

Localised Restrictions Support Scheme Guidance

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ABOUT THE LOCALISED RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT SCHEME

The Localised Restrictions Support Scheme provides financial support to businesses which have been required to close or have had business activities at their premises directly curtailed by Health Protection restrictions that have been put in place by the NI Executive.

The Scheme is only open to businesses which have been required to close or have had business activities at their premises directly curtailed by the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The Scheme will apply to businesses, subject to eligibility criteria, including:

- Cafes, pubs and restaurants that have been temporarily forced to close or limit their business to takeaway, delivery or outdoor service;
- Hotels, guesthouses and registered Bed & Breakfasts that have been temporarily forced to limit the provision of services for residents only;
- Close contact services (as detailed in the Health Protection Regulations <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2020/224/contents/made>) operating in commercial premises such as hairdressers and barbers, beauty salons, day spas, nail bars and tattoo parlours who have been forced to close; and
- Other businesses which, under the Health Protection Regulations are required to cease to carry on that business or to provide that service, including campsites and caravans parks for touring caravans, cinemas, museums, galleries, bingo halls, funfairs, indoor amusement arcades, indoor visitor attractions, trampoline parks, inflatable parks, escape rooms, bowling alleys and ice rinks.

If you consider that your business is eligible for support from the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme in line with the legislation, you must apply online only. Support payments are only issued after an online application for the relevant business premises has been submitted and is found to be eligible for the support payment according to the scheme's criteria.

The scheme is designed to support the occupying business in a property, not the landlord or managing agent. Applications must only be submitted by an authorised representative for the business which occupies the premises, such as the business owner, director or a senior manager. Landlords **must not** complete this application form on behalf of tenant businesses who rent their premises.

If you operate from more than one eligible premises, you may apply for support in respect of each one. You must complete a separate online application for each separate premises that you consider may be eligible for support.

ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible for the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme?

Businesses must meet 3 eligibility criteria:

- The business must operate from a property within Northern Ireland
- The business must fall into **at least one** of the following categories:
 - It has been registered with, or is in the process of registering with, their Council Environmental Health department as a business operating in one of the following categories: Cafe, Restaurant, Hotel, Guesthouse, registered Bed & Breakfast and Pub.
 - It operates in commercial premises as a close contact service (as detailed in the Health Protection Regulations) such as hairdressers and barbers, beauty salons, day spas, nail bars and tattoo parlours.
 - It operates as a campsite or caravan park for touring caravans, cinema, a museum, a gallery, a bingo hall, a funfair, an indoor amusement arcade, an indoor visitor attraction, a trampoline park, an inflatable park, an escape room, a bowling alley, or an ice rink.
 - It is a business which has been required to close or has had business activities at their premises directly curtailed by the Health Protection Regulations.
- The business must have been open to the public and trading at the start of the restriction period set by the Health Protection Restrictions (unless the applicant business is a wet pub which serves drink only)

Exclusions

The following businesses are excluded from receiving support through the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme:

- Public sector bodies
- Business which have failed to comply with a Covid-19 prohibition notice served by the PSNI

- Off-licences and supermarkets selling alcohol solely restricted by closure times
- Premises solely restricted by latest ordering time of 11pm on takeaway orders

My business has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 restrictions, but my business doesn't meet all of the eligibility criteria. Can I get financial support through this scheme?

No. The financial support provided through this Scheme is only available to businesses who meet the eligibility requirements for this scheme.

There may be other support schemes available to you. A full list of available support at an NI and UK-wide level is available at <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/business-support/coronavirus>

My business doesn't operate from a premises but it still has significant overheads – e.g operating from home or from a vehicle. Can I get the support payment?

No. The financial support provided through this scheme is aimed at businesses which have been required to close their premises or have had business activities at their premises directly curtailed by Health Protection restrictions that have been put in place by NI Executive. Businesses that don't operate from a premises have not had their operations curtailed by the restrictions in the same way and therefore they are not eligible for this support payment.

