

Dorset UKSPF 2025-26

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This FAQ document provides guidance on applying for funding under the Dorset Council UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) for the financial year 2025-26. It has been updated to reflect the most recent guidance and scheme information.

Q: What is the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)?

A: The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is a government fund aimed at improving pride in place and increasing life chances across the UK. It invests in three priority areas: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People & Skills. For 2025-26, Dorset Council has been allocated £1.45 million to support local projects under these priorities.

Q: Who can apply for UKSPF grant funding?

A: For UKSPF business grants, medium, small, and micro enterprises located within the Dorset Council area can apply. Organisations must be legally constituted, financially sound, and not in administration or insolvent. Applicants must not exceed the £315,000 threshold for Minimal Financial Assistance (MFA) under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

Q: What is the Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)?

A: The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) provides capital funding to support rural businesses and communities. For 2025-26, Dorset has been allocated £619,966 for small-scale rural projects including micro and small enterprises and low-carbon initiatives.

Q: Who can apply for REPF grant funding?

A: For REPF business grants, small and micro enterprises in the rural Dorset area. In the DC area almost the whole of the county is eligible. The main exceptions are built-up areas of Ferndown, West Moors, Weymouth, and Wimborne Minster.

Q: What do I need to know before applying?

- The business/organisation has sufficient financial resources available to cash flow the project and provide the match funding required – proof of match funding is essential.
- Businesses must represent the applicant's primary source of income.
- Businesses must be registered either on Companies House or with HMRC and have a unique tax reference (UTR). Farm based businesses will need a single business identifier (SBI) number.
- Charities need to provide their charity reference number plus Companies House reference (if applicable). Community organisation should quote their CIC number or affiliated status, for example a sports club.

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- Value for money by providing comparative quotes or catalogue listings. If requesting below £20,000 , 2 quotes or references are acceptable. For projects above £20000, 3 quotes or references are required (for each service/item). If the above is not possible you need to explain why.
- All and any planning permission MUST be in place before a submission is made. You should have a realistic timeframe for completion as no funds are available after March 2025.
- No work or orders should be placed before a grant funding award is made and the award letter has been received. Any expenditure committed or incurred prior will be invalid as retrospective funding is not eligible.
- All awards are made in arrears on completion or delivery of the project. Please ensure that you have sufficient funds to cashflow the project to completion.
- The eligible grant amount will be reimbursed on production of receipted invoices or evidence, photos of payment from a business bank account, and evidence of delivery or completion of the project. Grant payments will normally be made in a single payment upon completion, for large projects stage payments may be negotiated on an individual basis.
- Where the cost of the project has decreased the award will be reduced in line with meeting 50% of the project costs. No increase in project costs will be accepted once the grant has been agreed.
- Payment method – all payments must be made by direct bank transfer or debit card and must be traceable from invoice through to your bank statement.
- Funding restrictions – projects that have received funding from DEFRA are not eligible for this grant.
- One application rule – only one application per business will be considered. Linked businesses that share directors, owners, or major shareholders cannot submit separate applications.
- Linked businesses are ineligible – suppliers or applicants sharing directors, owners, or major shareholders cannot apply or be paid through the grant.
- Deadlines – failure to meet submission or project deadlines will result in forfeiture of the grant, and no payments will be made.
- Further information requests – Dorset Council may request additional information. If this is not provided within the timeframe specified, your application may be suspended or rejected.
- Ineligible costs – this include motor vehicles, wages, land purchases, core revenue, continuation funding, like-for-like replacements, VAT, gifts and donations.
- Your business must not be insolvent, not in administration, and not under striking-off notice.
- Subsidy control limit – total grants received to date must not exceed £315,000 over the current and previous two financial years (2023–2024, 2024–2025).
- Deadlines are strict – late claims or missed deadlines will mean no payment.
- Key dates:
Project completion by 31 January 2026
Final claims by 28 February 2026

No payments after 31 March 2026

Q: Can I apply for funding for an ongoing project, or apply retrospectively?

The UKSPF does not fund business-as-usual activity. If an application ties into an ongoing project through a new phase, this may be a suitable piece of ongoing work for a UKSPF grant, provided it meets the objectives set out in the scheme document and the timeframes detailed in the grant scheme document. Grants can only be made for projects undertaken between the date of award and 31st January 2026. Retrospective applications are not possible.

Q: How do I apply?

In the first instance, businesses need to contact SBA (Worldwide) CIC for a pre-application chat and to obtain a reference number for an online application. Once you have a code, please complete the application form on: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-2025-to-2026>

Q: What funding is available and what match funding is required?

A: The following grant levels and match funding requirements apply:

- Business Support Grants: £10,000 to £40,000, with 100% match funding (1:1 ratio).
- Upskilling Grants: £500 to £4,000, with a minimum of 30% match funding.

Grants are paid in arrears once projects are complete and evidence of spend is provided. In some cases, staged or advance payments may be considered.

Q: When does my grant submission need to be completed?

A: We have four grant panels taking place on 18th September, 1st October, 22nd October, and 5th November. Your submission must be received at least 15 days before the panel date to allow sufficient time for assessment.

Q: What supplementary documents do I need to upload?

A: In addition to your application, you will be required to provide supplementary, supporting documentation. This should include: relevant bank statements, proof of match funding, financial forecasts, company policies, a business plan, costings and comparable quotes.

Q: What are the key deadlines for the 2025-26 programme?

- A: - Applications open: 1st September 2025 (29th September for Startup Grants)
- All projects must be completed by 31st January 2026
 - All claims and evidence of spend must be submitted by 28th February 2026
 - No activity or payments can be made after 31st March 2026

Q: What cannot be funded using UKSPF or REPF grants?

A: The following costs are ineligible:

- Motor vehicles

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- Staff wages
- Stock purchases
- Core running costs (rent, utilities, etc.)
- Political or exclusively religious activities
- VAT reclaimable from HMRC
- Like-for-like replacement of equipment
- Gifts or donations
- Fines or penalties
- Projects already fully funded by other schemes, including certain DEFRA programmes

Q: Who decides whether an application is successful?

A: Applications are reviewed and scored by an independent assessor and Dorset Council's Grants Panel. Decisions are made based on criteria such as project deliverability, alignment with scheme objectives, environmental impact, and value for money. Applicants are notified of outcomes within 10 working days of a panel meeting.

Q: Where can I get further information or support?

A: Visit Dorset Council's UKSPF 2025-26 webpage for guidance, application forms, and updates: <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-2025-to-2026>

Q: What is the difference between an output and an outcome in the UKSPF prospectus?

An output is what is achieved by completing the project, for example refurbishing or improving a community sports changing room. The outcomes are the wider benefits of that output, for example the number of people now using the facility, whether it provides a better solution, or whether there is an improved perception of the facility. The UKSPF Grant Scheme Document outlines the outputs and outcomes expected to be delivered by businesses and community organisations using the awarded grant for projects as described in their application.

Q: What is considered capital and revenue expenditure in the UKSPF prospectus?

Capital spend is usually a one-off outlay for an asset, such as machinery or infrastructure improvements. Revenue spend is a repeated expense, but in this fund it does not include typical running costs such as utilities, rent, rates, planning permission, replacement of equipment, land or stock.

Q: Can UKSPF funding be used to pay for my time to develop a specific project?

Although revenue funding is available to applicants, the use of a grant to pay for one's own labour as a business owner would not be in line with the terms and conditions outlined in section 7.5.1 of the UKSPF Prospectus. Staff costs are also unable to be paid from revenue funds awarded to an applicant.

For questions or queries, please email the team at hello@sbacic.org to ensure a full and complete response.