Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up

Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

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ABOUT THE TOP-UP PAYMENTS – SUMMARY INFORMATION

What was the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant?

Businesses were able to apply for the original £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Scheme from 20 April 2020 until the date on which the scheme was closed to new applications, which was 20 May 2020. The Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Scheme was provided to support businesses that were experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and which had a need for financial relief under the terms and conditions of the scheme.

The overarching aim of the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Scheme was to help protect jobs, prevent business closures and promote economic recovery.

Full details of the original Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Scheme, including guidance on eligibility and FAQs, is available from https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-£25000-retail-hospitality-tourism-and-leisure-grant

What is the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up payment scheme?

The Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up payment scheme issues financial support of up to £10,000 to businesses that received the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant in 2020 and that have not been paid more than £10,000 under the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme or Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme: Part B, subject to some exclusions**.**

This grant will cover a wide range of businesses, including those which were allowed to remain open during the most recent restrictions, such as convenience stores, hardware stores, bakeries, financial services, engineering firms and coach services. The business must have been open and trading on 1 March 2021 to be eligible for a top-up payment.

Businesses which started trading after applications for the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant closed in May 2020, which would have been eligible for this grant, could apply for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up using an online form if they were open and trading on 1 March 2021.

As with the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Grant, only one grant will be paid to businesses which occupy multiple premises.

The Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Top-Up will be awarded in line with the following financial regulations:

- **The Financial Assistance (Coronavirus) (Business Support) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021** https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2021/87/schedule/made

The Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up was open to online applications from 30 June 2021 until 23.59 on Wednesday 28 July 2021.

Is my business required to apply for the Top-Up payment?

Only in some circumstances. Your business will be required to apply if a £10,000 Top-up payment has not already been received, if the grants team have advised that you should apply, or if your business started trading after applications for the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant closed in May 2020 but would otherwise have been eligible for that scheme.

Automatic top up payments were already issued to eligible businesses who received the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant in 2020 in May 2021. If Land & Property Services (LPS) did not require further information to confirm that a business was eligible for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up, their grant payment was issued to the bank account that was used for payment of the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant in 2020. **These businesses did not need to complete the online application form**.

These businesses were sent an email or a letter to confirm that the grant payment had been issued, as well as a remittance email or letter. In cases where the automatic payment was unsuccessful, for example if bank account details for the business had changed since the original grant was paid, these businesses were required to apply online for the Top-Up and provide updated bank details as part of their application.

If you have already received an automatic top-up for another of your premises that the same business operates from you cannot apply to receive another top-up.

Businesses who did not receive an automatic payment had to apply before they could be considered for a top-up payment. This included businesses occupying rental premises; businesses which may have moved premises since they received their grant payment in 2020; and businesses whose rate account has been updated since the grant was paid in 2020.

Which businesses should not apply for the Top-Up payment?

Businesses which are considered ineligible for this grant will not receive an automatic top-up payment and they should not apply for this scheme. This includes businesses which already received more than £10,000 through the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme (LRSS) or the Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS).

Businesses that were not trading on 1 March 2021 or that were ultimately found to have received the original Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant payment in 2020 due to an administrative error and / or had these funds recouped will not be eligible for the top-up payment and should not apply for this scheme.

What do I need to complete the online application form for the Top-Up payment?

You should enter an Application ID where one has been provided, unless you have moved property since you received your original Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant. If you have received an email or letter from LPS with an Application ID please enter this when completing the application form. This helps us to process your application more quickly. If you did not receive an Application ID you can search for your business property by postcode during the application process. You should also use the postcode to apply against your new property if your business has moved premises since it received the original Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant payment.

If you do not meet the NAV requirements for the original Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant, where your business premises was required to have an NAV between £15,001 and £51,000, you will not be able to proceed through the form as this was an essential criteria for the original scheme.

Please enter your rate account details (these can be found on the top right hand corner of your most recent rate bill) if you are the named ratepayer and additional details about the activities of your business. This will help LPS to process your application more quickly. You **must** enter bank account details for your business in order to receive payment.

To complete the online application form you will also need:

- A bank statement covering a month of transactions including 1 March 2021 relating to the bank account that the top-up payment will be paid into if the application is deemed to be successful. Please note that payment can only be made to an account directly associated to the business and not a representative or third party. You will be asked to upload this document as part of this application.
- A copy of your lease agreement, signed and dated, covering the period including 1 March 2021. Note this only applies if you are not the ratepayer who receives the rate bill for this business directly from Land & Property Services. You will be asked to upload this document as part of this application if applicable.