There may be other support schemes available to you. A full list of available support at an NI and UK-wide level is available at <https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/business-support/coronavirus>

I rent the property from which my business operates and I don't receive the rate bill directly from Land & Property Services. Is my business eligible to apply for support?

Yes. This scheme is for occupying businesses which have been required to close or who have had their business activities directly curtailed by Health Protection restrictions that have been put in place by NI Executive. The scheme is designed to support the occupying business, not the landlord or managing agent.

Occupying businesses who consider that they are eligible for support from this scheme should apply directly using the online form. If you do not receive the business rate bill directly from Land & Property Services, you will be asked to provide contact details for your landlord or managing agent so that your occupancy can be verified.

What if my landlord has applied for, or received, the support payment but I believe that my business is the party who is eligible to receive it?

Let us know. Occupying businesses who consider that they are eligible for support from this scheme should apply directly using the online form. If you don't receive the business rate bill directly from Land & Property Services, you will be asked to provide contact details for your landlord or managing agent so that your occupancy can be verified.

If you believe that a payment has been issued to a business that is not eligible to receive it, you should email details to LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk so that this can be investigated.

I have multiple businesses/ business premises that are directly affected by the localised restrictions. Can I apply for multiple support payments?

Yes. If you operate from more than one eligible premises, you may apply for support in respect of each one.

You must complete a separate online application for each premises that you consider may be eligible for support.

Note that legislation permits the business occupation to be verified against records held for rating purposes.

What if more than one business operates from the same premises?

The scheme is open to all businesses who meet the [eligibility criteria](#). More than one support payment can be issued in relation to the same premises, however businesses who are joint occupants will receive the lower rate of payment regardless of the NAV of the property that they occupy. The size and extent of each property is linked to the NAV of the property. Find out more in the [Support Payments section](#) and the [Net Annual Value \(NAV\) of the Property section](#).

For example, if a business rents part of a property from the main occupying business (such as a cinema complex which includes a separate business operating as a café), an application can be made in relation to each business that meets the eligibility criteria. Occupying businesses who consider that they are eligible for this scheme should apply online. Separate applications are required for each eligible business at the property, and must be submitted by an authorised party for each applicant business.

Please note that if this situation is relevant to your business premises, it may take slightly longer to verify your application. As long as you received an application reference number when your form was submitted, you should not be concerned if you do not receive an email advising on the outcome of your application at the same time as other businesses at the same property.

Note that legislation permits that we may also use the information you provide on the application form to verify our records about the occupation of this premises for rating purposes.

Is eligibility for this support scheme directly linked to business rate bills?

No. Eligibility for the scheme is based on the location of the business premises, the type of business activity undertaken at the business premises, and the severity of restrictions that have been put into place by NI Executive (subject to some exclusions).

Eligibility for the scheme is not directly linked to rate accounts, and the scheme is open to occupying businesses who have had their operations curtailed by localised restrictions whether or not they receive the business rate bill for the premises directly from Land & Property Services (LPS).

Rating information will be used to determine the following in relation to the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme:

- The rate account for the property will be used to verify applications, to confirm that the premises is used for the business purpose described in the application.
 - If you do receive the rate bill for the premises directly from LPS, you will be asked to provide the rate account reference numbers from your most recent rate bill.
 - If you do not receive the business rate bill directly from LPS, you will only be asked to share the name and contact details of your landlord or managing agent so that your occupancy can be verified.
- The Net Annual Value (NAV) of the property, which is one of the factors used to calculate the business rate bill, will be used to decide which level of support payment that successful applicants will receive. Find out more in the [Net Annual Value \(NAV\) of the property section](#)

I pay my business and domestic rates on one single bill. Will I still be eligible for the support payment?

Yes, subject to eligibility requirements. If you think your business is eligible for the scheme, you can apply for the support payment even if your business rates are shown on the same bill as your domestic rates.

If the domestic part of your rate bill relates to premises from which you operate a guesthouse or registered Bed and Breakfast, you can apply for the support payment if you think the guesthouse or registered Bed and Breakfast is eligible.

