

1.2. Aims of the Grants Pandemic Playbook

1.2.1. This document aims to draw from the department's previous experience, to ensure that future delivery is standardised and built upon an effective foundation.

The key issues covered include:

- Captured learning from previous Pandemic / Grant scheme delivery e.g. C19 Local Authority administered business support schemes,
- Consideration of requirements for the design content needed to stand-up emergency response and implement relevant process and documentation for effective and efficient activation; and
- Enabling collaboration cross-Whitehall, with Local Authorities and inter / intra OGDs plus engagement with LAs (delivery vehicle for business support grants).

1.2.2. Failure to consider how any scheme will be effectively delivered, monitored, assured, reporting requirements, legal basis, data sharing, etc. as well as recovery aspects are extremely difficult if not impossible to address after the event.

1.2.3. Therefore, as with any new scheme, in developing support especially emergency support under pace pressures, development should always "start with the end in mind". To ensure this happens in DBT, any such future support will be delivered via the Grant Delivery Directorate working in partnership with relevant policy, legal finance teams as well as other government departments including HM Treasury.

2. KEYS TO SUCCESS

2.1. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1.1. Ensure that staff involved in the delivery of any support are actively engaged by policy officials at the earliest stage to build delivery into the decision-making process.

2.1.2. Utilise grant/loan delivery professionals rather than bespoke new teams without prior delivery experience.

2.1.3. In DBT such activity should always be via the Grant Delivery Directorate.

2.1.4. Where schemes are to be administered by LAs, regular engagement will be via established MHCLG network routes, LGA, and directly through dedicated forums and webinar delivery sessions.

2.1.5 Responsibility and Staffing Requirements

2.1.6. Policy development will be led by relevant policy team(s) working in conjunction with the Grant Delivery Directorate who will lead on operational delivery.

2.1.7. Consideration will need to be given to surge response to boost capacity in both teams.

2.1.8. A Senior Responsible Office (SRO), typically SCS Director / DD within GDD or potentially jointly with a policy lead SRO will be appointed. As per DBT's Concept of Operations, in the event that a departmental Emergency Response Team have been activated, GDD SRO (or Policy SRO or a deputy) should expect to attend regular crisis response meetings hosted by DBT's response Gold Leader and provide updates on progress. GDD would also be expected to contribute to departmental Situation Reports.

2.1.9. Response input will be required across wider DBT teams including analysts, Emergency Response Coordination Team (ERCO), Comms, Finance, Legal, etc.

2.2. The Grant Delivery Directorate (GDD)

2.2.1. The protracted nature of a pandemic response will also likely mean that grant delivery starts relatively soon during a response and continues throughout including through the recovery phase. A key learning from delivery of C19 Business Support Grants is the need to be prepared for the protracted nature of delivery, rather than focusing only on the immediate / short-term response.

2.2.2. The Grant Delivery Directorate (GDD) owns capabilities which have been used for responses to individual company economic shocks, and emergency localised flooding support as well as wider economy systemic shocks such as the 2008 financial crisis, COVID-19, and emergency energy support and has strong connections with MHCLG and Local Authorities.

2.2.3. As a result, GDD possess the required specialist expertise for the development of new schemes, overseeing delivery of a schemes full lifecycle & providing guidance on application requirements, due diligence, monitoring to ensure outcomes are met, reconciliation, assurance, and recovery of HMG funds as necessary, thereby ensuring DBT meets all Cabinet Office Grant functional standards, delivers policy aims whilst protecting public money.

2.2.4. The GDD works closely with the Government Grant Management Function (GGMF) within Cabinet Office to remain compliant with GOVS15 Functional Standard for Grants and the Grants Functional Blueprint.

2.2.5. DBT/GDD was awarded a "best" maturity rating (top category) in its assessment under the Government Continuous Improvement Assessment Framework 2024. This cross-government exercise saw departmental grants functions self-assess against criteria set by the Government Grant Management Function and was validated by the Government Internal Audit Agency. The assessment recognised GDD as having the right processes in place for effective and compliant grant management with an overall scoring of 93.5%, a top position against other departments.

2.2.6. All GDD team members have completed mandatory Cabinet Office Grants training, and a number have completed the Cabinet Office's 'Licence to Practice' online pilot as part of their continuing professional development.