

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) Scheme: Taxi Driver Support Grant (ARG-Taxi)

#### INTRODUCTION

In response to the Coronavirus 4-week National Lockdown, ending on 02/12/2020, which was announced on 31/10/2020, the Government also announced there would be funding provided to Local Authorities to support businesses in their areas. The Additional Restrictions Grants Scheme (ARG) was announced alongside the Local Restrictions Support Grant.

ARG funds have been made available to support local economies and businesses that have been adversely impacted by imposed national restrictions. Local authorities, however, have the discretion to determine how much funding to provide businesses and which businesses to target.

Fareham Borough Council received an initial payment of £2,324,660, and a top-up of £1,032,504 (total £3,357,164) in funding for the ARG scheme. It has been stated that no additional funds will be awarded within the 2020/21 and 2021/22 financial years, although it was announced in the March 2021 budget that further ARG funds may be allocated.

Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides all local authorities with the vires to make these payments.

Fareham Borough Council has adopted a set of principles which underpin how the ARG funds will be used. The table below shows that the funds will be used for grant funding and wider support schemes. However, there may be some movement of funding between the parts depending on the level of take up.

Part of Scheme	Time period	% of Funding Allocated	Value of Funding
First Tranche of Grants to Businesses	Dec 20 - Feb 21	27.7%	£929,864
Second Tranche of Grants to Businesses	Jan 21 - Mar 21	27.7%	£929,864
Wider Support Schemes	Apr 21 - Mar 22	13.8%	£464,932
Top-up funds		30.8%	£1,032,504
			<b>£3,357,164</b>

This document covers the Taxi Support Grant Scheme which will be funded from the Top-up funds.

## TAXI SUPPORT GRANT SCHEME

The Taxi Support Grant Scheme (ARG-Taxi) will commence in March 2021.

The aim of this scheme is to support existing Taxi Licence holders who have been affected by the national and local restrictions. The scheme is available for Taxi Licence Holders where the licence is registered with Fareham Borough Council and where the use of the licence is associated with the area local to Fareham.

This is a flat payment scheme for 2020/21 which covers the periods when the Borough of Fareham was in National Lockdown, Tier 4, or Step 1 of the Roadmap: namely from 05/11/2020 to 01/12/2020 and from 26/12/2020 to 11/04/2021. A period of 134 days.

The ARG-Taxi scheme covers the following 3 eligible groups:

- a) ARG-Taxi (Op) – Holders of a current Taxi Operators licence
- b) ARG-Taxi (Ve) – Holders of a current Taxi Vehicle licence.
- c) ARG-Taxi (Dr) – Holders of a current Taxi Driver's licence.

### Cost of the Scheme

Based on the number of current licences, it is estimated that this scheme will cost roughly **£475,000**, as summarised below, which will be funded from the ARG Top Up fund.

		Number eligible	Value of Grant	Total
ARG-Taxi (Op)	Operator Licence Holders	21	£8,480	£178,076
ARG-Taxi (Ve)	Vehicle Licence Holders	80	£1,915	£153,200
ARG-Taxi (Ve)	Vehicle Licence Holders – additional vehicles	3	£1,915	£5,745
ARG-Taxi (Dr)	Driver Licence Holders – in borough	44	£1,915	£84,260
ARG-Taxi (Dr)	Driver Licence Holders – out of borough	28*	£1,915	£53,600
				<b>£474,881</b>

\*estimate

### How much Grant will be paid under the ARG-Taxi Scheme?

Grants will be given to the different eligible groups as defined below:

#### Group A - ARG-Taxi (Op)

For holders of a current private hire **Operator's Licence** issued by Fareham Borough Council, and where the business operates out of a business address in the Borough of Fareham.

Grant awarded: £8,480

#### Group B - ARG-Taxi (Ve)

For holders of a current private hire or hackney carriage **Vehicle Licence** issued by Fareham Borough Council, and where the licence holder's home address is in the Borough of Fareham.