Is eligibility for the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme linked to the criteria for the £10,000 Small Business Support Grant or the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Grant?

No. The Localised Restrictions Support Scheme is an entirely separate scheme with different criteria. If you received a £10,000 or £25,000 grant however it is useful to let us know as this may help us to process your application more quickly.

SUPPORT PAYMENTS

I have already applied for the support payment. When will I be paid?

Payments will be made as soon as possible. Applications will be assessed and payments made as soon as possible where eligibility has been clearly demonstrated. In cases where eligibility is less clear, and it is necessary to carry out further verification checks, you may be contacted for more information. Please check your email account regularly (including the junk folder) and respond quickly to requests for further information.

If your application is successful, the support payment will be sent directly to the bank account you specified in your application form and you will receive an email confirming that payment has been issued. Please note that payments may not show in your bank account until 7 working days after you receive the remittance email.

If my application is successful, how much financial support will I receive?

There are three levels of support available to businesses whose application is successful. The level of support that successful applicants will receive is based on the Net Annual Value (NAV) of the property from which the business operates:

- **Lower rate:** £800 for each week that the restrictions apply for:-
 - a business that is the sole occupant operating from a property with an NAV of £15,000 or less,
 - a guesthouse or registered Bed & Breakfast with a capital value (which means it is valued as a domestic property for rates); or
 - a business that is a joint occupant of a property with any NAV.

- **Standard rate:** £1,200 for each week that the restrictions apply for:-
 - a business that is the sole occupant of a property with an NAV between £15,001 and £51,000.

- **Higher rate:** £ £1,600 for each week that restrictions apply for :-
 - A business that is the sole occupant of a property with an NAV of £51,001 or more.

You can find the NAV of business properties in the Non-Domestic Valuation List which is published online by Land & Property Services. You can search the Non-Domestic Valuation List at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/property-valuation/valuation-lists>.

If your application is successful and the duration of the localised restrictions in the area that your business operates from is extended, further support payments will be issued automatically. Details of payment dates and amounts will be published online, and you will also receive an email to advise you of any payments that have been issued.

Do I need to take any action if my application is successful and the duration of the localised restrictions in my area is extended?

No. You only need to apply for the localised restrictions support scheme once in relation to each premises that meets the [eligibility criteria](#).

If your application is successful and localised restrictions in your area are extended, further payments will issue automatically.

My application was successful. I received a remittance advice email but the payment is not in the account, what should I do?

Please wait 7 working days. If you received a remittance advice but have not received a payment, check the bank account which is referenced in the remittance email. If you do not receive a payment into that account within 7 working days of receiving your remittance email, please email LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk for investigation.

Can I receive my payment by cheque?

No. To avoid unnecessary social contact, payments are being made directly into the bank accounts that applicants specify in their application form. Issuing payment by cheque would require successful applicants to go to banks to make lodgements, and slows down the payment process for everyone.

Cheques will not be issued unless absolutely necessary. To request a support payment by cheque, contact LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk for consideration, quoting the reference number associated with your application.

I am behind in my rates payments. Will any outstanding rates be deducted from my support payment?

No. Outstanding rates will not be deducted from the support payment.

I received my first support payment, but it does not reflect the increased payment amounts announced by the NI Executive. Why did I not receive the higher amount?

You will receive an additional payment shortly. The NI Executive announced the increased support payment levels on 15 October 2020, but the associated regulations will not be in place until around 26 October 2020.

In the interests of issuing support payments to eligible businesses as early as possible, eligible businesses whose applications are approved before 26 October will receive a support payment that relates to the initial payment levels (£400 per week for lower rate, £600 per week for standard rate and £800 per week for higher rate). Once the regulations for the increased support payment levels are in place, a further top-up payment will be issued to these applicants (£400 per week for lower rate, £600 per week for standard rate and £800 per week for higher rate). Those affected will receive a remittance advice email for each payment issued.

All payments issued after 26 October will be based on the increased support payment levels (£800 per week for lower rate, £1,200 per week for standard rate and £1,600 per week for higher rate).

