



Okehampton Town Council

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## COVID19 Grant Policy

Okehampton Town Council has set aside, from its general reserves, an additional amount of £3,000 for a COVID19 Grant Budget for the 2020/21 financial year. This funding will be awarded under the General Power of Competence and is for the sole purpose of:

- Supporting organisations who are providing COVID19 assistance to those residing within the Okehampton town boundary,
- Providing direct financial aid to individuals who reside within the town boundary, who have exhausted all other possibilities (have applied, and been turned down for other grants, and sources of funding; ie WDBC's grants) and have been referred to the Council by:
  - Okehampton Citizens Advice, or
  - Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group, through Councillors Button and Travers who are members of that group

### Applications by Referral

Grants of up to £100 may be made to individuals (strictly one per household) to alleviate hardship resulting directly from the COVID19 pandemic. This could be by way of the provision of vouchers from local shops for food, household items, medical or sanitary supplies, gas/electricity meter top-ups may be provided, or consideration given to other essential items as recommended by the referrer.

Referrals received from Okehampton Citizens Advice will have been screened and will be considered on that basis.

Referrals from Okehampton Coronavirus Support Group should be by completion of the application form, be accompanied by supporting documentation and submitted to the Town Clerk, the criteria being:

An individual or household member who has (since 23<sup>rd</sup> March) as a direct result of the government's Coronavirus restrictions either;

- become unemployed and is not eligible or included in the government's Job Retention Scheme (furlough), or
- if self-employed, has lost all work and income and is not eligible for the government's Self-Employment Income Support Scheme,

The referrer must commit to providing the applicant with signposting for future help and financial advice including budget management and be mindful of any safeguarding indicators that may be apparent.

Applicants would need to provide evidence of job or work loss and proof of registered address; ie redundancy notice from employer and/or recent utility bill/bank statement.

Exclusions: persons already unemployed or not working on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020.

## **Groups or Organisations**

Groups or organisations applying to the Council for this funding should do so by completion of the Council's grant application form and submitting it to the Town Clerk for consideration. Additional applications may be considered on production of receipts and proof that the need is valid.

## **Consideration of Applications**

Due to the anticipated urgent nature of the applications under this scheme, consideration for the approval of applications has been delegated to the Clerk/Assistant Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee, or their respective Deputies/Vice-Chairmen, provided they are satisfied that the criteria has been met.

Grants will be paid by preferably by BACS, or cheque to the named payee applicant.

The Clerk will take reasonable steps to ensure the validity of the applications, but it is recognised that means testing is not possible.

Any grants made will be reported to the next Policy & Resources Committee Meeting.

## **Duration**

The scheme will run for the 2020/21 financial year only and will end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 or sooner if the budget is exhausted prior to that date, unless revised by the Council.