

Thrive Telford UK Share Prosperity Fund 2025-2026 FAQ's

The Large Grants Fund, Small Grants Fund, Export Grants Fund, Frequently Asked Questions.

This is a general programme FAQs. Applicants should also refer to specific fund criteria and guidance ahead of submitting their applications. If you have any additional questions, please follow the *CONTACT US* page.

Thrive Telford Programme – General FAQs

This document provides general programme FAQs. Applicants should review specific fund criteria and guidance before submitting their applications. For any additional questions, please visit the Contact Us page.

1. What is the Thrive Telford Programme?

Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Telford & Wrekin Council has allocated grant funding to support growth projects for Telford-based SMEs. The Thrive Telford Programme offers eight distinct funds:

1. Large Grants Fund
2. Small Grants Fund
3. Export Grants Fund
4. Marches Energy Grant
5. Business Advice Service
6. Business Start-Up Service
7. Innovate Telford
8. Business Growth Enabler

For details on each fund's focus, eligibility criteria, and supporting documents—including FAQs, scheme specifications, and fund overviews—please refer to the individual fund pages.

2. How much can I apply for?

Eligible businesses can apply for grants ranging from **£1000 to £10,000**, with specific limits outlined within each individual fund.

3. What can I use the grant for?

Please refer to individual fund pages for specifics.

4. When will I be able to complete an online grant application?

Please refer to individual fund pages for specifics.

5. Is there any match funding required?

Each fund has its own support limits, please refer to individual fund pages for specifics.

For business applying to the:

The Large Grants Fund - Covers **70% of eligible project costs**, up to **£10,000** in grant funding. Businesses must match **30% of the project cost**.

The Small Fund Programme – Covers **100% of eligible project costs**, up to **£2,000** in grant funding. Businesses must fund all costs above the **£2,000** grant award cap.

Export Grants Fund – Covers **100% of eligible project costs**, up to **£3,000** in grant funding. Businesses must fund all costs above the **£3,000** grant award cap.

6. When can I begin my project?

Applicants for the **Large Grants Fund, Innovate, Small Grants Fund, and Export Grants Fund** must wait until they have received, signed, and returned a **Grant Offer Letter** before beginning their project.

Once the signed letter is returned, the applicant may commence their project. The business must **fully pay** for the associated work, services, or goods before submitting a claim for reimbursement from the Grant Fund.

Important Grant Payment Guidelines - A key requirement of the programme is that **projects cannot commence** until a **Grant Offer Letter** has been received, signed, and returned. Any expenses incurred **before** this process is completed **will not be eligible for funding** and the grant offer will be withdrawn.

7. When will I receive my grant funding payment?

For administrative purposes, **all purchases must be paid in full upfront**. To process your claim, we require:

1. Copies of supplier invoices
2. A **bank statement** from the business's dedicated account, showing the corresponding payments to suppliers

The bank statement **must match** the supplier's invoice details.

We **do not accept** payments made via cash, credit cards, or alternative staggered payment arrangements where the full amount is not paid upfront.

If you are unsure about any aspect of the payment process, please **contact us before making a payment** to confirm eligibility.

8. I am unable to cash flow the grant in the short term, can I request the grant funding up front.

No.

9. How do I apply?

All applications follow a **three-stage process**. While the overall process is similar for all funds, applicants should review the individual fund guidance notes for specific requirements.

Application Stages

1. **Expression of Interest (EOI) Submission**
 - Applicants must complete a **fund-specific Expression of Interest form**.
 - If the project meets the scheme criteria, the applicant will be invited to apply.
2. **Project Discussion with Invest Telford**
 - Applicants will discuss their project with a member of the **Invest Telford team** to ensure it aligns with the respective fund assessment criteria.
 - **Mandatory** for applications to the **Large Grant Fund, and Export Grant Fund**
 - **Optional** for applications to the **Small Grants Fund**.
3. **Full Application Submission**
 - Invited applicants will submit a **full application**, which will then be assessed.

Relevant **EOI forms** can be accessed through individual fund scheme overviews.

10. Do I have to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI)?

Yes, all applicants must submit an EOI to begin their application journey. Once your EOI is received and reviewed, you will be notified of the outcome.

11. Can I apply to multiple grant funds?

No, due to limited funding availability, applicants can apply for either the Large Grants Fund or the Small Grants Fund—but not both.

However, businesses may apply for:

- Both the Small Grants Fund and Export Grants Fund
- Both the Large Grants Fund and Export Grants Fund

12. This is my first time applying for funding and I need some support—can I get help from Telford & Wrekin Council / the Funding Team?

Yes, we can provide **general guidance** to businesses applying for funding. This includes support with understanding the application process and how to apply. However, please note that we are unable to write the application on your behalf.

