

# Helping Deliver Over £268m in Covid-19 Business Grants

Liberata has been able to help our Local Authorities clients support businesses across their area with valuable grants during a critical time.

## Overview

In 2020 the global landscape changed due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The introduction of national restrictions meant that many businesses had to close their doors for the foreseeable future with no idea of when they could possibly welcome back their customers.

The UK Government announced a national lockdown which ran from 26th March 2020 until 4th July 2020 and saw restrictions on all non-essential businesses with many having to close and not being able to trade. Whilst the first national lockdown was coming to an end, localised lockdowns were then being implemented in areas such as Leicester, meaning whilst some businesses nationally were allowed to open those local lockdown areas had to still remain closed. A second national lockdown soon followed on 5th November 2020 which impacted businesses once again until 2nd December 2020, a final national lockdown soon followed again coming into effect from 6th January until February 2021. In between the second and third national lockdowns there was also the introduction of Tier 2, Tier 3 and Tier 4 localised restrictions which continued to prevent certain businesses from trading dependant on the tier level

the area was placed under. The financial implications of these national and localised lockdowns would have made a staggering, long lasting effect on some businesses, who would struggle with no or reduced income coming through the door.

Throughout these periods the Government looked to offer help to those impacted businesses with the release of various business grants enabling qualifying businesses to gain some cover for their loss of income. These would come in the form of various grants such as:

- Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum
- Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed)
- Christmas Support Payment
- Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG)
- Closed Business Lockdown Payment
- Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open)
- Restart Grant

*"The support provided from Liberata to help our execution of the grant process has been invaluable. The joint partnership has been truly outstanding and shows the benefits of having a real partnership approach. There have been challenges along the way and there will be more in the future but the challenges have been addressed professionally and with the priority necessary."*

**Peter Turner, Director of Finance, the London Borough of Bromley**

# The Challenge

Local Authorities were being inundated with requests from various businesses about how they can claim relevant grants applicable to their business. Through the sheer volume of requests some authorities just didn't have the teams or infrastructure to be able to cope with the demands being asked of them, whilst also still working on the normal day to day workloads.

## The Solution

Liberata was able to offer their integrated service approach to help authorities tackle the increased workloads posed by the launch of these various grants. Liberata conducted work with councils including the London Borough of Bromley, the London Borough of Hillingdon, the London Borough of Hounslow, North Somerset Council, Redcar and Cleveland Council, Pendle Borough Council, Burnley Borough Council and Slough Borough Council. The support Liberata provided these businesses covered by both national and local discretionary schemes adopted by each Local Authority.

Liberata worked with these authorities to understand which businesses were eligible for each grant; to put in place an application method; made determinations on eligibility; identified instances of fraud and error and to make payments to eligible businesses.

## The Benefits

Liberata was instrumental in supporting these authorities by paying out in excess of £268million of business grants throughout the pandemic. In total Liberata has supported authorities by paying the following (as at June 2021):

- £159 million of Small Business and Retail grants to nearly 12,000 business during the initial phases of the pandemic
- Nearly £10 million of Local Restriction Support Grants (Closed) Addendum payments to 5,600 business in respect of the November lockdown
- £1 million of Local Restriction Support Grants (Closed) payments to 1,800 businesses
- £300,000 in Christmas Support Payments to over 100 businesses
- Over £3 million of Additional Restriction Grants to 6,400 business
- Over £25 million of Local Restriction Support Grants (Closed) Addendum payments over the third national lockdown period in early 2021
- Closed Business Lockdown Payments totalling £24.5 million to nearly 5,000 businesses
- Just over £1 million in Local Restriction Support Grants (Open) payments to 1,500 businesses
- Almost £30 million in Restart grants to 3,600 businesses

*"Liberata as a long term strategic partner of the council has reacted very positively to the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring our businesses and residents have experienced swift support and minimal disruption across a range of our services. The abrupt pressures generated from the administration of business rates grants and increases in demand for benefit awards have been processed well with the team going above and beyond."*

**Stuart Anstead, Head of Support Services, North Somerset Council**

Contact us for more information