



13. Omicron ARG – December 2021

- 13.1 On 21 December 2021, the Chancellor announced a £102 million top-up for the Additional Restrictions Grant in response to the rise of the Omicron variant.
- 13.2 The Uttlesford District Council Omicron ARG relates specifically to the grant provided by the Government to Uttlesford Council of £235,000, which the Government refers to as the third top-up payment to the ARG.
- 13.3 The Omicron ARG scheme aims to support businesses severely impacted by the surge of the COVID-19 Omicron variant.
- 13.4 Local Authorities must achieve all spend by 31 March 2022 and payments after this date will not be allowed in any circumstances. The grant is limited to £235,000 and funds may be exhausted prior to 31 March 2022.
- 13.5 In allocating Omicron ARG support, Uttlesford District Council will focus on businesses from sectors that have been severely impacted by reduced business activity due to the spread of the Omicron variant, including those that fall outside of the business rates system.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Hospitality, accommodation and leisure businesses that fall outside of the OHLG scheme.
 - Businesses in the supply chain to hospitality, accommodation and leisure.
 - Personal care.
 - Events sector, the associated supply chains and wedding related businesses.
- 13.6 This list is not directive nor exhaustive and Uttlesford District Council will continue to issue grants at their discretion, based on local economic needs. We will consider supporting businesses not listed at point 13.5 if they can evidence that they've been severely impacted and funds allow.
- 13.7 Applicants will be required to provide evidence proportionate to the need to verify that their business is eligible and that the application is not fraudulent. This will include business bank statements and may include invoices, insurance policies and/or utility bills. Applicants should make every effort to provide this information upfront as the Council reserves the right to refuse applications which are ambiguous, incomplete or contradictory.

14. Eligibility Criteria

- 14.1 Local Authorities must run an application process for all applicants and must be satisfied that businesses that have previously received related grants under this scheme meet the eligibility criteria for the Omicron ARG if further awards are made.
- 14.2 Business must have been trading on 01 December 2021 to be eligible for this grant.
- 14.3 For the purpose of this scheme the Council has decided that any business applying for ARG must meet the following eligibility criteria, and be able to provide the necessary evidence:
- a) Businesses that are not listed in point 13.5 above must demonstrate that they are severely impacted by reduced business activity due to the spread of the Omicron variant. Uttlesford District Council must be satisfied that that the fall in income is due to the COVID-19 Omicron variant and not a general failure of business.
 - b) Businesses must be trading and engaged in business activity. This should be interpreted as carrying on a trade or profession or buying and selling goods or services in order to generate turnover. Fully constituted businesses in liquidation, dissolved, struck off or subject to a striking-off notice are not eligible under these conditions.
 - c) In addition to the requirement for the business to be located in the Uttlesford District Council area, in the case of mobile and home business, the proprietor of the business must be resident in the Uttlesford District Council area.
- 14.4 The Council will not usually award multiple grants to the same business or individual unless that business or individual can clearly demonstrate that it operates multiple premises in the Uttlesford District. The Council reserves the right to refuse any and all payments to any business or individual that is considered to be intentionally making multiple claims for the same business or premises.
- 14.5 Businesses will not be eligible to receive a grant if their primary activity is in any of the following sectors: outdoor hospitality leisure or accommodation, construction, education, health and social care, manufacturing and engineering, agriculture and horticulture, financial and insurance activities, professional services or research and development.
- 14.6 Where businesses are applying as a supplier, they will be expected to provide documentary evidence of frequently supplying eligible sectors. As a rule of thumb, businesses which cumulatively receive under £1,000 per month in revenue from supplying eligible sectors are unlikely to be considered eligible, however all cases will be considered on their merits. The intention is to ensure that suppliers receiving grants under this scheme are those which are severely impacted by reduced business activity due to the spread of the Omicron variant.

15. Award Levels

- 15.1 Awards will be made on a first come first served basis. The scheme will expire on 31/3/2022 or when funds are exhausted, whichever is the soonest.
- 15.2 The grant amounts given to individual businesses will be subject to subsidy allowances. There is no restriction on the number of grants a business may receive, subject to subsidy limits. Please refer to section 4 for more information about subsidy allowance.
- 15.3 One-off grants of up to £2,000 will be awarded to individual businesses in the sectors listed at point 13.5 if their application is approved.
- 15.4 No award will be made before mandatory fraud and compliance checks have been completed.