Grant awarded: £1,915 per vehicle

#### Group C - ARG-Taxi (Dr)

For holders of a current private hire, hackney carriage or dual **Driver's Licence** issued by Fareham Borough Council, and where the licence holder's home address is in the Borough of Fareham.

Driver licence holders whose home address is outside of the Borough of Fareham will also be considered for a grant if they are able to demonstrate that they mainly operate in the Borough of Fareham and that they have not received any support under grant schemes operated by other Councils.

Grant awarded: £1,915 per driver

**For the avoidance of doubt, where an applicant meets the criteria for more than one eligible group, they will only be entitled to receive a grant under one of those categories. This will be the category that results in the highest grant payment.**

#### **Other Eligibility Criteria for the ARG-Taxi Scheme:**

To be considered for a grant under this scheme the following criteria must also be met:

##### **a) The applicant must hold a current Licence issued by Fareham Borough Council.**

The licence must have been issued before 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

If an applicant has temporarily suspended their licence, they will still be eligible for this grant. However, if the licence is not later reactivated prior to 1 August 2021 then the grant may become repayable.

If the licence has been fully surrendered or has expired, then the applicant will not be eligible for this grant.

- b) The applicant must not have received Local Restriction Support Grants or other Additional Restrictions Grants from Fareham Borough Council, or any other Council.**

Applicants can, however, have received support from the Government Self-Employment Income scheme (SEISS).

- c) The applicant must not exceed State aid/ Subsidy control/ Subsidy Allowance limits (see below).**

- d) Bank details must be provided**

The grant payment can only be paid directly into a bank account. The business must provide bank details for payment, including proof that the account is related to the business (Operators) or the applicant (Driver or Vehicle Licence)

### **Applying for a Grant**

Active Licence Holders are known to The Council. We will make contact directly with the eligible parties and ask them to confirm in writing that they meet all the eligibility criteria and to provide the bank details and evidence. The process will be administered by the Business Grants Team.

### **Assessment and Prioritisation of Grants**

All relevant applications will be assessed, and the grant payment made if the criteria are met. The Council reserves the right to close the ARG-Taxi scheme if it is likely to exceed the funding earmarked for it. An application is considered 'complete' when all required information has been provided.

The Council reserves the right to change the criteria of the scheme, including the amount of the grant, if it is likely to become oversubscribed or it becomes clear that the scheme may result in payments that were not intended.

The Council also reserves the right to use its discretion when assessing applications, where the principles of the scheme are being met but particular details of the scheme are preventing payments to businesses and individuals which the Council intended the grants scheme to help. However, there is no discretion over the maximum amount of the grant which can be awarded and the decision to use discretion for any application will be agreed by at least 2 authorising officers.

### **Payment of the Grant**

All payments will be made via BACS direct to the applicant's bank account.

### **Potential extension to the scheme**

Fareham Borough Council reserves the right to extend the scheme, providing additional payments, depending on changes to restrictions and funding available after 11/04/2021.

## **Tax**

Income received under the ARG Scheme is taxable therefore funding paid under any Local Authority discretionary grant should be declared for tax purposes.

## **Subsidy Allowance Limits**

Receipt of this grant falls within the rules of the relevant State Aid/Subsidy Control/ Subsidy Allowance rules which were in place at the time of the period of restrictions. More details can be found at [https://www.fareham.gov.uk/business/state\\_aid.aspx](https://www.fareham.gov.uk/business/state_aid.aspx).

## **Fraud**

The council will not accept deliberate manipulation and fraud - and any business or individual caught falsifying their records to gain grant money, or colluding to commit fraud, may face prosecution and any funding issued will be subject to claw back, as may any payments paid in error.

All applicants' information will be shared with the Government Grants Management team to enable any fraud to be identified. The council will use tools available to confirm accuracy of applications and submitted data.

## **Transparency**

The Council reserves the right to publicise the names of businesses and individuals helped through this scheme.

## **Appeals**

There are no further appeals rights for this scheme, the Council's decision is final, however, we will review our decision if it is clear that an error was made in processing an application.