THE NET ANNUAL VALUE (NAV) OF THE PROPERTY

What is the Net Annual Value of the property and how does it affect my application?

The level of payment issued to successful applicants will be based on the NAV as published in the Non-Domestic Valuation List (with the exception of guesthouses and registered Bed & Breakfasts).

The Net Annual Value (NAV) is one of the factors used to calculate business rate bills. You can find the NAV of business properties in the Non-Domestic Valuation List which is published online by Land & Property Services. You can search the Non-Domestic Valuation List at <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/topics/property-valuation/valuation-lists>.

Each property within the Valuation List has a unique Property ID and a Net Annual Value. The size and extent of each property is based on information held in the Valuation List in relation to each unique Property ID. In simple terms, the size and extent of the property is reflected in the current rate bill – one rate bill for each property. Note that the property can be made up of a number of different buildings or units. Eligible businesses that jointly occupy a property will receive the lower rate payment regardless of the NAV of the property they occupy.

You cannot ask to have a property split into separate units, or 2 properties joined into one larger property, for the purposes of changing the level of payment that you might receive through this support scheme.

If I operate a business from a property that is currently valued for rates as a domestic property, can I still access the support payment?

Yes, but only if the business operates as a guesthouse or registered Bed & Breakfast.

Find out more in the [Support Payments](#) section.

If my business is eligible for the support payment but I am waiting for the outcome of a valuation review which may impact on the NAV of my property, will this change the level of support payment I receive?

No. Because this scheme is a short term support measure, the level of payment issued to successful applicants is based on the NAV as currently published in the Non-Domestic Valuation List. Subsequent changes to the NAV of a property won't affect the level of payment that successful applicants will receive.

There is no facility to request a review of the NAV, for the purposes of changing the level of financial support you will receive through this scheme.

COMPLETING THE ONLINE FORM

Who should complete the online application form?

Applications must only be submitted by an authorised representative for the business which occupies the premises, such as the business owner, director or a senior manager. Landlords **must not** complete this application form on behalf of tenant businesses who rent their premises.

What information will applicants be required to provide?

Applicants will be required to provide:

- the address of the business premises that has been directly curtailed by the Health Regulations. (This is the address which the business is trading from rather than the registered office, if different. If you have a business that operates from more than one address, you will be required to complete a separate application for each property that has been directly curtailed by the Health Regulations)
- information about the most recent rate bill for the property. (If you receive the rate bill for the property directly from Land & Property Services, you will be asked for the Occupancy ID and Ratepayer ID. If you do not receive the rate bill you will be asked to provide contact details for the landlord or managing agent)
- contact details for the person within the applicant business to whom any correspondence relating to the application should be directed. (All correspondence will be issued by email)
- information to demonstrate that your business meets the eligibility criteria. Relevant information may include: the business trading name, a description of the business activities carried out in the property, business website, social media links or Company number (if registered with Companies House)
- sort code and account details for the bank account into which you wish to receive payment
- confirmation of whether the business received a £10,000 or £25,000 COVID-19 Business Support Grant. (This is not relevant to eligibility, but will be used to validate applications)
- confirmation of whether the business complied with all requirements of a COVID-19 prohibition notice (if a COVID-19 prohibition notice was issued by the PSNI)
- confirmation that the business was open to the public and trading when the localised restrictions were announced (unless the applicant business is a wet pub that serves drinks only)

Applicants will also be required to complete [a declaration](#) in relation to their application.

When I search for the address of the property that my business operates from using my Postcode, my property address isn't shown on the list. What should I do?

Check your postcode is correct. If so, keep your postcode as you have entered it in the Postcode field of the form, and type the rest of the address for your property in the box below. There are a number of reasons why your address may not be shown on the list, but this doesn't prevent you from continuing with your application, and doesn't affect the eligibility of your application.

When I try to enter the Company Number for my business the form doesn't accept it. What should I do?

Please enter your Company Number by removing the 2 letters at the beginning and replacing these with zeros. So for NI123456 enter your Company Number as 00123456.

I made an error when I submitted the online form. What should I do?

