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**Grant for Apprentices Guidance Notes**

**What is it?**

**The Grant for Apprentices scheme is for apprentices in the Winchester District, either currently in a role or due to start one in the near future. It is for the sole benefit of the apprentice and is designed to remove any practical barriers which might prevent them from taking on or continuing in their role.**

The grant can be given in the form of specific items the apprentice needs, or vouchers to purchase those items. Some items, such as travel costs, may be paid in separate instalments. All items requested are subject to certain criteria set out below. The grant can be applied for at any time during the financial year using a short application form.

**Who can apply?**

**To be eligible, you must live or work in the Winchester District, and be earning less than the** [living wage](https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates)**. Once you have been awarded a grant from Winchester City Council you cannot apply again in subsequent years. You must be able to prove a need for the grant which will not be met by other means.**

**What can it be spent on?**

The grant is intended to remove any practical barriers which might prevent you from taking up or continuing an apprenticeship, such as:

* Transport costs to the workplace or training location (maximum £1000 grant, paid for a maximum of 12 months)
* Appropriate clothes for the workplace (maximum £200 grant)
* Essential equipment (e.g. tools) (maximum £500 grant)

**The maximum total grant allowance is £1000.**

This list is not exhaustive. The grant can potentially be used for any cost relating to the apprenticeship which is not reasonably met by your wages, benefits, training provider, employer or other grants applied for.

Please note that the grant **cannot be used for items that have already been purchased or ordered**, or for items which your employer should be providing. The Head of Economy and Arts at Winchester City Council will make the final decision over the eligibility of the application.

**What criteria are used to assess the application?**

**You must:**

* **Submit a completed, signed application form**
* **Be an apprentice or have the formal offer of an apprenticeship (we will confirm this with your employer)**
* **Live or work within the Winchester District (if you live within the District you must provide proof of address, if your work location is/will be within the District we will confirm it with your employer)**
* **Earn less than the national living wage (we will confirm this with your employer)**
* Specify what the grant will be used for and its cost (evidenced by, for example, a link to webpage)
* **Explain why the grant is needed (you may need to include supporting evidence as to why the items cannot be funded elsewhere)**

**If your application is successful you may be asked to take part in general publicity for the grant scheme, such as providing quotes or photos for press releases, and to assist in the evaluation of the scheme.**

**How do I apply?**

An application form is available to download on [our website](http://www.winchester.gov.uk/business/business-grants/apprenticeship-grants). Please email the completed and signed application form with supporting information to businessgrants@winchester.gov.uk

Alternatively it can be posted to: Apprentice Grants, Economy and Arts, Winchester City Council, Colebrook Street, Winchester, SO23 9LJ. Please mark your application as Private and Confidential.

**It is extremely important that you do not spend prior to formal notification of grant approval.**

**What happens next?**

Once we receive your completed application, we will contact your employer and training provider to confirm that you are currently in an apprentice role or have been offered one, and are registered with the training provider.

The application will be scored against the criteria and assessed by the grants panel. If successful, you will be formally notified of this and sent a funding agreement to sign and return to us. Again, it is extremely important that you do not spend before receiving this formal notification of approval.

The grant is usually paid retrospectively, which means that the items will be paid for by yourself, and then reimbursed once you send us proof of purchase and payment in the form of receipts. In special circumstances the grants panel may be able to purchase items on your behalf, so the grant would be given in specific items required, vouchers or travel tickets.

In order to reimburse you for your expenditure, our Finance department will contact you to obtain your bank details in order to set you up as a creditor. Once this has been done and we have received your proof of purchase and payment, the grant will be paid via direct bank payment.

**Winchester City Council audit checks**

Successful applicants will be subject to a review to ensure purchases have been made in accordance with the Grant for Apprentices criteria, application form, and funding agreement. You will be required to repay any grant which has been paid as a result of any false statement by you, or where the grant has not been used for the specified purpose as set out in the funding agreement.

**Notes to applicants**

Successful applicants will be responsible for their own tax liabilities as a result of receiving this grant.

Winchester City Council has allocated funds to support apprenticeships in this financial year and this may not be available in future years. Applications will only be approved where there is sufficient budget to fund the grant.

This fund does not replace or compete with the Government’s incentive to employers or any other grant scheme.

More information about apprenticeships can be found at <http://apprenticeships.org.uk>

**Publication of information**

Winchester City Council will publish an anonymised list of grants on its website ([www.winchester.gov.uk](http://www.winchester.gov.uk)).

**For help and advice in completing your application please contact:**

Carol Hussey or Zoe Sipsma (Economy & Arts Support Officers)

Tel: 01962 848 196 or 01962 848 303

Email: businessgrants@winchester.gov.uk