



Start Up Grant Funding Guide

Thank you for your interest in applying for start up funding.

In this guide, you will find helpful information regarding the grants available, eligible costs, the eligibility criteria and the application process.

If you have any questions about applying for funding, please email bgateway@westlothian.gov.uk or contact your dedicated adviser directly.

Introduction

Discretionary funding is available through Business Gateway West Lothian to support individuals who face barriers to starting a business or accessing traditional finance.

The grant programme aims to encourage inclusive economic growth by helping residents create sustainable businesses, move towards self-employment, and contribute positively to the West Lothian economy.

There are two Start-up Grants available:

- **Intro to Business Grant**
 - Available to pre-start individuals and early-stage businesses.
 - Designed to support applicants who require financial assistance to help establish their business. A maximum of £1500 grant awarded, subject to assessment and the anticipated economic impact.
- **High-Value Start-up Grant**
 - Available to businesses at pre-start stage and up to 12 months after trading commenced.
 - Businesses must meet two of the following criteria:
 - VAT registered,
 - Operating from commercial premises or
 - Creating employment opportunities.
 - A maximum of £4000 grant awarded subject to economic impact.

Funding is limited and decisions will be assessed against the criteria listed below.

What the Grant Can Support

- Essential tools and equipment
- Website Development
- Marketing Materials
- Small level of stock items.

What the Grant Can't Support

- Personal living costs or cash flow
- Vehicles
- Salary costs
- Rent payments
- Costs incurred before approval
- VAT is **not included** in the grant funding expenditure.

Who Can Apply?

Criteria	Guidance
Location	Applicants must live in West Lothian or operate from commercial premises based in West Lothian.
Trading	Support is available to businesses up to 3 months before starting to trade and up to 12 months after commencing trading.
Age	You must be over 18 years old to access funding.
Business Plan and Financial Forecast	You must submit a comprehensive business plan and financial forecast as part of your application. Your Business Gateway Adviser will be able to help you with this.
Previous Funding	You must not have accessed funding previously for business start up.
Resources	You must have accessed the Resource section on www.investinwestlothian.com on how to complete a business plan and help to complete the application process.
Priority Applicants	Priority will be given to clients that face the following barriers and those making a greater economic impact: • Accessing finance • Long-term unemployed or economically inactive • Lone parents Young people aged 18 – 24 year old

What Happens Next?

Action	Guidance
Grant Approval	Once your application has been approved, you will be required to sign the Terms & Conditions of the grant funding.
Payment	Grant payments will be made retrospectively. This means that following a successful application, you will need to purchase the items first and submit receipts and bank statements to claim the grant.
Monitoring	Your Business Gateway Adviser will continue to provide support and you will be required to provide information 12 months after you have received the grant. This will focus on sustainability and turnover.

The Start-up Grant is discretionary and subject to available budget. Council's decision is final.

Business Gateway West Lothian reserves the right to prioritise applications that demonstrate the greatest financial need, economic impact, or contribution to inclusive growth objectives.

Business Support Overview April 2025 – March 2026

“Building Cariad Beauty has been an incredible journey and Business Gateway has been a fantastic source of support along the way. The advice and guidance I’ve received has helped me grow in confidence as a business owner and continue developing my business within the West Lothian community.”

**Cassy Innes,
Cariad Beauty**



321

**New business
supported
at the start up stage.**



£116,559

**Total funding
provided to
new businesses.**

“Business Gateway played a crucial role in helping me set up my new business. From supplying information and templates, to providing access to funding, they were with me every step of the way. I would highly recommend that anyone thinking of starting their own venture get in touch and make use of their free business support services.”

**Paul Stark,
Sustainable Sport Scotland**