You must email LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk to advise of the error that was made, including your application reference number for the affected form.

Please do not submit a duplicate application as this can result in an unnecessary delay.

APPLICATION UPDATES

I have already applied for the support payment. When will I be paid?

Payments will be made as soon as possible. Please note that it may take up to 3 weeks to process your application. Find out more in the [Support Payments section](#).

Can I speak to someone to get an update on my application?

No. To ensure that all our resources are focused on processing your application, updated information about the scheme will only be available at www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/LocalisedRestrictionsSupport

We are processing applications as quickly as possible. Checks will be carried out to verify your application and for the protection of all applicants. Please note that it may take up to 3 weeks to process your application.

We appreciate your patience. All applicants will receive an outcome email confirming whether their application has been successful, as soon as our checks are complete.

Urgent queries about your application can be sent to LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk and a member of our team will respond. Please ensure that you quote your application reference number in any correspondence about your application.

Where can I find my application reference number?

Your application reference number is shown in the confirmation email sent to the email address you provided on your application form. The confirmation email will have the subject line '**Application for the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme**'.

Remember that you can only use the LocalisedRestrictions@finance-ni.gov.uk email to contact us. Please only include your application reference number, and never send your bank details to us via email.

APPEALS

I received an email to tell me that my application was rejected. What is the Appeals Procedure?

Details on how to submit an appeal will be included in the rejection email sent to unsuccessful applicants.

Please note that any appeal request should be lodged within two weeks of the date of receiving a rejection email.

Please note - this appeals procedure only applies where an application has been submitted, processed and rejected.

All applications are assessed fairly and consistently. Applications that do not fully meet the eligibility criteria or where insufficient information has been provided will be rejected. In these cases written notification will be sent by email as soon as the rejection decision is made. This notification will clearly detail the reason the application was rejected.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Data Protection and Privacy Policy

The information provided by applicants will be used by Land & Property Services to process your application and to update rate account details if circumstances have changed. I also understand that information held by Land & Property Services for rating or valuation purposes, or held in respect of the business or property to which an application relates by district councils, may be obtained and processed in respect of the assessment of an application. Occasionally this information may be passed to other organisations but only when we are required by law to do so or when the disclosure complies with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and/or the Data Protection Act 2018. For more information please go to: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/lps-privacy-notice>

Declaration

Applicants are required to confirm that they understand and agree to the following declarations:

1. I confirm that I am an authorised representative for the business identified in this application.
2. I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is accurate and complete.
3. I understand that if any of the information provided on this application is found to be fraudulent or false, repayment of funding will be required. Fraudulent claims may be subject to legal action.
4. I understand that I must notify Land & Property Services if there is any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for this scheme.
5. I understand that Land & Property Services may seek more information from other sources to verify this application. This may include checking that the business has complied with Covid-19 prohibition notices issued by the PSNI.
6. I confirm that I am aware that Land & Property Services or an agent acting on behalf of Land & Property Services may carry out an inspection of the business premises to substantiate this application. If the property is found not to be as described in the application, the application will be rejected and repayment of funding will be required.
7. I understand that the information I provide will be processed by Land & Property Services for the purposes of assessing this application and to update rate account details if circumstances have changed. I also understand that information held by Land & Property Services for rating or valuation purposes, or held in respect of the business or property to which an application relates by district councils, may be obtained and processed in respect of the assessment of an application. Occasionally this information may be passed to other organisations but only when we are required by law to do so or when the disclosure complies with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and/or the Data Protection Act 2018. More information is available at: <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/lps-privacy-notice>
8. I understand that the information provided on this form may be used for the purpose of the prevention and detection of crime.
9. I understand that any payment is considered income which must be declared to HMRC as part of the tax return for the business.

Reporting Fraudulent Payments

If you have any concerns about fraudulent payments relating to this Scheme you should send these to the Department of Finance by email to Corporate.governance@finance-ni.gov.uk

You can view the Department of Finance Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan through the link below:

<https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/dof-anti-fraud-policy-and-response-plan>