



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS

Labour Market Partnership
Working Together



Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund

PLA – CALL 2 Guidance Notes

Deadline for Submission of Applications:
Rolling Fund until 31st March 2023.

This is a rolling fund and will remain open until Friday 31st March. There will be regular assessments and applications will be scored in order of date submitted.

LMP have a specific budget for this fund, once the budget has been exhausted or by the 31st of March 2023, the grand funding programme will close.

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1. Introduction

The Priority Sectors Personal Learning Account Fund has been developed to enable upskilling within priority sectors in the local labour market. Training participants have the opportunity to get new skills and qualifications that will help them take a step closer to employment or enhance their current employability prospects.

This fund is aimed at all people aged 18 and over, resident within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area and with a legal right to work in the UK. The programme will fund up to £500 training per participant.

You may find it helpful to discuss your application with a member of the LMP team before submitting:

Please contact Marc McGerty or Dearbháile Hutchinson

Email: imp@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

1.1 Purpose of grant programme

Causeway Coast and Glens Labour Market Partnership (LMP) is a new, DfC funded programme established to address key challenges in the local labour market. The programme aims to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally by delivering a tailor-made action plan reflecting local conditions and needs. The LMP will support the delivery of Employability NI and as such will work closely with people that are unemployed, under-employed or needing to upskill. The LMP will also work closely with local employers who are looking to attract talent to their business. The Priority Sectors Personal Learning Account Fund has been developed to enable participants to gain new skills and qualifications to secure employment, or to progress in their current employment.

1.2 Strategic Fit

The fund links to Council's Community Plan under the following themes:

Community Planning Outcomes: All people of Causeway Coast and Glens will contribute to and benefit from a thriving economy built on a culture of growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and learning.

The Causeway Coast & Glens area provides opportunities for all to contribute to and engage in a more prosperous and fair economy.

If your application is successful, you will be contractually obliged to provide information to Council's Labour Market Partnership Team. This will include monitoring progress and expenditure incurred, discussing challenges or obstacles and fulfilling the reporting requirements stipulated in the Letter of Offer. Please do not apply if you cannot fulfil these requirements.

1.3 Level of Grant Award

The Priority Sectors Personal Learning Account Fund can provide funding of up to 100% costs up to a maximum of £500. Match funding is not a requirement. Grants will be released upfront upon evidence and confirmation of course registration.

This is a competitive process and all grant awards will be determined on the basis of merit. Applicants are advised that organisations that have been successful in securing Council funding in the past will not automatically be guaranteed funding in the future. Council reserves the right to reduce the amount of funding awarded if we do not consider that the amount applied for represents value for money or if there are insufficient funds available to meet the request.

Please Note: Successful applicants will have to provide all evidence requested once the project expenditure is complete.

1.4 General principles

In line with Council's Grant Funding Policy, the overarching principle for all Council grant funding is that of meeting local needs which have been identified and prioritised by Council or by others and acknowledged by Council. Any activity that cannot be shown to meet the following basic requirements will not be provided with funding:

- Have a clearly identified need i.e., the application addresses barriers to growth which the business faces.
- Can deliver outcomes which meet this need.
- In the case of this funding, deliver improved profits, increased employment, entry into new markets, cost effective and quality service provision, fitting with the purpose and remit of the funding.
- Be undertaken by a credible, viable business with the capacity to deliver the project as stated.
- Reflect the statutory remit of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council aligning with the Council's Corporate Plan, the relevant Service Plan and meets the specific criteria of the fund. • Applicants must demonstrate their commitment to promoting Good Relations and Equality of Opportunity.
- In the interests of transparency, equality and accountability, all eligible applicants will have a right of appeal should their application be rejected.
- While all applications are treated on the basis of merit, Council would particularly welcome applications from young people, women and under-represented groups from Section 75 groupings.

All projects must be completed, paid in full, cleared the bank account and claimed before Friday 31st March 2023. There is no provision for extending this deadline.

1.5 Who can apply?

The initial criteria for application are as follows:

- Individuals aged 18 and over.
- Resident in the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.
- Eligible to work in the UK.

These criteria are mandatory and an application will not proceed without them.

1.6 What can be funded?

Examples of expenditure that can be funded through this grant include:

- All associated costs of training including teaching, awarding body costs and exam fees.

1.7 Who/What cannot be funded?

This funding programme will not award grants to the following:

- Individuals whose address is outside the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area
- Anyone under the age of 18
- Individuals without a legal right to work in the UK
- Recreational training courses not linked to employment
- Courses currently funded elsewhere
- Businesses with charitable fundraising as their main focus
- Political Organisations
- Businesses yet to commence trading
- Any business where there are ethical or reputational considerations – e.g. gambling, money lending, adult entertainment, tobacco products or cannabis products not authorised as medicines, debt factoring, hire purchase financing; pyramid schemes; projects which have as their object the promotion of political or religious views; illegal or immoral activities.
- Any other business that the Council may from time to time deem to be ineligible.

