

Appendix 11 - Accessibility Grants

Background

The Equality Act 2017¹ (which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act 2006) imposes an obligation on businesses to make adjustments to its services that allows disabled people to access its services as close as is reasonably possible as non-disabled people to access that service.

A business must anticipate the different types of disability experienced by customers and therefore consider how to overcome the barriers that create a disadvantage to customers can be achieved. There is a significant benefit to making a business more accessible as the potential customer base is increased, however the Department recognises that compliance with this legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people is a cost to business. Consequently, the Department may be able to offer a grant for those businesses which aim to improve accessibility to their services for disabled people.

As the Island moves into an endemic approach following the coronavirus pandemic, the continuation of grant support towards improving the ventilation within commercial business premises has also been included within Appendix 11, in order to assist vulnerable individuals e.g. those with compromised immune systems, to access business premises and essential services.

The Business Improvement Scheme also provides consultancy advice (legislation compliance consultancy) related to the Equality Act 2017.

The Cabinet Office will shortly publish further guidance on compliance with the Act's obligations for service providers in a Code of Practice on Services, Public Functions and Associations. This follows the Code of Practice on Employment and the Code of Practice on Equal Pay.

Assistance Available

General accessibility improvements:

For all existing and new businesses, the Department has the following support available through a simplified application process:

- Up to 50% towards permanent modifications required to premises (commercial business premises and offices only), which may include signage, handrails, step edges, door handles, automatic doors, ramps, lifts, lighting, contrasting floor coverings, low counters, stair lifts, accessible facilities (i.e. toilets/washrooms/quiet spaces) etc.;
- Up to 50% of plant and machinery costs which may include specialist furniture (commercial business premises and offices only), counter or room induction loops with testing device, portable payment terminals etc.;
- Up to 50% towards website modifications for accessibility purposes;

¹ https://legislation.gov.im/cms/legislation/current/by-title.html?view=acts_alpha

- Up to 50% of other reasonable adjustments at the Department's discretion.

The total grant available towards general accessibility improvements is capped at a maximum of £7,500 per business. The Department may in exceptional circumstances consider an application, which exceeds £7,500 based on it creating additional economic benefit (e.g. new job creation, one off construction benefit, additional visitor capability etc.). This is at the Department's discretion and the applicant is encouraged to speak to the Enterprise Support Division before applying as each application is reviewed on a case by case basis, based on its individual merit.

Ventilation improvements:

The Department will refund up to 50% of the approved expenditure in the areas identified below and up to 75% for Co2 monitors, up to a maximum of £5,000 per business:

- Purchase and installation of standalone CO2 monitors for single spaces (up to 75% grant);
- Purchase and installation of networked CO2 monitors for multiple spaces (up to 75% grant);
- Purchase and installation of air/filters/purifiers;
- Purchase and installation of window contact sensors;
- Window servicing (including assessment of needs and costs of scaffolding, if required);
- Purchase and installing of airbricks (including assessment of needs and cost of scaffolding, if required);
- Purchase and installing of vents (including assessment of needs and costs of scaffolding, if required);
- Unblocking windows/small repairs/enhancements (including the purchase of any related products);
- Purchase and installation of small mechanical vent - extractor fan (including assessment of needs and costs of scaffolding, if required);
- Purchase and installation of monitoring equipment (including monitoring for large mechanical ventilation systems);
- Purchasing and fitting automatic openers for ceiling windows;
- Undercutting/raising non fire doors;
- Independent Health & Safety Report with a recommendation on the ventilation works (this report cannot be issued by any company selling, installing or affiliated with the ventilation system or the works carried out);*
- Any other reasonable costs as agreed by the Department on a case by case basis.

*The Department will fund 100% of the cost associated with obtaining an independent Health & Safety report up to a maximum of £500.

Although an independent health and safety assessment is not compulsory, the Department would encourage businesses to ensure any ventilation works and ventilation systems purchased and installed are suitable and effective for the space in which they will be used.

Note:

- All goods and services relating to ventilation improvements must be purchased from Isle of Man incorporated businesses and the applicant must provide invoicing to this effect.
- Ventilation work that is not related to mitigating the potential airborne transmission of coronavirus will **not** be eligible for grant assistance e.g. ventilation for dust / heat extraction or over cooking areas. Officers may visit the business premises to view the work that has been carried out before an application is approved or any grant payment is made.
- In the case of any construction work, the applicant should undertake, wherever practical, to seek quotes from Construction Isle of Man (CIOM) accredited professionals for the work involved (details can be obtained from Construction Isle of Man, Eagle Lab, Queen Victoria House, Victoria Street, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 2LF - Telephone (01624) 660188 or email: info@constructioniom.im).
- Only eligible costs towards ventilation improvements incurred from 17th January 2022 will be eligible for grant assistance.
- In terms of general accessibility modifications, the application must be submitted before any expenditure is carried out; any retrospective expenditure will **not** be eligible for assistance.
- The total grant available under Appendix 11 is capped at a maximum of £7,500 per business for general accessibility modifications, with an additional maximum of £5,000 per business for ventilation improvements.
- Only one application for ventilation improvements and one application for general accessibility modifications per business will usually be allowed.

Eligibility to apply for assistance

The business

- Must have a permanent establishment / place of business in the Island;
- Must be an eligible business under the Regulations (see sections 1 and 2 of the main text); and
- Must be up to date with all tax (including VAT) and National Insurance obligations including returns and payments.

Assessment criteria

The following criteria are considered when an application is assessed:

- How the project will improve access to the premises for disabled people;
- If the business has received consultancy advice regarding compliance with the Equality Act 2017; and

- If the business has considered a range of impairments which may include mobility, visual, hearing, limited dexterity and hidden disabilities (i.e. mental health; autism, dyslexia, epilepsy, cancer, dementia, bowel disorders).

Information to be supplied

All applicants must provide a fully completed and signed application form which will include;

- Details of the business;
- Details of assistance sought; and
- The Department's standard declarations.

The following should be supplied in addition to the application form:

- Short business case;
- Details of the proposed project; and
- Number of part time, full time, permanent or temporary staff employed
- A copy of the latest accounts and management accounts.

The Department reserves the right to request further information.

It is suggested that the applicant speak to their Business Development Manager before applying to ensure that the proposed project is within recognised accessibility standards.

Application Process

Information about the application process is available on the Department's web site www.iomdfenterprise.im