

Signpost 2 Grants Terms & Conditions

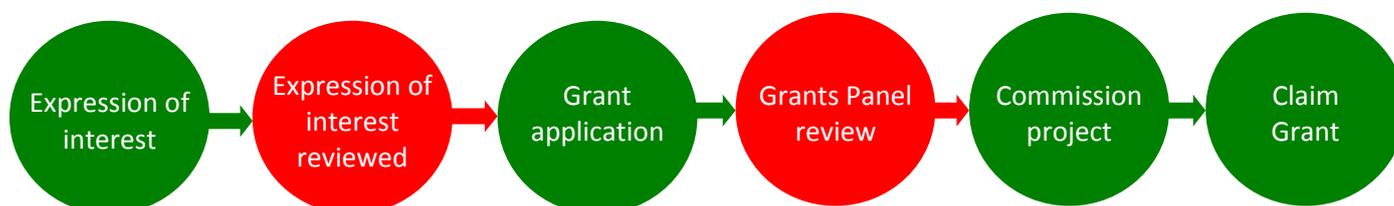
Introduction

The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP (GCGP) is fully funding and supporting the successful delivery of “Signpost 2 Grants”. “NWES” has been employed by GCGP to manage the grant application process on behalf of GCGP. “Signpost 2 Grants” is a “trading name” of these entities.

Guidance for grant applicants

Our grant is available to any small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) as long as it fulfils the criteria and conditions outlined herein. The aim of the Grant is to provide a flexible capital subsidy to assist SMEs implement initiatives to realise growth and efficiency opportunities. The Grant can be used to assist where the SME has not previously invested or in areas that will potentially make the business more viable, or act as a catalyst for competitiveness.

Signpost 2 Grants is a two-stage process. To apply for assistance, you must first complete and submit our simple **Signpost 2 Grants Expression of Interest Form**. You may then be invited to submit a **Signpost 2 Grants Grant Application Form**. This is reviewed by our Grants Panel, who will inform you of their decision. If you are successful, you’ll receive a Grant Offer Letter, detailing the value of the grant offered and other terms and conditions.



Please note that we **cannot** retrospectively fund initiatives that have already been commissioned, paid for in full or in part or otherwise definitively initiated before a formal offer of a grant has been issued.

About our grants

Our grants are available **up to a maximum of 20% of eligible capital expenditure**, with the other 80% of costs met by the applicant. Typical grant awards are **between £2,000 and £20,000**. Multiple grant applications from the same applicant cannot be considered. Our grants are discretionary and not all applicants will be awarded the full 20% of eligible costs. It is expected that **for every £10,000 of grant assistance requested, one job must be created** (for amounts under £10,000 an indication of the grant impact on future job creation is required).

What the Grant **can** support

- investment in the purchase and installation of equipment, machinery, technology or processes that facilitates business growth, improves resilience or creates jobs

What the Grant **cannot** support

- paying-off debts or refinancing
 - the purchase of stock, land, buildings
 - financial investments
 - salaries, travel or subsistence
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- investment in efficiency initiatives in the form of equipment to realise materials/utilities optimisation, recovery or reduction
- ongoing normal business costs (i.e. business rates, overheads etc.)
- costs associated with a statutory or legislative requirement for the organisation

Help completing the *Signpost 2 Grants Grant Expression of Interest Form*

There are a limited number of grants available and your response to the questions on the Expression of Interest form will directly influence the outcome of your application. The following guidance will help you to make a strong case for grant support as the expression of interest stage.

