

Independent Retailers Grant Scheme

Guide for applicants



Introduction

Mid Sussex District Council has grant funding available to support independent retailers (less than 5 stores) in Mid Sussex to make improvements to their premises and / or retail operations. The scheme is complemented by a programme of training workshops to help retail owners maximise the potential of their business. The training is offered **at no additional cost** to all independent retailers across the district.

It is a requirement of the grant scheme that applicants have engaged with the online training and completed at least one of the training modules prior to application. Applicants will be asked to provide evidence that they have done so before any grant funding is paid.

Aims and Benefits

Mid Sussex District Council recognises that independent retailers are facing challenges in the current retail environment. The grant scheme can help you to:

- Maximise your shop's impact on the high street
- Attract more customers, increasing footfall and spend by local shoppers
- Present a more compelling shopping experience to customers
- Differentiate your independent shop from the big multiples and online retailers.

Funding Criteria

Funding is available to support independent retailers to make improvements to their premises and / or retail operations. Funding assistance is available towards **capital projects** to improve:

- Visual appearance of shop units (external and internal)
- Enhance the interior environment and / or shopping experience
- Contribute to improved business operation, efficiency and competitiveness.

Funding is available to **independent retailers**, not part of any regional, national or international chain or franchise.

The grant available will be up to 75% of eligible costs, to a **maximum contribution of £4,000**. The business must contribute the remaining 25%.

Possible work that the grant could cover includes:

- New replacement shop front or fascia
- Repairs to any part of the shop front facade that is visible from the street including the first and second floors of premises
- Redecoration of existing shop fronts
- Replacement or refurbishment of doors and / or windows visible from the street
- New or improved external lighting and / or canopies
- New internal fixtures and fittings (for example internal lighting relating to goods displays)
- Upgrade to till systems, ecommerce activity or omni-channel / digital offer.

Temporary Pop-Up Shops

In addition, **smaller grants of up to £500** are available for businesses taking up **temporary pop-up shop** opportunities towards their set up costs.

Not eligible for funding:

- Activity that represents **business as usual** such as routine maintenance, stock, staffing costs, etc.
- **Revenue expenditure** such as advertising, training, consultancy costs, etc.
- **Retrospective costs** for work already undertaken prior to application.

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Qualification Requirements

To be considered for this grant you will be required to:

- demonstrate that you have the permission of the property owner (where this is not you) to carry out the works.
- be registered with Companies House or HMRC
- have a physical shop presence within the Mid Sussex district
- Not be part of any regional, national or international chain or franchise
- Have 25% match funding in place
- have engaged in the Virtual Learning Hub Training Programme (evidence required)

Applications which do not meet the qualification criteria will not be considered further.

Statutory Consent

It is your responsibility as the applicant to make enquiries as to whether any statutory consent is required for projects relating to the exterior of the store, and to ensure the relevant applications are made, for example for planning permission.

Any owners of shops that are listed, located within a conservation area or have a traditional historic shop front will need to ensure that any alteration works do not harm the historic character and appearance of the building. Consultation with the Council's Planning Department at an early stage is encouraged regarding whether the proposed changes would be acceptable and if listed building consent or [planning permission](#) is required.

Insurance

The applicant, agent and / or contractor is responsible for all risks in connection with public or employer liability associated with the building works.

Quotations

Quotes for the improvement works that accompany the application must be on formal letter headed paper and where possible the contractor should be based in the Mid Sussex district.

If the applicant plans to undertake work themselves, only the cost of materials can be included.

Application process

Applications for the Shop Improvement Grants for Businesses are now open and will close on 28th January.

If you would like to apply for the scheme, an application form can be found [here](#)

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria and reviewed by the Cabinet Grants Panel. All grant awards are subject to a 10-day call-in period, after which the applicant will be notified of the outcome.

This is a discretionary grant scheme there is no right to appeal by applicants.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be scored and assessed using the following criteria

- Delivery of grant aims and benefits
- Value for Money
- Need for the project

Applicants will need to provide invoices / receipts as evidence of expenditure before the grant is released.

You will also be asked to complete an End of Grant Report and should expect a discussion or visit from the officer administering the grant.

Evaluation of all grants will be reported to the Cabinet Grants Panel in the 2021-22 Financial Year.

Any queries please contact:

Mid Sussex District Council, Economic Development
economicdevelopment@midsussex.gov.uk

www.midsussex.gov.uk