



Application Guidelines

Please read the following carefully before completing application form

Launch Date: Monday 13th December 2021

Closing Date for Applications: The Business Start Accelerator is a rolling programme appointed on a first come first serve basis in line with a competitive process, until all funding has been exhausted.

1. Background

Take the next step on your journey to success with the support of the Start Up Accelerator Programme, designed to assist local budding entrepreneurs to progress their business idea.

The programme is a partnership between Derry City and Strabane District Council, Enterprise North West and Strabane Enterprise Agency and is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

The programme is open to all new businesses, in any sector, who are currently participating in, or have recently completed the Go For It programme within the last 6 months.

The programme is specifically targeted at individuals who are new to enterprise and particularly welcomes applications from:

- Unemployed/ Economically inactive individuals
- Young People (16-24 year old)
- Disabled people
- People aged 50+
- Lone parents

- Females
- Individuals from rural communities

As such priority will be given to applicants in these categories.

The 'Start Up Accelerator Programme' will assist individuals to explore their business idea and further and develop their business skills. The programme offers a number of exciting opportunities, including:

- Access to two new incubation hubs in Derry and Strabane. The incubation hubs will provide participants with high quality office space, admin support, access to high speed broadband/ IT Support and access to meeting and conference facilities.
- Two pop up shops will be available to eligible programme participants to help them to connect with new customers and showcase their products in prime retail locations from February to June 2022. Candidates will be selected through a competitive process, with five places available in Derry and one in Strabane. This initiative will be delivered in collaboration with the Fashion and Textile Design Centre in Derry and Strabane BID.
- One to one mentoring support from leading figures across a range of industries, as well as a series of workshops and Entrepreneurs Forum.
- Successful candidates will be awarded a business grant (upon completion of the programme) up to £1,000 to purchase items such as marketing materials, equipment, premises fit out, rent or training to assist them in their venture.

2. Eligibility

1. The Grant application process will open on 13th December 2021.
2. Applicants must be over the age of 16 and not in full time education.
3. Applicants must be working a minimum of 16 hours per week in their business.
4. Applicants must be residents of the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.
5. Applicants must be starting the new business, in any sector within the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.
6. Applicants must have completed the 'Go For It Programme' with Strabane Enterprise Agency/ Enterprise NW within the last 6 months and have a viable business plan and financial projections.
7. Applicants must have registered / or will register as self-employed/ sole trader or establish a limited company.
8. Businesses are classified as those seeking to make a profit and performing a business function. (Registered Charities are not eligible for this funding)
9. Applicants should be able to demonstrate that they are committed to using the package to start and grow a new business over the next 6 months.
10. The applicant must receive business start-up advice from Strabane Enterprise Agency or Enterprise North West.
11. Successful applicants will be issued with a letter of offer. Participants will be required to sign a declaration accepting the terms and conditions of the letter of offer.

12. The grant award will be up to a maximum of £1,000 payable upon completion of the programme towards eligible items as detailed in section 5. The grant **is not** a cash award, Derry City & Strabane District Council will be responsible for purchasing eligible items on behalf of participants.
13. Applicants must provide feedback on the project regarding support received including post programme evaluation.
14. Participation on the programme will be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis to ensure that participants are progressing in line with their Acceleration Action Plans which will be developed upon acceptance onto the programme. If progress is deemed inadequate project partners reserve the right to withdraw the offer of support.
15. Only one application allowed per new business.
16. The Panel reserve the right to explore any data in the public domain and request additional information to satisfy authenticity.
17. The Panel reserves the right to reject any application in its absolute discretion where there are inaccuracies or the panel cannot verify information.
18. The Panel will assess all applications received to ensure eligibility, capability to deliver the business proposal and ability to participate in the programme and reserves the right to reject any application on this basis.
19. Successful applications will be awarded through a competitive process on a rolling basis until all funding has been consumed.
20. Applications will be scored according to an established assessment criteria, see Section 4.
21. The grant is made on the strict condition that in the event the funds are not deployed to the specified project, the grant will be withdrawn. Any financial liabilities to suppliers/providers arising from this action will transfer to the grant applicant.
22. Applicants must not have a criminal record, current bankruptcy or current debt charges.
23. Applicants must fall within current state aid thresholds. De minimus forms will be required upon successful application.

3. The Application Process

- The Start Up Acceleration programme will be awarded through a competitive application process which is open for applications from Monday 13th December 2021 on a rolling basis until all funding has been consumed.
- Applicants are required **to answer all questions** in the application form which shall be scored as per the Scoring Criteria outlined in Section 4. Incomplete applications will be rejected.
- A total of 50 places are available throughout the duration of the programme.

4. Scoring criteria

- The application will be assessed against five criteria

Criteria	Weighting	Maximum Score
1. What inspired you to start your own business?	3	15%
2. Overview of your business idea and how you plan to develop your business over the next 12 months.	5	25%
3. Overview of your market analysis	5	25%
4. What are your business goals and how will this programme assist you in meeting your business goals over the next 12 months, and how will this benefit the local economy of Derry Strabane?	5	25%
5. How will you spend your £1000 seed fund and how will this benefit your business?	2	10%

- Each question will be scored according to established criteria shown in the table below:

Band	Comments	Marking out of 5
5	Fully detailed evidence provided, very minor concerns on detail, relevance or complexity	5
4	Detailed evidence provided, some concerns on detail, relevance or complexity	4
3	Reasonable evidence provided, lacking in detail, relevance or complexity	3
2	Limited evidence provided, significant concerns on detail, relevance or complexity	2
1	Little or no evidence provided, very significant concerns on detail, relevance or complexity	1
0	Failed to submit details or to address question	0

5. Item Eligibility

Eligible for grant assistance:

- Rent
- Computer / Digital Equipment inc. relevant software
- Machines / Equipment relevant to product/service design and development
- Shop fit out
- Marketing including marketing collateral – signage, promotional materials etc
- Website
- Training

Ineligible for grant assistance:

- Mobile phones
- Second Hand Equipment
- Stock for general trading
- Consumable Items
- Salaries
- Vehicles
- Insurance
- Electric
- Alcohol
- Costs that are not auditable
- Provide financial gain to applicant
- Spend which has already taken place (pre LoO)
- Licenced / Subscription services