

Support for business in Edinburgh is welcome – but some are still waiting

Figures show that 3,784 businesses in the capital have received Scottish Government grants to support firms through the coronavirus crisis.

A total of £49.45 million has been awarded in Edinburgh through The Scottish Government scheme to support small businesses and the retail, hospitality and leisure sector.

Only last week the Council Leader told The Edinburgh Reporter that between 85 and 90% of grants applied for in Edinburgh had been paid. This means that Edinburgh is leading the way in distributing much needed funds.

But the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) warn that more needs to be done and they claim that 1,721 businesses are still waiting for support with only 69% of grants having been paid to date in Edinburgh. This is at odds with the figures we have been [given by the council](#).

Garry Clark, FSB Development Manager for Edinburgh, said: “Firms in Edinburgh are dealing with circumstances way beyond their control and the quicker that we get help to local operators, the better the odds that they’ll make it through crisis. Clearly, there’s still a lot of work to do, with a number of businesses having contacted me to tell me that they have been waiting over a month for their grants, despite

having been told by the council that they would receive their cash in 10 working days. These delays are also impacting on Midlothian businesses whose grant applications are being handled in Edinburgh.

“While we understand that The City of Edinburgh Council has faced administrative and operational challenges and that it has significantly increased the team dealing with applications, that’s little comfort for local businesses running out of road. We need to see the council leadership ensure that the team processing the grant applications have all the resources they need to get help to firms quickly. We’re also making the case to the Scottish Government for a more consistent, efficient enterprise support approach across the country.

“Many local firms are living on borrowed time. We need to see local and national decision-makers get this vital help to independent businesses as quickly as possible.”

The small business grant is worth over £1 billion to business, and is part of the wider business support package worth £2.3 billion.

In order that funding can be distributed as quickly as possible, eligibility for the grant scheme is linked to the non-domestic rates system.

SNP MSP Gordon MacDonald said: “This is a very difficult time for businesses.

“This Scottish Government funding is designed to support firms and ensure that our economy is on the best possible footing when we get through this health crisis.

“Our support for business is now worth £2.3 billion. This is more than The Scottish Government have received from the UK Government and actively works to

fill the gaps in the UK schemes with tailored support for the Scottish economy.

“I encourage all businesses across Edinburgh to ensure they are receiving the support they’re entitled to.”

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-business-support-fund-grant-statistics/>