

NORTH NORFOLK HOSPITALITY UPLIFT GRANT SCHEME (HUGS)

Frequently Asked Questions

The North Norfolk Hospitality Uplift Grant Scheme is administered by Norfolk County Council (NCC) on behalf of North Norfolk District Council (NNDC).

Funding for this scheme is provided by North Norfolk District Council.

The grant fund is designed to offer targeted assistance that helps businesses innovate, expand their services, or invest in activities that attract new customers, rather than covering everyday operational expenses or supporting struggling companies. Funding may be used for capital expenditures if they contribute to diversification and lasting resilience, such as purchasing equipment for a new product or experience—like a doughnut machine—rather than simply replacing similar kitchen equipment. Examples of eligible projects could include things such as buying a PA system and staging for live events or investing in infrastructure like extensions or temporary car-park matting for festivals and events. Every project must have the appropriate permissions, include a business match contribution, and clearly show a legacy that goes beyond the grant period. Applicants must have been trading for at least two years. Grants range from £5,000 to £50,000, are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, and are subject to the funder's discretion. Both the applicant business and the project must be located within the North Norfolk District Council area.

- Are you delivering a food and drink service, i.e. a restaurant, café, pub/bar?
- Are you a tourism/leisure operator, such as a visitor attraction or experience venue?
- Do you plan to invest in new equipment or premises for new or improved services? Will grant funding help you enter new markets, enhance your core service, support tourism and create lasting impact?

Funding Available

Eligible businesses can come forward to apply for grants between £5,000 and up to £50,000.

The maximum grant intervention through the programme will be for 50% of eligible capital costs, up to a maximum grant value of £50,000. The maximum award of £50,000 will only be considered for exceptional projects, as determined by the grant panel.

Exclusions – accommodation providers, religious establishments, gambling and education providers (schools, colleges). This list not exhaustive and eligibility is at the funder's discretion (see list below).

Applicants must be a micro, small or medium sized business operating within North Norfolk boundary.

What type of projects could be eligible for grant support?

Projects are required to clearly articulate how the grant will contribute to the financial sustainability of the business, foster growth, and/or expand the range of offerings.

For example:

- Investment in a capital item or items that allow the hospitality business to expand their offer. The offer needs to be new or a diversification within their core business.
- Projects should be able to demonstrate a legacy beyond the lifetime of the grant and be able to illustrate how the project outcomes can be measured.
- Projects demonstrating genuine connections to environmental goals, and capital items contributing to lower carbon emissions will receive favourable consideration.
- Projects which seek to expand or enhance business premises, allowing a new commercial offer for tourists and visitors.

Time Restrictions

At the point of application your project must be ready to proceed and have all the necessary permissions in place. This may include planning permission and/or applicable licenses (or evidence that this is not required). All projects must be fully completed by 31/12/2027.

Prior to submitting your application, you must check with your proposed suppliers/installers/contractors that projects can be delivered within the timeframe outlined within your application. All grants must be paid out, on or before 31/03/2028, following receipt of a fully completed claim form. Works undertaken after this date will not, under any circumstances, receive grant funding.

The following are examples of what we cannot fund:

- Any costs incurred before the date a grant offer is made and accepted.
- Any revenue costs such as core routine overheads, staff costs or stock purchases.
- Items or services that are not directly needed to deliver the proposed work.
- The replacement or maintenance of infrastructure, items and consumables.
- VAT, unless this cannot be recovered.
- Business or organisational vehicles.
- Assets to be used for hire or reward.
- Investments to meet legal or statutory obligations/requirements.
- Stand-alone projects for solar panels, insulation of premises, EV chargers, LED lighting, battery energy storage systems, heating systems or other purely energy efficiency initiatives.
- Those that benefit a private individual such as enhancement of personal premises or assets or vehicles which may also be used privately.
- Project costs receiving duplicate funding through other grant schemes.
- Capital purchases which will not have a usable minimum life of 36 months.

We will not be able to provide grant support for the following non-exhaustive list of sectors:

- Banking and finance.
- Publicly funded bodies and statutory services, healthcare, schools, nurseries, childcare facilities, and care homes.
- Religious or political organisations.
- Energy generation and distribution.
- Coal, steel, and shipbuilding.
- Primary agriculture. Grants will not be awarded to fund farming equipment or infrastructure, or to diversify within agriculture. Applicants looking for funding for this type of activity must use existing Defra grant schemes.
- Accommodation providers.
- Gambling establishments.

Planning permission and other dependencies

It is anticipated that some projects will require planning permission, change of business use, landlord's permission etc. We are unable to accept grant applications where permissions are not yet in place or are unknown.