12. Can I use paid consultants to complete the application process?

While it's technically allowed, we strongly advise against it. The application process has been designed to be straightforward, and we encourage all businesses to reach out to the funding team with any questions or challenges before considering the use of consultants.

Please note that consultant fees are an *ineligible project expense* and cannot be covered by any of our funding sources.

13. I am based on a Telford and Wrekin High Street—can I apply for UKSPF funding?

Unfortunately, no. Due to limited funds within the UKSPF budget, businesses that are eligible for—or have already received—funding through the Pride in Our High Street Programme are **not eligible** to apply for grants from the Large Grants Fund, Small Grants Fund, or Export Grants Fund.

We recommend contacting the *Pride in Our High Street* team to check the latest funding opportunities available to you.

14. My business is a community-based business, can I apply?

Unfortunately, no. We are shortly releasing a dedicated community based fund which those business will be able to apply for. Check the website for the latest information.

15. Can I apply for grant funding and the Business Advice Service?

Yes, businesses can apply for both grant funding and access the Business Advice Service.

16. I own multiple businesses—can each business apply for a grant?

In principle, yes—each business may apply, provided they are separate legal entities delivering distinct activities.

However, due to limited funding, priority will be given to supporting as many individual businesses as possible. A second application from the same applicant may not be prioritised.

17. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

Before accessing the full application, applicants must confirm the following eligibility criteria:

- The business is **based in Telford and Wrekin**.
- The business has been **trading for at least six months** at the time of application.
- The project **has not already started**.
- The business has the financial capacity to **cash flow the project**.
- The business has a **dedicated business bank account** solely for business transactions, separate from personal finances.
- The applicant complies with **UK Subsidy Control regulations** (formerly State Aid).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the **fund guidance notes** and scheme specifications to assess full eligibility.

Ineligible Business Sectors

Applications **cannot** be accepted from businesses operating in the following sectors:

- Fisheries and agriculture
- Processing of agricultural products
- Shipbuilding
- School-age educational establishments
- Insurance companies
- Primary production (coal, steel, synthetic fibres)
- Banking

18. What are the grant terms and conditions?

- Only **one business can apply per fund per application**—multiple attempts may invalidate your application.
- **Projects must not begin** before a Grant Offer Letter is awarded. **Purchases or orders made prior to approval will not be funded.**
- Applications must be **fully completed** and include all required supporting evidence.
- The grant is **recoverable** if false or fraudulent information is found in the application or claim.
- The project must **align with individual fund objectives.**
- Grant funding **cannot be used** for equipment previously funded through other grants.
- Have a dedicated and active Company Registration Number or Unique Tax Reference Number.

19. My project will not complete by December 2025, can I still apply.

In principle – Yes. But applications that run past December 2025 will not be prioritised. It is advised that you discuss any delays or expected delays with the funding team ASAP

20. My project has been severely delayed and now will not complete until after March 2026. Can I still claim funding.

No. If this is the case, or becomes an issue, contact us ASAP.

21. What information do I need when completing the application?

Applicants should review the **fund-specific guidance notes** to ensure they have the necessary information prepared.

22. What can the funding be spent on?

Funding **eligibility varies** by fund. Please refer to individual fund guidelines for details.

23. What can't the funding be spent on?

While individual funds have specific criteria, grant funding generally **cannot** be used for:

- Working capital (e.g., stock)
- Wage payments
- PPE equipment and consumables
- Activities contradicting, duplicating, or undermining UK Government initiatives
- Structural building work
- Non-industrial vehicle purchases
- Computer equipment, laptops, mobile phones, TVs, etc.
- Retrospective purchases or activity
- General business expenses
- Professional fees (e.g., legal, accountancy)
- Property expenses
- Training courses and other associated training

This list is **not exhaustive**—if you have questions about the eligibility of your project or purchase, please contact us.

24. Can I purchase second-hand goods?

Yes, second-hand equipment purchases **may** be eligible for grant funding if:

- The seller provides a **declaration of origin**, confirming it was **not previously purchased** using national or European grants within the last **seven years**.
- The equipment includes a **minimum six-month warranty**.

25. One of my machines has broken, can I seek grant funding to repair it?

No.

26. Can I use grant funding to replace what I already have with the same functionality and usability.

No.

UKSPF funding is fundamentally a fund designed to support business to bring something new to the business or enabling the business to do something new. This could be a new service, new product, accessing a new market etc...

27. Do I have to use local suppliers?

No, you can choose any **registered business supplier**, if the service or product is eligible for funding and relevant to supporting your business. However, you must confirm that the supplier is **independent of you and your business**, with **no conflict of interest**.