1.8 Exclusions

The purpose of this funding is to support training and upskilling. In general, the following will not be eligible for funding:-

- Retrospective expenditure where services/items have already been obtained and paid
- Applications received after the closing date as specified
- Costs that are not auditable e.g. cash payments unsupported by an approved petty cash system
- Costs towards ongoing running costs (e.g. electricity, rent, rates, insurance etc.)
- Building costs, Capital Improvements or refurbishments of any property
- On-going Licence Fees
- Loan Repayments
- Mobile Assets e.g. bicycles, cars, vans, lorries, boats, trailers, horse-boxes, diggers
- Second-hand equipment including refurbished equipment

- General maintenance or refurbishment works
- Servicing of existing equipment
- Information Websites
- Consumable items that are used by the business and replaced regularly because they wear out or are used up e.g. printer ink, high-vis vests for staff, hand sanitiser
- Costs towards banking charges and / or repayment of debt
- Costs that can be claimed back from elsewhere e.g. VAT.
- Activities which are party-political in intention, use or presentation
- Salary costs
- Alcohol, gratuities, gifts and prizes
- Purchase of stock for general trading purposes

2.0 How to answer the questions

Applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for the Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund 2023 should be submitted online at www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding

Guidance on completing the application online is provided via the web-site link. All sections must be completed as fully and concisely as possible.

Please note maximum word limits per question.

3.0 How we assess and score your application Every application that is received will be assessed for the following:

- To ensure that the individual is eligible to apply to this particular grant programme.
- How much the course will help advance the employment opportunities and prospects of the applicant.

An acknowledgement receipt will be electronically issued to you once your submission has been received.

The Funding Unit will assess your application for eligibility. If your application is eligible to apply for grant aid from the Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund, it will be forwarded to the relevant service area for a full assessment and scoring against the stated criteria.

3.1 Eligibility Assessment

The assessments in respect of Part 1 of the application form are awarded a pass or fail eligibility rating. If the applicant, based on the information supplied, is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility to draw down the grant, they will progress to the next part of the process.

3.2 What if an application is not eligible?

If your application is not eligible, you will be notified and the reasons will be outlined to you. Your application will not proceed to assessment and scoring. If you are not eligible

for funding through the Fund, you may wish to contact Council's Labour Market Partnership Team who can help signpost to other sources of support.

3.3 Assessment and Scoring

If an applicant, based on the information supplied, is able to satisfy the Council of their eligibility for the Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund they will be scored according to established assessment criteria shown in the table below.

0 Unacceptable	Nil or inadequate response. Fails to address the question or demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.
1 Very Poor	Response is partially relevant but generally very poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. An unacceptable response with serious reservations.
2 Poor	Response is partially relevant but generally poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirement but contains insufficient/limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled. A response with reservations.
3 Average	Response is relevant and average. The response addresses a broad understanding of the requirement but may lack details on how the requirement will be fulfilled in certain areas.
4 Good	Response is relevant and good. The response is sufficiently detailed to demonstrate a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled. Good supporting evidence supplied.
5 Excellent	Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

Applicants will be ranked according to score obtained and available funding allocated to highest ranking applications.

3.4 What happens if an application is successful?

If an application is successful, Council will issue an electronic Letter of Offer which is a legal agreement with the applicant to deliver on the proposals outlined in their application form. Signed Letters of Offer must be returned within 14 days of receipt. If successful, applicants can avail of support that will explain the processes and procedures that relate to programme monitoring, submitting a financial claim, requesting a change to programme, promoting Council's support for the programme, monitoring and evaluation requirements and the process of verification. Grants will be released upfront upon evidence and confirmation of course registration. Applicants are required to submit an end of project evaluation report.

3.5 What happens if an application is unsuccessful?

If an application is not successful, officers from the Council will be available to go through the application and provide practical developmental support to address areas of concern.

An Appeals Process / Review Procedure is also available if an application is unsuccessful. The purpose of this is to ensure that the decisions taken and procedures followed for individual applications are applied fairly and consistently.

The Review will provide an independent process through which an applicant will have the opportunity to demonstrate to the Review Panel that either:

- the outcome was unreasonable or
- that the proper procedures were not followed Appeals on any other grounds will not be considered.

3.6 Grant Application Assessment Schedule

The Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund will be open for applications according to the table below:

Opening Date: Wednesday 1 st February 2023	Closing Date: Friday 31 st March 2023 at 5pm. No late applications will be accepted under any circumstances and all required supporting documentation must be supplied at time of submission or the application will not be considered.
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Please note, this is a rolling grant programme and applications will be assessed as they are received.

3.7 Application Process

All applications for financial assistance from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council for The Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund should be submitted online via Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's online Funding Hub at: www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/grantsandfunding

It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that their application is submitted prior to the advertised time and date of closing. Applications received after the closing time/date will not be considered for funding. No exceptions will be made and there is no recourse to appeal.

The deadline for submissions to Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Priority Sector Personal Learning Account Fund 2023 is 5pm on Friday 31st March 2023, or when the budget has been exhausted.

Data Protection Act

- We will use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- We may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- We may also share information with other government departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- We might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.

Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives members of the public the right to request any information that we hold, subject to certain exemption that may apply. This includes information received from third parties, such as, although not limited to, grant applicants, grant holders and contractors. If information is requested under the Freedom of Information Act we will release it, subject to exemptions; although we may consult with you first. If you think that information you are providing may be exempt from release if requested, you should let us know when you apply. For further information please visit the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.gov.uk