You will need to provide documentary evidence that all permissions are in place when you submit your application, and you should contact your local planning office (NNDC) at the earliest opportunity. Where there is uncertainty, you may be required to provide evidence to prove such permissions are not specifically required.

Paying for your project

If your project is approved you must not proceed with ordering, paying deposits, or any payment until you have formally accepted the Offer.

You will need to pay your suppliers and contractors directly from your business bank account.

This means that cash, credit card, asset finance or hire purchase are not acceptable methods of paying for your project through this scheme.

If you propose to use other grant funding to pay for all or part of your project, please discuss your plans in detail with the Growth Hub to outline how this will be composed and the terms of other grant offers.

Procurement

All projects will need to demonstrate value for money and there will be a requirement to provide at least three quotes for each category of expenditure.

You will receive advice and support as required during the application process.

Advice and guidance

As part of the process, an initial in-depth diagnostic exercise will be undertaken by a Growth Hub Business Adviser to determine the eligibility of your business and identify what type of support you require.

To be eligible for grant funding, applicants must meet the following essential criteria:

Be a trading enterprise. An enterprise is any entity (that is, any person, or group of persons under common control) that is engaged in an economic activity, which means offering goods and services within a market.

The conditions (see the table below) relate to turnover, balance sheet total and number of employees. An enterprise must satisfy two or more of the relevant conditions to qualify.

Qualifying criteria	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium-sized enterprises
Turnover	Not more than £632k	Not more than £10.2 million	Not more than £36 million
Balance Sheet Total*	Not more than £316k	Not more than £5.1 million	Not more than £18 million
Number of Employees**	Not more than 10	Not more than 50	Not more than 250

Must not be a company that is ailing, or insolvent, and financial checks will be made.

Subsidy Control

Grant support will be delivered within the terms set out under the UK subsidy regime known as Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA).

The maximum support through MFA is £315,000 and this is a cumulative total of all support received over the current, and the last two complete financial years through MFA, EU de minimis and Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance.

If you are offered support through MFA, you will need to make a declaration that you have not already exceeded the £315,000, and/or with approval of the requested support, you will not exceed the £315,000 threshold.

Please note, grants are awarded on a discretionary basis and are subject to eligibility checks and approval.

How do I apply for funding?

Businesses wishing to apply for the grant should first contact the Growth Hub via the contact form found here:

[Contact Us - New Anglia Growth Hub](#)

A Business Growth Adviser will work with you to develop your application.

Please note, the services of the Growth Hub are free and impartial.

How are grant applications assessed?

Once you submit your complete application, we will start processing it. We will undertake a detailed assessment of your proposal based on the Application Form and the supporting information (including evidence of value for money) that you provide. You may also be asked to provide additional information during this process in order to support your application.

Once assessment of your grant application has been completed, the document along with a relevant report will be submitted to the Grant Panel who will take a final decision on your proposed project. Once your application has been sent to the panel it can take up to 28 days from that date before a final decision is reached.

The grant decision will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity. Please be aware, full compliance with the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that your application will be successful, as grants are discretionary, and there is no right of appeal against the grant decision. If your grant application is declined, an explanation will be provided.

How do I claim the grant?

If your grant is approved, Norfolk County Council (NCC), will send you a **formal Offer Letter** that will include information about your grant and eligible project costs, with any conditions of the offer and information on how to claim the grant. A signed acceptance of the Offer needs to be returned to NCC before you can make your claim.

You must not commence your project, or enter any legal contracts, including ordering, payment of deposits or incurring any costs on any supplies, services or works before the formal approval of your grant funding and you have signed and dated the Offer Letter Acceptance.

If approved, the grant can only be paid on satisfactory completion of the claim process and only once all supported expenditure has taken place and the project has been completed in full. **This means that you do not receive the grant up front as it is paid in arrears once your project is fully complete and paid for by you.**

It is important to note that **costs incurred before the date of the Offer Letter cannot be supported.**

Any project expenditure undertaken before the acceptance of the offer is signed and dated by you is at your own risk and will not be eligible for the grant.

To claim your grant, you will need to **submit a Claim Form and provide supporting documentary** evidence.

Can I re-apply for more than one grant under this scheme?

If you have already been successful with the North Norfolk Rural Business and Communities Grant, priority will be given to new applicants; however, we may be able to support a new project via this scheme so please stay in touch with your Adviser or contact the Growth Hub directly. If you cannot re-apply, we might refer you to an alternative programme or another business support organisation that may be able to assist.