28. When do I pay the supplier?

All expenditure must be **paid in full upfront** before a grant claim can be made. Applicants must provide:

- **Supplier invoices**
- A **business bank statement** showing payment to the supplier
- The **bank statement and invoice must match**

We **do not accept** payments made via **credit cards** or staggered payment arrangements where the full amount is not paid upfront.

29. Can Telford and Wrekin pay my supplier directly?

No.

30. What if I have problems with my supplier?

Applicants are fully responsible for ensuring work is completed to specification and satisfaction. The agreement is solely between the applicant and supplier—we **cannot** intervene in disputes or guarantee the quality of work.

31. I don't want to get 3 quotes as I know who my preferred supplier is, can I apply with 1 quote.

No.

All applicants are required to submit 3 quotes. Failure to do so will see your application rejected.

32. The item / service I am seeking support for is specialist and there is only 1 supplier, can apply with 1 quote.

In the rare case that this is the case, applicants will have to proceed through a public tender process to confirm. This will only be done in exceptional circumstances and all applicants who think this may apply to them should contact us ASAP to discuss.

33. I don't want to upload bank statements; can I still apply?

No.

34. Can I claim the VAT?

- **VAT-registered businesses:** Cannot claim VAT through the grant.
- **Non-VAT registered businesses:** Can claim VAT **but** must not later attempt to recover VAT through HMRC.

VAT status **will be checked**, and incorrect information may lead to application rejection.

35. I am a sole trader—can I apply?

Yes, provided you:

- Are **based in Telford and Wrekin**
- **Pay council tax** to Telford & Wrekin Council
- Have a **Unique Tax Reference (UTR)**

36. What does 'dedicated business account' mean?

All businesses **must** have a dedicated business bank account.

For businesses with a separate business account:

- The account must **match the business name** on the grant application.
- The account must contain **only business transactions**, separate from personal finances.

For businesses using a personal bank account:

- The account must be **used for both personal and business transactions**.
- All **grant-related payments** must be made from this account.
- Grant funds will be deposited into this account.
- Applications using personal accounts will be **assessed on a case-by-case basis**.

37. My Companies House accounts are either overdue, or the business is in the process of liquidating / dissolving can I apply?

No.

38. Can I change suppliers after grant approval?

Yes, but you must:

- Obtain a **new quote** from the new supplier
- Submit the updated quote to the **funding team**
- **Wait for approval** from a project officer before proceeding

Any unapproved supplier changes will invalidate your grant.

39. Can I change what I spend the grant on after approval?

Changes **may** be allowed but must be approved by the **funding team**.

- **Minor adjustments** require approval.
- **Major changes** may lead to **grant withdrawal** if the new project does not align with the original objectives.

Discuss any proposed changes **before proceeding**—unauthorised changes will **invalidate** your grant.

40. How long does it take to receive a grant decision?

Please refer to **individual fund guidance notes** for specific timelines.

41. When will I receive the grant if successful?

Grant disbursement **varies by fund**—check the guidance notes for details.

42. Can I appeal if my grant application is rejected?

No, due to limited funding and high application volumes, **appeals are not permitted**.

- Applicants are responsible for **completing applications correctly** and demonstrating compliance with grant requirements.
- Contact us **before** applying if you need clarification.
- An **early application does not guarantee approval**.
- If further funding becomes available, applicants **may** re-submit their application.

43. Do I have to repay the grant?

The grant is **recoverable** if the application or claim includes **false or fraudulent information**, or the applicant **cannot evidence agreed outputs**.

44. How is my data used? (GDPR Compliance)

Data collected under the **Thrive Telford Programme** is used for business support and stored in the **Telford & Wrekin Council CRM Database (Evolutive)**.

Data may be shared with:

- **Telford & Wrekin Council**, as the Accountable Body
- **National Government**, the Marches Growth Hub, MHCLG (or their subcontractors), and DBT (Department for Business and Trade)
- Relevant business support partners and providers

45. Is the grant taxable?

Yes, grant funding is considered **taxable income** and must be included in business accounts.

46. Grant Aid / Subsidy Control

You will be expected to inform us within your application form of any grants and other support you have received from the public sector over the last 3 financial years.

This scheme is covered by the current [UK Government Subsidy Control Act \(2022\)](#). The total amount of Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) received over a rolling period of three fiscal years should not exceed £315,000 per business.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to monitor the level of MFA received; you will be asked to declare that this has not been exceeded in the event of an offer being made. [* The MFA financial threshold applies at company group level.]

Where applicants do not adequately demonstrate that the proposed project is compliant under the UK Subsidy Control Regime it may be considered ineligible, and your application could be rejected.