You will also be asked to provide contact details for the person within the applicant business, and contact details for your landlord if you are not the named ratepayer for the property.

What are my responsibilities when completing the application form for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up payment scheme?

Businesses should be aware that:

- If any information provided with your registration form is later found to be false, repayment of funding may be required.
- Any payment must be declared to HMRC as appropriate as part of the tax return for the business.

ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TOP-UP PAYMENT

Who can apply for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up Payment?

Businesses that received the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant in 2020 and that have not been paid more than £10,000 under the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme or Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme: Part B, and have not received an automatic payment could apply.
Businesses which started trading after applications for the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant closed in May 2020, which would have been eligible for this grant, could also apply for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up

Eligibility requirements for the scheme include:

- The property relevant to the application must not be vacant
- The property relevant to the application must have an NAV between £15,001 and £51,000
- The business must be open and actively trading
- The business cannot receive the £10,000 Top-Up payment if it has already received more than this amount via the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme or Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme: Part B schemes (Unless the LRSS payment was issued incorrectly and must be repaid)
- Duplicate applications or those which have already received an automatic Top-Up payment under this scheme will not be eligible for payment
- The applicant business must not have received funding from the Large Tourism and Hospitality Business Support Scheme
- The applicant business must not have been rejected by Department for Economy for the original £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Scheme
- The applicant must not be an MP / MLA office, wind turbine or GP surgery

INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE MADE AN APPLICATION

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

You should submit a query to our grants team using the contact form for those who have applied, at https://dttselfserve.nidirect.gov.uk/LPS25KTop/TellUs#/RTHL-APPL-QUERIES, choosing 'I want to make a change to my application' from the drop-down.

Please advise us of the error that has been made, noting the reference number of the application you made an error on. Note that mechanisms are in place to ensure that multiple grant payments are not made to the same ratepayer.

How much financial support will I receive?

Successful applicants will be eligible to receive the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up of up to £10,000 ONLY. There is no facility to access the £25,000 Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant which closed in May 2020.

If your business received less than £10,000 via the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme or Covid Restrictions Business Support Scheme: Part B and your business is otherwise eligible for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up, the payment amount received will be topped up to that amount. For example, if you received £7,000 via the relevant other schemes you may receive up to £3,000 via the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up. A breakdown of your Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Grant Top-Up payment will be provided to you where required.

Some businesses received payments through the Localised Restrictions Support Scheme but it was subsequently determined that their business was not eligible for support from the LRSS scheme and these businesses were asked to return their LRSS payment. For these businesses, eligibility for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Top Up scheme will be assessed on the basis of them being ineligible for LRSS support. If the business is confirmed to be eligible for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Top Up, their Top-Up Grant will be offset against their LRSS payments. This means that all or part of the LRSS payment will be considered to be all or part of their Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Top Up Grant.

For businesses which were incorrectly paid less that £10,000 through LRSS who are confirmed as eligible for this Top-Up Scheme, the value of the LRSS payment will be deducted from their grant award so they do not need to return the LRSS payment. The remaining amount will be issued to the business through the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure Top Up Grant

For businesses which were incorrectly paid more that £10,000 through LRSS who are confirmed as eligible for this Top-Up Scheme, the amount of LRSS that the business is

required to repay will be reduced by £10,000. Although the business is eligible for this scheme, no payments will be issued due to this offsetting arrangement.

I have already applied for the top-up payment, when will I be paid?

Applications will be assessed and payments made as soon as possible where they demonstrate clear eligibility. In cases where eligibility is less clear, it will be necessary to carry out further verification checks, you will be contacted where further information is required and payments will be made as soon as possible. Therefore, you should regularly check your email account (and the junk mail folder). The grant payment will be sent directly to your bank account and you will receive an email confirming that the grant payment has been issued. Please note that payments may take up to 7 working days to appear in your bank account.

It would be appreciated if you could be patient and await contact from the grants team. Please be assured that we will be in contact to provide further instructions as quickly as possible. Please ensure that you regularly monitor your email account (including the junk folder) and respond quickly to requests.

Payments to applicants will begin to issue from the end of July 2021 onwards.

Can I receive my payment by cheque?

To avoid unnecessary social contact payments are being made directly into bank accounts. Issuing payment by cheque would require people to go to banks to make lodgements, as well as slowing down the payment process for everyone. Therefore, cheques will not be issued unless absolutely necessary.

I received a remittance advice but no payment, what should I do?

Please note that payments may take up to 7 working days to appear in your bank account. 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, please submit a query for investigation by our grants team using the contact form for those who have applied, at https://dttselfserve.nidirect.gov.uk/LPS25KTop/TellUs#/RTHL-APPL-QUERIES.

