

East Suffolk Capital Investment for Skills Grant Scheme

Grant guidance notes

Headline summary of the fund

UK Shared Prosperity Fund:

In April 2022, the Government launched the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to support its Levelling Up agenda. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK.

For a summary of the fund please see:

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/>

East Suffolk Council are providing a new **capital** grant scheme using UKSPF funding to provide capital grants to organisations with, or planning to develop dedicated space or facilities for training and education that meets the needs of our workforce within the district.

*Please note that this is a capital only fund. Capital means assets that have monetary value, such as equipment, real estate, and inventory. This fund **cannot** be used to purchase a property.*

About the fund

East Suffolk Capital Investment for Skills Grant Scheme

There are two tiers of grant funding available to eligible organisations:

Tier 1: Grants between £5,000 and £24,999.

Tier 2: Grants between £25,000 and £100,000.

The grant intervention rate for each tier is 40%.

The information requirements of any grant application will need to reflect the size of the grant being applied for and the anticipated complexity of the funded project or programme:

- **Tier 1** applicants will need to provide a **Project Summary** within the application form, justifying the project and outlining project delivery. Your application should clearly explain:
 - a. Why the project is required, and what it will achieve.
 - b. How the project will benefit the applicant organisation.
 - c. How the project supports the aims of the Capital Grants Scheme.
 - d. How and when the project will be delivered.
- **Tier 2** grant applications will need to reflect the anticipated higher cost and increased complexity of a high value project. In addition to a Project Summary, Tier 2 applicants will need to upload a **Business Case** and **Project Plan** with their application and may be asked to discuss their project with the Grant Panel.

About the fund continued

- East Suffolk Council are particularly keen to receive grant applications for projects that aim to address identified skill gaps within east Suffolk's key industrial sectors. Particularly those sectors identified within the *East Suffolk Economic Strategy 2022-2027*:
 - Agriculture, food and drink
 - Clean Energy
 - IT, tech and digital creative
 - Manufacturing and engineering
 - Marine and maritime
 - Ports and logistics
 - Visitor economy and cultural sectors
- Applications are also welcome for projects that address the skills requirements beyond our key sectors, providing that sufficient evidence of need is included within the application form.
- East Suffolk Council are committed to developing education, training and skills related opportunities to help businesses recruit, train, and retain skilled staff; stimulating enterprise and ensuring residents can access high quality employment.



Funding scheme details

Funding scheme overview



Types of organisations this grant is suitable for

- The Capital Investment for Skills Grant is suitable for organisations that:
 - Have a physical premises that provides training or educational facilities that meet local business and workforce needs and is looking to upgrade the facility in-line with local skills needs.
 - This could include Further and Higher Education providers (open to anyone aged 16+) such as: Universities, Colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITPs), Local Authority (LA) providers, Employer providers, Third Sector providers, and Adult Community Education (ACE) providers.
 - We are also keen to receive applications from businesses that have their own training facilities or training hubs.
 - The fund can also support organisations and businesses that do not yet have training facilities and are looking to develop a dedicated space. This could also include a new training facility for a specific skills need within a wider already developed facility.
 - Business centres and hubs within East Suffolk are also eligible for the fund, ensuring the need for the project is evidenced.

Priorities of the grant scheme

The main objectives of the Capital Investment for Skills Grant Scheme is to provide:

1. Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment into new or existing dedicated training space (you can apply for more than one space within the same funding bid) that meet local skills needs and sector training requirements.
2. Funding (capital grants) for small scale investment in modernising existing training facilities to ensure they are in line with local skills needs.

The Capital Investment for Skills Grant Scheme is a 100% capital fund grant that will allow organisations to apply for funding across the following five priorities. All applicants must ensure that their application evidences how it meets at least one of the priorities:

1. *Digital equipment*
2. *Purchasing new or upgrading equipment*
3. *Modernisation of training facilities*
4. *Sector specific needs and technologies*
5. *Energy efficiency adaptations to improve the sustainability of local training facilities*

We are particularly keen to receive applications that take a holistic approach and address multiple priorities where possible within their submitted project.

Types of projects

Digital equipment projects:

- This could fund digital equipment from laptops, desktops, projectors, virtual conferencing equipment, VR equipment, headsets, or sector specific digital equipment.
- The grant fund cannot fund software or IT applications as this would be classed as revenue funding.

Purchasing new or upgrading equipment and sector specific needs & technologies:

- This could include industry standard specialist equipment, simulated work environment equipment, 3D printers and much more.