- **Questions 1-9** – please note that the Grant is only available to eligible SMEs within the local authority areas of Cambridge, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Forest Heath, Huntingdonshire, Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, North Hertfordshire, Peterborough, Rutland, South Cambridgeshire, St Edmundsbury, South Holland or Uttlesford.
- **Question 10** – “to purchase a piece of machinery” would not be sufficient detail. A better response would include brief details of why you need it, how it will be used and how it compliments other processes. You should use this section to demonstrate how the Grant would make a difference, not simply fund something that’s going to happen anyway. The Grant could, however, be used to a) bring forward programmed initiatives, b) extend/expand programmed initiatives, or c) enhance the specification/benefits of a programmed initiative.
- **Question 11** – please outline whether the proposed investment will result in your organisation creating new jobs – job-creation is a priority for Signpost 2 Grants. For every £10,000 of grant applied for, one job must be created (or part-time equivalent for amounts under £10,000).
- **Question 12** – please outline the specific benefits that the initiative will realise. For example, will it result in the organisation being able to offer a new product to its customers – if so, what? Signpost 2 Grants attaches particular importance to supporting enterprises to grow.
- **Question 13** – this can include reasonable installation costs for equipment, as well as purchase costs. These values should not include VAT.
- **Question 14** – you can apply for whatever grant assistance you wish, but intervention levels exceeding 20% or £20,000 are unlikely to be considered. In considering your proposals, Signpost 2 Grants will assess whether, or not, the initiatives and outcomes outlined justify the value of grant applied for.
- **Questions 15-18** – these questions demonstrate your organisation’s status as an eligible small or medium-sized enterprise (SME).
- **Question 19** – this grant constitutes *state aid*. Any state aid (including our Grant) awarded to you will be relevant if you wish to apply, or have applied, for any other grant aid. It is the responsibility of the organisations receiving the aid to report on any other aid via a public source that they have received. Failure to advise of a grant or exemption from a cost otherwise due (e.g. other grants, rate relief from public authority etc.) could lead to the claw back of the funds plus interest.

Help completing the *Signpost 2 Grants Grant Application Form*

There are a limited number of grants available and your response to the questions on the application form will directly influence the application appraisal process and should be answered as fully as possible. The following will help you to make a strong case for grant support.

- **Question 8** – “to purchase a piece of machinery” would not be sufficient detail. A better response would include details of how the machinery can contribute to your organisation’s growth or efficiency, why you need it, how it will be used and how it compliments other processes. The Grants Panel is looking for *additionality*; you should use this section to demonstrate how the Grant would make a difference, not simply fund something that’s going to happen anyway. The Grant could, however, be used to a) bring forward programmed initiatives, b) extend/expand programmed initiatives, or c) enhance the specification/benefits of a programmed initiative.
- **Question 9** – aspects that could be included in response to this question include competitiveness, viability, future growth and/or efficiency, increased capabilities or labour force, new products or new areas of investment or research activity.

- **Question 10** – please outline the specific benefits that the initiative will realise. For example, what are the anticipated annual cost savings that this initiative or initiatives would deliver? Will it result in the organisation being able to offer a new product to its customers – if so, what? The Grants Panel attaches particular importance to a) job creation, and b) supporting enterprises to introduce new products or services, including *process innovation* as long as the process contributes to the development of the product or service. Other benefits of investment are covered in **Question 11**.
- **Question 12** – please outline whether the proposed investment will result in your organisation creating new jobs – job-creation is a priority for Signpost 2 Grants. For every £10,000 of grant applied for, one job must be created (or part-time equivalent for amounts under £10,000). You will be required to provide evidence of any jobs created as a result of grant support at the point of claim.
- **Question 13** – this can include reasonable installation costs for equipment, as well as purchase costs. These values should not include VAT.
- **Questions 14-15** – these questions outline how you’re planning to fund the proposed investment. Ideally, you will purchase physical assets outright. In some cases, it’s possible to combine our grants with other external sources of funding, but this is more complex and you would need to contact us for advice. Other public sector funding cannot be included within the 80% of eligible costs that grant applicants are expected to meet. From the Grants Panel’s perspective, the most straightforward option is to invest using company reserves, cash or equivalent.
- **Question 16** – you can apply for whatever grant assistance you wish, but intervention levels exceeding 20% or £20,000 are unlikely to be considered. In considering your proposals, Signpost2Grants will assess whether, or not, the initiatives and outcomes outlined justify the value of grant applied for.
- **Questions 17-21** – these questions demonstrate your organisation’s status as an eligible small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). The information is the same that you will have provided when you originally completed your **Signpost 2 Grants Expression of Interest Form**.
- **Question 22** – this grant constitutes *state aid*. Any state aid (including our Grant) awarded to you will be relevant if you wish to apply, or have applied, for any other grant aid. It is the responsibility of the organisations receiving the aid to report on any other aid via a public source that they have received. Failure to advise of a grant or exemption from a cost otherwise due (e.g. other grants, rate relief from public authority etc.) could lead to the claw back of the funds plus interest.