What if I think my landlord has applied for the Top-up or received the Top-up payment but I think I am the eligible business who is entitled to receive it?

You should submit a query through our general queries contact form for the scheme at https://dttselfserve.nidirect.gov.uk/LPS25KTop/TellUs#/GNL so that the details of the landlord grant application/payment can be investigated.

What is the Appeals Procedure?

All applications are assessed fairly and consistently. The Department reserves the right to reject applications that do not fully meet the eligibility criteria. In these cases written notification was sent as soon as the rejection decision was made. These notifications clearly detailed the reason the application was declined.

The Department gives applicants every reasonable means of providing the information needed to validate eligibility. However, if, when requested, you have been unable to provide sufficient information, then your application may be rejected. Should there be any dispute with the decision made, the applicant will have the right to ask for an independent review to be conducted.

Details on how to submit an appeal will be included in the rejection notice. The request must be lodged within two weeks of the date of the rejection notice.

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

How can my business return an automatic payment made under this scheme?

If circumstances have changed and your business is not eligible to receive this grant, or if your business wishes to decline the grant, you can return your grant payment using the details shown below:

To return the funds by bank transfer to the Department of Finance use the following payment details:

Account Name: Department of Finance
Sort Code: 950121
Account Number: 61063871
Description: Refund 8000xxxxx

The number to be included in the description/text field is the document number which can be found on the remittance advice you will receive. Your business name should appear automatically in the sender field.

Alternatively, you can return the payment by cheque, which should be made payable to the Department of Finance and post to the address below along with a copy of your remittance advice and your contact details:

Account NI
Cash Office – Floor 3
Goodwood House
44-58 May Street
Belfast BT1 4NN

REPORTING ANY POTENTIALLY FRAUDULENT PAYMENTS

How can I report concerns regarding potentially fraudulent payments?

If you have any concerns about fraudulent payments relating to this Scheme you should contact the Department of Finance via the contact forms for the scheme, available from the Actions section of the page at https://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/content/coronavirus-retail-hospitality-tourism-and-leisure-top-scheme

DATA HANDLING

How will my data be handled?

You should note that your data will be shared and handled in line with the **LPS Privacy Notice** https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/lps-privacy-notice

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Does payment under this Scheme constitute State aid?

The Department is processing this grant within the context of both 3.1 of the Temporary Framework, in respect of Manufacturing related to trade in EU, (as applied for NI measures falling within NI protocol permitting subsidy of up to EUR 1.8M per undertaking), and 3.2.3 of the TCA signed between UK and EU signed on 30 December 2020. Links to both documents are provided below:-

- https://ec.europa.eu/competition/state_aid/what_is_new/TF_informal_consolidated_version_as_amended_28_january_2021_en.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/relations-united-kingdom/eu-uk-trade-and-cooperation-agreement_en

Notwithstanding any other provision of this grant and the legislative framework for the grant scheme, if required as a result of external subsidy controls (including Withdrawal Agreement Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement) the Department may at any time withhold payment of and/or require repayment of any or all of any assistance deemed to be a subsidy, from the date on which the assistance was awarded and the Company shall on demand by the Department repay to the Department such assistance (and interest that may be imposed by the subsidy control regime) in a reasonable amount of time.

Under what terms and conditions are Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up Payments issued?

Businesses applying for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-up Payments must have been open and trading on 1 March 2021 to be eligible for a top-up payment.

In addition, all businesses applying for the Retail, Hospitality, Tourism & Leisure Grant Top-Up Payments must agree to the following declaration before an application can be submitted:

1. 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.

2. I confirm that I am an authorised representative for the business identified in this application.
3. I confirm that the property associated with this application meets with eligibility requirements for this scheme.
4. I confirm that the information I have provided in this form is accurate and complete.
5. I understand that I must notify Land & Property Services if there is any change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for this scheme.
6. I understand that Land & Property Services may seek more information from other sources to verify this application. 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 any payment made which is found to have been paid contrary to Regulations shall be recoverable by Land & Property Services. If payments made contrary to the Regulations are not recovered, information about these payments may be published in the public interest.
8. I understand that the details of any successful applicants of this scheme may be published in the public interest.
9. 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.
10. I understand Land & Property Services may share information in relation to eligibility for this scheme with another Northern Ireland government department. 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
11. I understand that the information provided on this form may be used for the purpose of the prevention and detection of crime.
12. I understand that any payment is considered income which must be declared to HMRC as part of the tax return for the business.
13. I understand that if the support payment constitutes State Aid, I will comply with subsidy control arrangements.