- 3) if their application fails to meet the required eligibility or ARG Policy criteria.

#### **Q11. Who will be evaluating the applications?**

The Economic Development team will be leading on ARG3 application processing with support from Business Rates and Customer Service teams.

**Q12. What is the definition of ‘severely impacted’?**

‘Severely impacted’ is defined as a clear and obvious drop in business income and/or trade as a result of the national restrictions (from 1 April 2021 onwards) compared to a comparable period prior to those restrictions or a more representative period of trading (for example the same 6 week period last year). A business can evidence this by providing bank statements or uploading a document proving that they supply or are supplied by a business which was forced to close. We welcome other types of evidence, although for the avoidance of doubt the applicant will need to explain how the document shows the business was severely impacted where this is not initially or obviously clear.

**Q13. I have already received a Restart Grant, can I apply for a Discretionary Restart Grant too?**

No. You cannot receive both a Restart Grant and Discretionary Restart Grant. Please see our [Business Grants Portal](#) for an explanation of what grants cover which periods along with key eligibility criteria. This webpage will continue to be updated with any new funding opportunities when they become available.

**Q14. Can a business apply for more than one Discretionary Restart Grant?**

No. A business is only eligible for one Discretionary Restart Grant (excluding ‘special cases’). Businesses who received an ARG2 award covering the January-March 2021 period of national restrictions will be invited by email to apply for a Discretionary Restart Grant (ARG3) award.

**Q15. Can a business with two or more premises in East Devon apply for two or more Discretionary Restart Grants?**

No. A business is only eligible for one Discretionary Restart Grant, regardless of the number of premises. We do invite applicants to report their combined rateable value for all premises with an RV above £15,000 that they are the registered rate payer for when completing the ARG3 application form.

**Q16. Can an owner/director of more than one business apply for multiple Discretionary Restart Grants?**

If an applicant is a director/shareholder of more than one business registered/trading at a particular address, only one of those businesses can receive a Discretionary Restart Grant. The applicant will be ineligible for a Discretionary Restart Grant if another one of their businesses has received a Restart Grant for the same space (or a proportion of that space) that the business applying for an ARG3 occupies.

**Q17. Does the applicant need to pay business rates to be eligible?**

No. One of the main purposes of this scheme is to include those businesses who do not have their own business rates assessment and therefore were not eligible for the Restart Grant scheme. Businesses forced to close who do have a business rates assessment should check to see if they are eligible for the Restart Grant scheme before applying for this scheme. Businesses that have been severely impacted can apply regardless of whether they are rated or not.

**Q18. Is there scope to provide grants to businesses without commercial premises costs?**

Yes. All types of businesses can apply as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. ARG3 applicants whose businesses have not been required to close and can demonstrate 'significant impact' must also evidence at least one specific fixed business costs outside of their residential property and staffing costs that the grant would help mitigate.

**Q19. Can the self-employed/sole traders apply?**

Yes. All types of businesses can apply for as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

**Q20. Can those who work from home or work on a mobile basis apply?**

Yes. All types of businesses can apply for as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. Where fixed business costs are reported, these cannot include residential property costs (rent, mortgage, utilities), but can include business insurance, equipment hire and licensing costs for example.

**Q21. Will non-commercial organisations be eligible for this fund?**

No. Only organisations that engage in business/commercial activity that meet the eligibility criteria can apply. Exceptions are allowed for 'special cases' where grant awards are linked to local economic needs.

**Q22. Is there a rateable value limit for businesses receiving this fund?**

No. All types of businesses can apply for as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

**Q23. Is there an absolute limit of employees for businesses receiving this fund?**

No. All types of businesses can apply for as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

**Q24. Can the Council provide an application form in paper format?**

No. The application form can only be filled in online.

**Q25. What supporting documents will applicants need to provide?**

Applicants will need to upload various documents for us to verify eligibility. A checklist has been uploaded onto our [webpage](#) outlining everything an applicant will need to supply. Failure to provide correct and honest information could result in any grant awarded being withdrawn and legal action being taken.

**Q26. Why are applicants being asked to provide so many reference/account numbers?**

We encourage businesses to provide as many details as they can, as this will help us to quickly resolve any anti-fraud checks at a later stage. Applicants will need to provide at least one of these reference/account numbers.

**Q27. I have not been severely impacted by the national restrictions as such, but my business has been affected by COVID-19 pandemic generally. Can I still apply?**

No. Those that cannot show that they have been severely impacted during this period (or have not been forced to close) are not eligible for this scheme.

**Q28. What happens if an applicant forgot to upload adequate information and wants to send additional documents post-application?**

Each application will be assessed based on the information included in the original submission. Where it is clear the business is eligible for support but that a required piece of information or evidence has been omitted from the application, the applicant will be emailed, informed about what specific information is required and asked to submit that information via email. Failure to provide this information within 7 days of that email being sent will result in the application being rejected. Similarly, failure to provide correct and honest information could result in any grant awarded being rescinded and legal action being taken.

**Q29. My business cannot provide evidence of a fixed cost from the last three months. What should I do?**

If your business has no fixed business costs which can be evidenced, your business is not eligible for a Discretionary Restart Grant.

**Q30. Businesses based in a residential dwelling may interpret 'fixed business costs' to include their house mortgages etc. Could support be given to these businesses?**

Although these types of businesses can apply (assuming they meet the eligibility criteria), the application form only allows applicants to input fixed business related costs. Examples of eligible fixed costs include equipment hire, fixed marketing costs, utility bills for a commercial property, insurance costs or leases/mortgages for non-commercial residential properties. B&Bs and guesthouses can include these costs, as the property is used primarily for a commercial purpose.

**Q31. Will grant payments to a particular applicant be paid out all in one go or in smaller portions over time?**

A grant to an applicant will be paid out all in one go.

**Q32. Do applicants need to pay back the grant?**

No, only in cases where a grant was paid in error or claimed on the basis of false evidence or misinformation can the local authority reclaim the funds.

**Q33. When will the scheme close?**

The scheme will remain open to new applications until either 11 June 2021 at 4pm or when our allocation for this scheme has been exhausted, whichever occurs first. We may either extend the application window for applications or close the scheme earlier than stated, depending on the volume of eligible applications received and remaining funds. Applicants required to submit additional evidence have until 18 June 2021 at 4pm to do so. Final payments will be made by 25 June 2021 at 4pm at the very latest.

**Q34. Will there be additional funding available for the remainder of the national restrictions period?**

The Council may decide to award additional ARG3 funds to successful ARG3 recipients if there is a significant financial remainder left over for this scheme after 25 June 2021.

**Q35. How will any remaining funds be allocated?**

Remaining funds will be used to pay for post-national restrictions business support projects to the direct benefit of East Devon businesses (the Adaptation, Innovation and Resilience (AIR) Fund), in accordance with Government guidance and as approved by EDDC Cabinet.

**Q36. How should applicants fill in the Subsidy Control declaration?**

The Subsidy Control declaration includes three different ‘allowances’. If a business has received less than £335,000 in Government support, then they must tick all three boxes to confirm that they are not exceeding any allowance. If a business has exceeded one of the three allowances, they must tick the allowances they have not exceeded and leave unticked the allowances they have exceeded.

**Q37. What further guidance is available?**

Whilst [Government guidance](#) for local authorities sets out some mandatory eligibility criteria, it also provides scope to target the grants in accordance with local economic circumstances and priorities.

Please refer to the ARG3 policy document available on the [ARG3 webpage](#) for the full eligibility criteria in East Devon local authority area.