



OFFICIAL



HM Government

**Rushcliffe Borough Council
UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Skills Development Fund

Applicant Guidance

Aim of the grant scheme

The Rushcliffe Borough Council Skills Development Fund scheme offers funding to residents and small businesses in the Borough of Rushcliffe as part of our UK Government funded Shared Prosperity Funding.

The aim of the scheme is to remove barriers to education and training by providing financial assistance to individuals and businesses in the Borough, to upskill and gain qualifications in their chosen area of work. Funding is available to residents to upskill or retrain in a chosen work area, and to businesses to upskill their current workforce to enable to growth of the business. The Skills Development Fund is looking to achieve the following objectives:

- Remove the financial barrier to accessing education and training for residents
- Encourage small businesses to train and upskill their staff to enable growth
- Increase the number of qualifications being gained across the Borough to stimulate economic growth.

Duration of the grant scheme

The Skills Development Fund will be available for applications from 1 April 2024 and will close once all the funding is allocated. All grants awarded must be claimed before March 1st 2025.

Amount of grant funding that you can apply for

The grant will support up to 100% of course costs. Residents can apply for up to £1,000 to cover course fees. Small businesses can apply for up to £5,000 to cover course fees to train one or more members of staff in a relevant area (maximum £1,000 per member of staff). Businesses applying for funding will be required to contribute at least 30% of training costs as match funding.

2. Grant criteria and eligible expenditure

Eligibility criteria

Grants are open to residents who meet the following criteria:

- Rushcliffe resident aged 18+
- Currently unemployed or facing redundancy
- Not in full time education
- Willing to commit to completing the chosen course of study

Grants are open to businesses which meet the following criteria:

- Has been trading for a minimum of 6 months
 - Has a turnover of less than £10m
 - Has between 1 and 30 employees
 - Is registered with Companies House OR is a sole trader or partnership with a Unique Tax Reference Number from HMRC.
- Must be able to fund and evidence 100% of the project cost upfront from their own resources (funding is retrospective).

- Holds a business bank account (a 'trading as' account is acceptable). A business bank account is a trading commercial account in the name of the applying business. All purchases must be made via the business account and all claim payments will be made to the same business account. Personal or current accounts are NOT eligible.
- All appropriate licences and permissions are in place and food businesses have achieved a food hygiene rating of 4 or greater.

Eligible project activity

The Skills Development Fund can assist with any course fees which are relevant to the business sector or chosen area of work, and that aren't available through mainstream funding. The following learner details must be captured to enable to effective delivery of the fund:

1. Enrolment confirmation
2. Attendance record
3. Course completion/pass confirmation

Ineligible project activity

The following cannot be supported by the grant:

- Courses of study which have already been undertaken
- Purchase of digital hardware to support study
- VAT (unless the applicant is not able to recover VAT)
- Recurring study costs (digital training subscriptions, digital resource subscriptions etc)
- Repayment of existing study loans or debts

The list of ineligible project activities is not definitive and all proposals will be assessed for eligibility by Rushcliffe Borough Council.

Availability of grant

All grants are made at the discretion of Rushcliffe Borough Council and are subject to availability of funding.

Timescale

You must be able to enrol on and pay for your chosen course of study and claim back your grant amount by March 31st 2025.

Grant amount and match funding:

The Skills Development Fund will provide up to 100% of the funding requested up to a maximum of £1,000 for residents and £5,000 for small businesses.

Businesses applying for funding will be required to contribute at least 30% of the training costs as match funding.

Match funding is cash that you will be contributing to the course of study/training.

Businesses applying must be able to pay upfront for any course fees as grant payments are made in arrears, to reimburse/contribute to costs already paid.

Upon successful application, residents must arrange an invoice from their training provider confirming enrolment. Grant amounts will be paid upon receipt of these documents. Grants will not be paid directly to an individual under any circumstances.

In all cases applicants need to apply for the grant by submitting a full application form and obtain written approval of award from Rushcliffe Borough Council before any course of study is undertaken. The grant will not be paid towards the cost of transactions that have occurred before the date of the approval.

VAT

Applicants who are VAT registered will have their grant assessed on the net cost of eligible projects; non-VAT registered applicants will be assessed on the gross cost. If the applicant does not know whether they are VAT registered or not they must seek advice from HM Revenue & Customs.

3. Applying for the grant

Applicants should submit a completed application form together with evidence/quotes of expected course fees.

- You must obtain a quote for study to be undertaken and submit these with your application form.
- Study costs that you include in the application should be net, exclusive of VAT
- Rushcliffe Borough Council will assess the eligibility of applicants

Each application will be judged on its own merits with regard to how well it meets the scheme's aims and eligibility criteria and its ability to be implemented within the set timescales.

Decision on applications

All applications will be subject to an assessment by Rushcliffe Borough Council and the amount offered will be at the discretion of Rushcliffe Borough Council and only whilst funds are available. The decision of Rushcliffe Borough Council is final. The Council reserves the right to vary the level of grant or reject an application.

Notification of decision on the application will be made in writing to the applicant. An offer of grant will be made by letter, which will specify:

- The eligible applicant
- The eligible training to be accessed/purchased
- The maximum amount of grant awarded
- The date by which the expenditure should be completed

Payment of grant

- Grants are discretionary and Rushcliffe Borough Council reserves the right to withhold payment of the grant in whole or part if any condition of the offer letter has been breached
- No retrospective costs can be paid – do not enrol on, pay for or commission any training or course of study and services prior to receiving an offer letter
- Business applicants must submit the claim (including invoices and evidence of payment) for grant assistance within one month of the enrolment date as stated in the offer letter. Payment will be subject to the applicant having satisfactorily completed the course of study and complied with all terms and conditions of the scheme. Non-completion of study may result in grant amount being claimed back.
- Payment of the grant will only be made when Rushcliffe Borough Council receives confirmation of enrolment and evidence of payment for the approved course of study from the applicant. Invoices dated before the date of the offer letter will not be eligible for payment.
- Any changes to supplier must be agreed with Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Payment of the grant will be made into either the applicant's business bank account (or 'trading as' account) via BACS. Resident grants will be paid directly to the training provider.
- Grants will be paid against the agreed training provider, as stated in your application form
- Businesses must pay 100% of the costs to the training provider – the grant is a reimbursement, for the value stated in the offer letter. Residents must arrange an invoice with the training provider to be sent to Rushcliffe Borough Council for payment.

IMPORTANT

No claims will be paid where payments to a supplier were made by cash, by a third party or by cheque. All payments to training providers must be made from a business bank account. Payments made to suppliers by credit card will only be eligible for grant if the card is registered to the business and not a private individual.

FAQs

Do I need to provide a certificate upon completion of my course?

Yes. Once you have completed your course of study, learners or businesses will need to send us a copy of their certificate of completion/achievement.

Do I need to provide quotes?

Yes. This could be a formal quote from a training provider, an email confirming course costs or information taken from a provider source detailing course costs.

Can I apply to the Skills Development Fund more than once?

Eligible businesses are welcome to apply more than once if value added can be justified. However, residents are only eligible to receive one grant payment per business year.

Will I need to pay the grant back?

No, the funding provided to a successful applicant is a grant and not a loan. Businesses or residents will be required to pay grant funding back if conditions in the grant offer letter and contract are not adhered to.

Where can the Business Rates Account Number be found?

Your Business Rates Account Number can be found at the top of any business rates bill you have been issued. Rushcliffe Borough Council are unable to provide your account number to you to avoid cases of fraud.