

# Wigan Council Business Start Up Grants - Guidelines

## Background

Wigan Council recognises the importance of new businesses in the borough to increase the levels of enterprise and local employment. Through the use of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) and North West Coalfield Communities Regeneration Programme (NWCCRP), the council is determined to develop and support new businesses in Wigan in the most practical ways possible.

The effects of the recession upon businesses has been well documented, however, uncertain economic conditions can often prove to be a catalyst in developing businesses ideas. Despite this, access to start up finance is increasingly difficult to obtain and remains a barrier in establishing a business.

## Eligibility Criteria

All applicants must be eligible to be considered for a grant. The eligibility requirements are designed to be as broad as possible in order for this program to accommodate the most diverse variety of business start up financing needs. All applicants that are considered for financing under the Business Start Up Grants Programme must:

- Live within the borough;
- Planning to establish a business in the borough;
- Participate in the Intensive Start Up Support programme delivered in Wigan by Blue Orchid;
- Hold a business bank account;
- The requested amount should be not be more than £1,000;
- The Grant should be viewed as working capital with such eligible spend including
  - Salaries (need to be able to evidence e.g. PAYE, bank statement)
  - Rent
  - Stock (including raw materials and/or finished goods stock)
  - Marketing and advertising
  - Tools for the job
  - Franchise costs
  - Equipment such as computers/fax/photo copier etc
  - Training Costs
- An additional £1,000 will be made available to those applicants residing in NWCCRP wards. Eligible wards are as follows:

**Abram, Ashton, Astley Mosley Common, Atherleigh, Bryn, Golborne & Lowton West, Hindley, Leigh East, Leigh West and Tyldesley.**

- This grant may not be used to supplement the cost of any capital asset in excess of £1,000.
- This grant may not fund a statutory or legal requirement or fund anything that could bring Wigan Council into disrepute.\*

\*Statutory and legal requirements include the approval, lease or permit needed to engage in certain activity under its ruling legislation. Such examples include taxi licences, legal fees and contracts.

### **The Application Process**

Applications may be submitted at any time during the first year of operation. Grants will be available for £1,000 or £2,000 depending on eligibility criteria.

### **What happens to my application?**

- All grant applications will be assessed and approved by officers from Wigan Metropolitan Development Company Ltd.
- Applicants are informed of the decision in writing and depending on the outcome the next stage is as follows:

**Approved** – a grant agreement is prepared, stating the conditions under which the grant is awarded, and sent to the applicant to be signed, dated and returned.

**Refused** – the reasons for refusing the application will be explained, the applicant will be able to resubmit addressing initial issues for refusal.

**Deferred** – further information will be requested from the applicant. The application will then be reassessed by officers.

- Once a signed grant agreement has been received, payment by cheque will be made into the applicant's business bank account.
- In order to comply with state aid requirements applicants must sign a statement declaring they are eligible to receive support under the De-Minimus agreement (the business concerned has not received cumulative aid totalling over €200,000 within the last 3 years).
- Wigan Council reserves the right to audit the financial transactions related to the grant. Therefore you are required to keep original evidence of financial transactions to prove on request that the grant was used as stated in your application form.
- Original copies must be submitted to Wigan Metropolitan Development Company Ltd within 3 months of the grant receipt. Failure to provide the evidence within this timescale will result in Wigan Metropolitan Development Company Ltd requesting the grant to be repaid. Wigan

Council reserves the right to pursue all appropriate and proportionate measures to recover the grant. Original documentation will be returned to the applicant upon request.

- Franchises are only eligible when the franchise sets up a business and buys the 'kit' (signs, machinery, branding etc.) and then runs as their own business.

#### **Disclosure of information**

- Any documents provided shall not be disclosed, disposed or used for any purpose other than those described above without written consent from the affected organisation

**If you require any advice or assistance in completing the form, please contact the Wigan Development Company on**

Telephone: 01942 705655

Email: [a.finance@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:a.finance@wigan.gov.uk)

Otherwise please return your completed application form to:

Access to Finance Small Grants Scheme  
Wigan Metropolitan Development Company Limited  
Wigan Investment Centre  
Waterside Drive  
Wigan  
WN3 5BA