

Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) - Grant Scheme Guidance

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Grant Overview

The scheme, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund aims to support start ups and existing SMEs within Portsmouth. The scheme is available to support start ups begin their business journey and for existing SMEs to support their growth.

Grant support is available at a 20% - 50% match, with a minimum grant awarded at £1,500 and maximum amount of £4,000. Businesses can only claim between 20% - 50% of the costs. This scheme cannot fund any more or less than 20% - 50%.

If you have an idea that you would like to develop or discuss with us before applying or if you would like to discuss any element of this fund beforehand, then please get in touch at business@portsmouthcc.gov.uk,

Businesses must complete an application form by the deadline. We reserve the right to close the scheme if all funds have been allocated.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to apply and receive this match-funding through the Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) every applicant must:

- Qualify as a micro or small business.
- Be located in Portsmouth within post code areas PO1 to PO6
- Not be in administration, be insolvent or where a striking-off notice has been made.
- Have a UK bank account.
- Must be able to provide a sound business plan.
- Clearly explain how, with the help of this fund, your business will deliver direct economic benefit within Portsmouth.
- Confirm that applicant has their remaining % towards to the project.

Clearly identify the costs the funding will be used to support from the following areas:

- costs that are incurred in enabling the business to pivot to new delivery models; or
- routes to new markets, such as taking the business online; or
- the introduction of a new product/service for your business; or
- if starting up; the installation of equipment and items to get your business ready for delivery.

Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) - Grant Scheme Guidance

Exclusions

Businesses will not be eligible to apply for support from this fund if:

- a) The business has already received support through the Portsmouth Match Fund (Rounds 1,2,3 and 4).
- b) The business has already received support from Portsmouth City Council for a project which is still live (i.e. has funds already drawn down, or contracted outputs yet to be delivered or have yet to be complete and submit a satisfactory evaluation form).
- c) The spending has already taken place.
- d) The applicant is a charity and not a business.

This match-funding scheme cannot be used to fund:

- a) More than 10% of the capital costs of the total value of the project for the purchase of land, building/refurbishment or building projects.
- b) Existing operational costs of the business such as:
 - Replenishment of stock
 - Replenishment of ingredients
 - Rent
 - Insurance
 - Subscriptions
- c) Costs which is purely research
- d) Costs for ongoing staff - including salaries of permanent or fixed term staff.
- e) Costs incurred in putting the application together.
- f) Political or religious activities.
- g) Repairs and maintenance to building or equipment.
- h) VAT that can be recovered by the business.
- i) Loans or interest payments
- j) Purchase of alcohol or illegal substance.

Timescales

Businesses must complete an application form by the deadline. Applications will not be accepted after this time.

The funding is limited and when it has been fully allocated there will be no additional grants paid.

The Application / Assessment / Payment Process

- 1) Business completes online application with FULL supporting documentation. Incomplete applications will be rejected.
- 2) PCC will review application alongside a scoring system based off the information submitted and if the application meets the eligibility criteria.
- 3) Successful applications that are completed and have from validated completed application with all required supporting evidence, will be contacted by PCC to begin the next stage of the process.
- 4) If no further information/documents are required, the applicant and PCC will enter into a grant agreement.

Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) - Grant Scheme Guidance

- 5) Applicant submits invoice(s) for project - payment will only be made upon receipt of a valid invoice(s) addressed to the business and detailing services/goods provided.
- 6) Invoice(s) should be submitted as soon as possible and in any event by 20th March 2026 at the latest.
- 7) Grant payment will be issued via BACs direct to the applying businesses bank account.

Application Process

Guidance - Visit the PCC website and read the scheme guidance document in full.

Application form - Complete the online application with FULL supporting documentation. Incomplete applications will be rejected. Ensure this application is submitted before the **deadline**.

Assessment - Your application will be scored by PCC assessors ensuring that the applicant has provided the required documents and explained fully their reason for applying.

Due diligence - If your application has been deemed as both eligible and suitable for funding, you will then be asked by PCC to provide further information/documents if needed.

