

Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 6 12 February 2021

Launch of Discretionary Business Grant Scheme

This week the Council launched its discretionary business grant scheme. This is a one off £2,000 grant to any business who have been unable to secure alternative grant support and seen a significant reduction in trade. It is to help micro, small or medium sized businesses and open to all business types including Limited Companies, Sole Traders, Trusts and Partnerships.

Applications will be considered on a first come first served basis

The scheme is open until 3 March 2021

Core Criteria for businesses applying:

- The business must not have secured a grant from any of the grant schemes in operation (or proposed) since October 2020.
- By exception, if income (claimed/awarded for period 1 November 2020 to 29 January 2021) from the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme is less than the value of the Discretionary Grant Scheme (£2,000) – a top-up grant will be provided to make up the difference.
- The business was trading on Monday 2 November 2020 (i.e. business is not in administration, insolvency or received notice to be struck off Companies House).
- The business must be able to demonstrate a significant reduction in trade (50% or more) due to COVID-19 restrictions.
- The business is a Small or Micro business and employs 50 employees or fewer.
- The business is based within the Highland Council area.

Further details are available at: www.highland.gov.uk/discretionarygrantscheme

Details on how to apply can be found at:

www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/962/discretionary_grant_scheme/2

Over the coming weeks the Scottish Government will be making available a range of other grants to businesses, including Newly Self Employed, Mobile Close Contact, Large Self-catering and B&B's. As information becomes available from the Scottish Government, the Council will provide guidance and detail on its website as to who is eligible and how to apply for grant.

Maximising Incomes - Scottish Child Payment & Best Start Grant

Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Child Payment is now open for applications. Scottish Child Payment is a new payment for families on tax credits or certain benefits to help towards the costs of looking after a child. It's £40 paid every four weeks for each child under six.

The payment starts on Monday 15 February 2021, with first payments made from the end of February onwards, but Social Security Scotland have been taking applications early to help manage demand.

Anyone can apply if their child, or a child they are responsible for, will be under six on 15 February 2021.

The qualifying benefits are:

- Child Tax Credit
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Social

Scottish Child Payment will not be taken into account for UK benefit and tax credit assessments and there is no cap on the amount of children this payment can support.

Payments will be made every four weeks following the first payment.

Find out more information and apply at: mygov.scot/scottish-child-payment or call Social Security Scotland on 0800 182 2222.

Best Start Grant School Age Payment

People with children who were born between 1 March 2015 and 29 February 2016 could be eligible for a Best Start Grant School Age Payment but they must apply before **28 February this year**.

Further information and how to apply can be found at: <https://mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods/>

Voting at the Scottish Parliament Election

There was an update this week from the Electoral Registration Officer for the Highlands and Islands, reminding people that there are a number of ways that people can have their say in the election in May - voting in a polling station, by post, or by appointing someone you trust to vote on your behalf, which is known as a proxy vote.

Planning is in place to ensure that if people choose to cast their vote at a polling station they can do so safely. A range of measures will be adopted including those familiar in shops and restaurants e.g. hand sanitising, face coverings and floor markings.

People also have the option of voting by post and it is being encouraged that if people wish to do this, they can do this now.

To vote people need to be registered and this can be done online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

For more information, including how to apply for a postal vote, please go to: [How to vote – Highland & Western Isles \(saa.gov.uk\)](http://saa.gov.uk)

Any queries can be directed to the electoral registration team on 0800 393 783 or by emailing ero@highland.gov.uk

Vaccination Update

The latest update from NHS on the vaccine can be accessed at the following link: www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine

A stakeholder briefing from NHS Highland is also attached to this briefing

Food Support for Groups

We know that a number of you continue to provide support to the most vulnerable in your communities and that most of you already have well defined routes for accessing food to provide this support or are supporting individuals to access their shopping or community fridges/food tables.

If you are struggling to access food to continue support to vulnerable people locally, please do contact us through the policy mailbox and we can look at ways that we can support your group going forward.

Contact: policy6@highland.gov.uk

Resilience Network Contacts

The first meetings of all of the new resilience networks have now taken place. The next meetings are in the process of being scheduled depending upon what was agreed at the initial meeting and dates will be circulated to all within an area.

Where networks are already in place, should any group not already be involved with this network, the contact details for each is below.

- Caithness – If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Alan Tait at Caithness Voluntary Groups allan@cvq.org.uk
- Sutherland – If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Karina Ross at Highland and Islands Enterprise karina.ross@hient.co.uk
- East Ross – Helen Ross, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk
- Black Isle - If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Asia Cielecka at communities@black-isle.info
- Wester Ross and Dingwall – Dot Ferguson, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk
- Skye and Raasay - If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Fiona Thomson at Skye Community Response Development Team fiona@portreeandbraes.org
- Lochaber – Emma Tayler, Assistant Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk
- B&S – If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Karen Derrick enquires@vabs.org.uk
- Inverness City – David Haas, City Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk
- Inverness Rural – Charles Stephen, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk
- Nairn – Willie Munro, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network For future involvement in this network please contact policy6@highland.gov.uk

Helpful Links

Welfare Support Team -

www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/102970/benefit_advice

Self Isolation Support Grant - www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/940/self-isolation_support_grant

Fuel Support Fund

www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund

Energy Advice

energyadvisors@hi.homeenergyscotland.org

AbilityNet - IT advice or support AbilityNet

Helpline 0800 048 7642.

Business Support Grants -

www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/945/strategic_framework_business_fund

Covid Resilience Grant Support -

www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1422811/supporting_community_resilience/category/155/grants_for_community_groups

HTSI Community Group Helpline

Telephone Number 01349 808022

Winter Conditioning reports -

www.highland.gov.uk/news