Types of projects continued

Modernising training facilities:

- This could include small modernising requirements such as new whiteboards and chairs through to larger scale projects such as building improvements through capital works.

Energy efficiency adaptations to improve the sustainability of local training facilities:

- Examples include:
 - Changing to a low carbon heating system
 - Installation of low and zero carbon generating technologies, such as solar PV, biomass or micro-wind
 - Insulation, replacement windows, doors etc. to improve energy efficiency of buildings
 - Heating e.g., Biomass, ASHP/WSHP etc. but not fossil fuel alternatives
 - Solar Panels (building regs and planning permission may apply – please see Slide 14 for more details)
 - Insulation
 - Energy efficient lighting
 - Draught-proofing
 - Energy efficient plant and machinery

Who can apply?

The fund is available to any business or organisation that has or are looking to develop a dedicated training facility, who are located within the geographical area of East Suffolk.

Applications will be accepted from:

- Further and Higher Education providers (open to anyone aged 16+) such as: Universities, Colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITPs), Local Authority (LA) providers, Employer providers, Third Sector providers, and Adult Community Education (ACE) providers.
- Sole traders
- Limited companies
- Business partnerships
- Please note we can only fund VCSE organisations if they are not eligible for the East Suffolk Rural Business and Community Fund and have a specific training facility / space and a project that requires financial support. To find out more about the East Suffolk Rural Business and Community Fund please visit: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/business/uk-shared-prosperity-fund/rural-england-prosperity-fund/>

Grant funding intervention rate

The following maximum intervention rates apply:

- Capital Investment for Skills Grant Scheme: up to 40%

Grant intervention rate is the amount of funding a grant will provide. This is calculated as a percentage of the total eligible expenditure of a project.

You must provide evidence within your application on what other match funding has been secured or you are seeking and how you will fund the remaining costs of the project.

Grants are available of between £5,000 and £100,000, and your application will need to reflect the size of grant you are applying for, demonstrating value for money, the need for the project, and appropriate project outputs.

Quotations for works and services

As a condition of the grant, all capital (physical assets) expenditure, and services provided by another organisation on behalf of the applying organisation over the value of £4,999 will require evidence of three quotes obtained to ensure value for money. Expenditure over £75,000 will require a formal tender process. Please provide any quotations that you have obtained for the project along with the completed application form.

This shall include adopting the following minimum procedures:

Value of Purchase	Procedure to be followed
£0 - £4,999	Direct Award (meaning you can choose who is award the works without obtaining any quotations)
£5,000 - £74,999	3 written quotes or prices sought from relevant suppliers of goods, works and / or services
£75,000 and over	Formal tender process

Planning permission and license requirements

- If you are applying for any physical upgrades or improvements that will require planning permission, grants will only be approved, and funding paid if planning permission has already been provided or if there is evidence that planning permission is currently being sought and the grant will be awarded on a conditional basis that planning permission is approved.
- To find out more about how to gain planning permission, please visit: <https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/>
- You will also be asked within the application form to declare any other permissions or licences that are required for your project and when they will be obtained.
- If your project is taking place on rented / leased / tenanted land or premises, please ensure you submit a letter of authority from the land or premises owner or that the owner applies for the grant funding direct.

Options and need

- As part of the application process, you will be asked to provide an overview of what other options you have considered and how you have chosen your preferred project.
- You will also be asked to provide evidence of the local skills need for your project and explain what research has been undertaken to support this.
- You will also be asked to demonstrate how your project meets local strategic policies and the identified need and demand.

Subsidy control

Please be aware that all applicants are expected to complete the subsidy declaration within the application form for both schemes.

The UKSPF Grant support will be delivered through Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA).

The maximum support through MFA is £315,000 and this is a cumulative total of all support received over the current, and the last two complete financial years through MFA, EU de minimis and Small Amounts of Financial Assistance Allowance.

If you are offered support through MFA, you will need to make a declaration that, 1) you have not already exceeded the £315,000, and 2) with award of the requested support, you will not exceed the £315,000 threshold.

You will be required to make a declaration of the subsidies that your business / organisation has been awarded on the application form.

