Message

From: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=4357ADACFACF40D1B786723C2FE34B04-ANASTASIA.O]
Sent: 07/01/2022 11:32:41
To: Name Redacted @local.gov.uk]; Business Grant Funds [businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk]
CC: Estibals2, Agnes (Business Investment directorate) [agnes.estibals2@beis.gov.uk]; Name (Business Intelligence and Readiness) Name @beis.gov.uk]
Subject: RE: New business grants

NR

Thank you for reaching out and raising the concerns.

As you will appreciate we were pushed to get the schemes off the ground quickly, over the holiday period which was challenging. In regards to the criteria, ARG which sits alongside the Hospitality and Leisure grant gives LAs flexibility to give grants to the businesses you have mentioned.

In regards to the Advisory group the team will be now focused on communication and engagement and I will make them aware of the concerns being raised.

Thanks

Ana Osbourne
Director, Business Investment,
Tel: I&S Mobile: I&S

From: Name Redacted @local.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 January 2022 11:23
To: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) <Anastasia.Osbourne2@beis.gov.uk>; Business Grant Funds <businessgrantfunds@beis.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: New business grants

Hi Ana

Thank you for publishing the guidance and the council by council allocation for the new Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant and for the top-up Additional Restrictions Grant. Thank you also for your communication to councils on 30th December when the new sets of guidance were published and on 4 January inviting them to Monday's webinar. I also note that the allocations of the OHLG and the top-up ARG have been published this morning. It was also welcome that you recognised that the assurance and reconciliation timetable may be impacted by the need to prioritise the delivery of the new grants to businesses.

I will be at Monday's webinar and I also look forward to the next meeting of the Programme Management Board (Has a date gone in diaries for this ?).

I am getting in touch before Monday's webinar because I am picking up some concern, including at senior member level, at the fact that the OHL grant does not allow for any discretion in the light of local circumstances and that councils may be in a position of having to distribute it to businesses which they do not consider have been significantly impacted by Omicron. One example is holiday homes / lets which are entitled to the grant but which one seaside council said were full. On the other hand other sectors which would have got the previous LRSG and Restart Grants, such as hairdressing, will not be entitled to the OHLG. Of course councils will have the ARG top-up but that is six times smaller than the OHLG.

I suspect that these points will be made at Monday's webinar.

I am also picking some concern in the sector that the previous LA Grants advisory group, which met for the previous rounds of grants, has not been convened and there has been no chance to comment on confidential drafts of guidance before publication as was the case previously. I would repeat my suggestion in my e-mail to you of 21 December that this group be reconvened in addition to the webinar.

Happy to discuss.

Best wishes

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The online event is free to member authorities. For more information and to book your place please visit the LGA website

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From: NR
Sent: 21 December 2021 14:26
To: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) <Anastasia.Osbourne2@beis.gov.uk>
Subject: New business grants

Hi Anastasia

I see from the press release and fact sheet on the Treasury website that there is a new up to £6000 grant scheme to support businesses that are experiencing difficulties because of the Omicron variant, and the dual impact of staff absences and lower consumer demand. The beneficiaries will be hospitality (defined as accommodation, food & beverage services) and leisure premises. The estimated value of the total package is £683 million.

I also see that the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) will also be topped up by £102 million so local authorities (LAs) can continue to use their discretion to support other businesses in their area, based on local economic need. The ARG top up will be prioritised for those LAs who have distributed their existing allocation.

Use of this funding is at the LA's discretion but is intended to support businesses who are impacted by COVID-19 but may not be eligible for the hospitality and leisure grant.

The Treasury fact sheet says that final application and payment dates for the hospitality and leisure grants and the ARG will be confirmed in guidance published by BEIS.

I am sure you are busy drafting the guidance. I wonder if there is a case for reconvening the previous LA Grants Advisory Group to discuss any drafts; I know that in previous rounds your colleagues found their input useful.

Best wishes

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From: NR
Sent: 17 December 2021 14:18
To: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) <Anastasia.Osbourne2@beis.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: LA Grants Programme Steering Board - ARG outstanding

Hi Anastasia

I hope you are keeping well.

I gather from my colleague NR that the meeting on 8 December went well. I look forward to the next meeting.

I am getting in touch as the LGA has been picking up that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been briefing that around £250 million of ARG is still outstanding and available for distribution, within the context of calls for additional business grants to cope with the pressures caused by the current 'Plan B' situation.

Our information, which we have been relaying to the media, is that most councils have distributed or are in the process of distributing the last of the ARG and the latest published BEIS figures are out of date as they relate to information submitted at the end of August. I hope that this is also the message which you are relaying to ministers. It would be useful to know when you plan to update the figures.

Therefore if Government decide that another round of grants for businesses are required this would have to come through additional resources, perhaps through ARG, although of course the deadline for spending by March 2022 would then come into question.

Best wishes

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Best wishes

From: NR
Sent: 26 November 2021 16:49
To: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) <Anastasia.Osbourne2@beis.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: LA Grants Programme Steering Board

Thank you Anastasia. I am happy to continue on the Programme Board.

Please note however that I will be unable to make the meeting on 8 December as I on leave on that day.

If that is OK, I will endeavour to see if one of my LGA finance team colleagues is able to attend.

Best wishes

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From: Osbourne2, Anastasia (BEIS) <Anastasia.Osbourne2@beis.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 November 2021 14:43
To: Name Redacted @local.gov.uk>
Subject: LA Grants Programme Steering Board

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you to invite you to continue to represent Local Authorities on the Covid LA Business Grants Programme Board.

As you are aware the programme has moved to a new phase of work with a shift in focus to the reconciliation, assurance, and debt recovery work. As the incoming Senior Responsible Officer I am taking this opportunity to bring a more strategic approach to the work of the Programme Board and to refresh the Board membership. The Board's remit is to monitor progress of the overall delivery of the LA Grants programme, undertake scrutiny of the overall programme and ensure performance meets the programme objectives, and consider risks and issues as they arise which can affect delivery.

The Board will meet monthly, usually for one hour.

The date of the first meeting of the refreshed Programme Board has been pencilled in for 8 December at 2pm, and invitations for an MS Teams meeting will be sent out shortly.

I hope we can look forward to your continuing participation in the programme and would appreciate your reply no later than Monday, 29 November.

Yours sincerely,

Anastasia Osbourne

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

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