Funding award - If no further information/documents are required, you will enter a grant agreement with PCC.

Signing the agreement - Sign the grant agreement and return to PCC. Then proceed with the purchase of agreed item(s).

Claim your grant - Once you have purchased the agreed item(s) complete a claim form and return to PCC with proof of purchase. Invoice(s) should be submitted as soon as possible.

Grant paid to applicant - Grant payment will be issued via BACs direct to the applying businesses bank account.

Once received, validated applications will be assessed based on the criteria set out above.

You **must** attach evidence to substantiate the information in your application form. Failing to do so will either weaken your application and/or reduce the chance of receiving a grant or mean your application is ineligible.

As part of the assessment, you may be asked for additional information to support your application. This scheme is funded directly by government and therefore there is a requirement for proper and proportionate checks to be undertaken in the assessment of all applications.

If you are required to provide additional information, then we will request this by email using the information provided in your application and require a response within five

Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) - Grant Scheme Guidance

working days in order for your application to be assessed. Please ensure you regularly check your emails including items that may have been sent to your spam / junk inbox.

All eligible applications will be assessed and scored. This scoring system will enable PCC to determine what business will receive match funding.

The decision of the assessors is final.

There is no provision to appeal. If your application fund meets the criteria and is awarded funding, you will be contacted to confirm the amount.

Release of grants

All payments will be made via BACS as soon as is possible, but it is expected that the volume of applications will be very high, and it will take some time to carry out all of the assessments.

The business must provide bank details for payment, including a bank statement.

Supporting documentation

In order for your application to be assessed you will be required to provide the following supporting documents when submitting an application form.

- Copy of the businesses latest filed financial statements or self-assessment tax return showing entries for the business where applicable.
- Management accounts / Summary of monthly income and expenditure for the period from the last filed financial statements / self-assessment up to date of application.
- Latest business bank statement to verify account details.

Grant payment

Both existing and previous UK law places restrictions on when a public body can provide financial aid to commercial entities. This grant is being made under a number of schemes that have been established by Government to support local businesses.

Financial aid provided by a public body is any "advantage" granted by a public body through state resources. The meaning of "aid" is broad because an advantage can take many forms. Financial aid can constitute the following:

- grants, including Business Support Grants.
- loans
- tax breaks, including enhanced capital allowances
- the use or sale of a state asset for free or at less than market price

Financial aid is permitted where it is beneficial to the economy and supports growth and other Government policy objectives and it can be given to support a wide variety of activities including research and development, environmental protection, and aid for small to medium sized businesses. The rules permit

Portsmouth Match Fund (Round 5) - Grant Scheme Guidance

financial aid where it is necessary to deliver growth and other important objectives.

The award of any financial sum must comply with any subsidy control legislation and Government guidance, and to the extent it still applies any pre-existing State Aid legislation.

Subsidy Control Rules

The award of any grants by Portsmouth City Council to the recipients under a match-funding scheme is likely to involve the provisions of a subsidy for the purposes of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the "Act") and therefore must comply with the subsidy control rules set out in this Act and related legislation. It is the intention that Portsmouth City Council and the recipients under these match-funding scheme are to rely on the exemption for minimum financial assistance set out in the Act, which means the subsidy control rules will not apply to this match-funding, provided the value of the grant sits below the threshold (£315,000 over a period of three years) and certain procedural requirements are met.

Due to the value of the grants being awarded by Portsmouth City Council sitting below the threshold stated above, these grants will only be awarded where it satisfies the minimal financial assistance exemption. Portsmouth City Council would not be considering subsidies where minimal financial assistance does not apply.

Post Award Monitoring

This scheme is funded directly by government and a requirement of the funding is to collect information from businesses receiving these grant payments, and we will be expected to account for how the funding has been spent.

Grant recipients should also be advised that they may be contacted for research purposes, and that their data will be shared with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for research and evaluation purposes.

Tax

Grant income received by a business is taxable therefore funding paid under the (scheme name) will be subject to tax. Only businesses which make an overall profit once grant income is included will be subject to tax.