For more information on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund subsidy control please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-subsidy-control-7>

What we cannot fund

We cannot fund:

- Applications from individuals – we cannot make grant payments to individuals
- VAT: If you can claim back VAT then VAT is not eligible as part of the costs of your project and should not be included.
- Annual/usual organisation running costs and core staffing costs
- Projects unable to start within 6 months of the grant award date
- Activities promoting political or religious beliefs
- Payments towards endowment funds, deficit funding or loans
- Overseas travel for individuals/groups
- Sponsored or fundraising events
- Funding for trips abroad or hospitality to other organisations
- Repeat funding – i.e. if East Suffolk Council has previously provided a grant for the same activity
- Items or projects which only benefit an individual
- Retrospective costs
- Projects that will displace existing provision
- Activities that are statutory obligations

Before applying, please note that this funding cannot be used to replace lost income / profits / hardship experienced as a result of the pandemic, although it can be used help you to resume activities suspended due to Covid-19. We cannot provide retrospective funding for projects i.e. for costs already incurred.

Please ensure that your application includes information about how your project adds value to the work of existing organisations, projects and activities in your target area.

How to apply

If you would like to access funding through the Capital Investment in Skills grant scheme, please complete an application form via the following weblink:

- [https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/en/service/Capital investment for skills](https://my.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/en/service/Capital_investment_for_skills)

If you have any problems with completing the e-form, please email: grants@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

If you are unsure of what to put in a grant application, here are some suggestions that you may wish to consider.

- **What are you going to do?**

Provide a statement about the activity you want to fund using this grant money.

- **Why do you want to do it?**

- Describe how this will add value to your business / organisation / community, how it will meet local skills needs and requirements and what difference it will make, for example, would it enable you to;
 - Support local skills needs for businesses which have been highlighted through local engagement and data
 - Meet specific sector skills requirements and attract new revenue streams
 - Increase users of your training facility
 - Deliver critical upgrades required to existing premises to ensure you can meet local demand and competition requirements
 - Create new, required training spaces and facilities that will address a gap in the market
 - Support individuals in East Suffolk that are unemployed and / or not in education to gain the required skills to move towards local employment opportunities
 - Access new customer / revenue base to support wider organisation objectives
 - Help East Suffolk become a highly skilled population that truly delivers for business workforce requirements

How much will it cost?

- We need to see a breakdown of how you have reached the total fund you are asking for. This doesn't need to be to the penny but should evidence your main costs, confirmation of match funding, and estimates or quotes which could include detail of equipment costs, suppliers etc.

How does it match our priorities?

- Our priorities for the schemes are outlined in the guidance. We do not expect that your project will meet all of our priorities, however your application needs to describe where it does support those it can.

Hints and tips

Hints and tips continued

What will the outcomes for your business / organisation be:

Provide figures to illustrate the anticipated improved outcomes for your business / organisation / community for example:

- Create or safeguard jobs
- Support local businesses
- Introduce new to the firm technologies or processes to your organisation and local businesses
- Attract further investment through match funding
- Increase the number of businesses engaged in new knowledge transfer activity
- New products to local firms due the improved training and development
- Increase in revenue to your organisation due to the project

When will the project start and finish?

Provide expected dates including any milestone dates that will occur during the project, for example if new equipment is arriving, when will it start to be used.

Our expectation is that projects will start within 6-months of funding being awarded and will be completed within 12 months.

And please ensure you answer every question to the best of your knowledge.

Support

For business support and advice relating to areas such as training, grants and funding, land and premises, business associations and more, please visit our dedicated business support website, East Suffolk Means Business:

<https://eastsuffolkmeansbusiness.co.uk/>

Or email: economicdevelopment@eastsuffolk.gov.uk



The process

Received applications

Once you submit your complete application, we will start processing it. We will undertake a detailed assessment of your proposal based on the Application Form and the supporting information that you provide. You may also be asked for additional information during this process in support of your application.



Panel meeting

Once assessment of your grant application has been completed, the appraisal will be submitted to the Grant Panel who will take a final decision on your proposed project. Once your application has been sent to the panel it can take up to 28 days from that date before a final decision is reached.



Outcome

The grant decision will be relayed to you at the earliest opportunity. Please be aware, full compliance with the eligibility criteria does not guarantee that your application will be successful, as grants are discretionary, and there is no right of appeal against the grant decision. If your grant application is declined, an explanation will be provided.

Deadline for applications: Capital Investment in Skills grant scheme

- Applications for this grant scheme will open on the 1st of April 2024 and for:
- Tier 1: Close on 31 January 2025, unless the funding available has been allocated before then.
- Tier 2: Close on 13 October 2024, unless the funding available has been allocated before then.
- Applications can be submitted at any point during this period and we will aim to relay the outcome of your application to you within 28 working days.