Procurement rules

Please secure a minimum of three written quotes in relation to each initiative within your grant application; it is acceptable to use print-outs from websites for smaller or generic goods/services. You are not obliged to accept the lowest quote received, but a written explanation of the rationale behind any such decision will be required. Please be aware of your own company policy on procurement procedures.

You will need to present realistic costs in response to **Question 13**, so some procurement activity will need to have been carried out, anyway. Unless there are clear reasons set out in writing why you have been unable to obtain three quotes, then satisfactory evidence of procurement will be required at the point you claim your grant.

Please note the thresholds for advertising in the Official Journal of the EU. General guidance is that projects exceeding £100,000 in total value must adhere to EU rules on public procurement, which are designed to open up the EU's public procurement market to competition, to prevent buy national policies and to promote the free movement of goods and services. For more information, please refer to www.ojec.com.

State Aid

In simple terms, State Aid is defined as:

- financial support that is received from a Member State of the European Union (including UK Government and local authorities);
- that favours a selected business; and

- has the potential to distort competition and affect trade between Member State of the European Union.

You may find it beneficial to obtain your own advice on State Aid matters.

Other points to note

- Please ensure that you provide all the evidence required to process and verify your Grant Application Form, paying particular attention to the checklist presented in **Question 24**.
- Please provide any evidence or workings to support the outputs and outcomes attributable in whole or in part to the initiative(s) outlined and the provision of a grant.
- You are asked co-operate, if requested, with the project to promote and publicise any outcomes in the form of press releases, case studies or other communications unless there are clear reasons not to (for example, confidentiality around intellectual property or patents etc.).
- A **Signpost2Grants Grant Claim Form** must be submitted within 3 months of receiving a grant offer.
- All grant payments are made as reimbursements to the applicant subject to the satisfactory provision of proof of expenditure in accordance with the original application. Grants will be settled within 3 months of the submission of the claim form.
- If applicant intends to pay for goods or services (which are the subject of their grant application) on HP or other credit facility, interest payments are not eligible for grant reimbursement. Any grant will be paid in instalments upon receipt of confirmation that the applicant has incurred eligible costs. You must inform us of your intention to make us of such a facility at the point of grant application, in **Question 15** of your **Signpost 2 Grants Grant Application Form**, not at the point of grant claim.
- As a grant recipient, you must agree to support the principle of equal opportunities to ensure that all employees and beneficiaries of support are treated fairly, with dignity and respect and oppose all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination on the grounds of colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sex, disability, age, religious belief, sexual orientation or marital status. If your organisation has a diversity/equality policy, please append it to your grant application.
- The Grants Panel may well attach specific conditions to any grant offers made.
- The application and approval of our Grants will follow a clear, structured and transparent process to ensure a fair and level playing field is maintained at all times, and that all applicants are treated equally.
- Signpost 2 Grant shall assess the business plans and/or financial strength (as the case may be) of each applicant and any approval or rejection of a Grant application shall be at the sole discretion of Signpost 2 Grants, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership Ltd (GCGP LEP), and Norfolk & Waveney Enterprise Services Ltd (NWES).