

SWEF – Business Grant

Applications Open: 29 th January 2026	Application deadline: 31 st October 2026
Size of Grants: up to £2,000	
Length of Grant: 12-month funding	
Location: Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, and the Isle of Wight	

What is the SWEF Business Grant?

- SWEF is the name of the donor (think ‘Dragons Den’ and Lord Sugar on ‘The Apprentice’).
- You are someone aged 18-30 who has a new business (trading for less than 2.5 years). To qualify for a larger Business Grant your business should be turning over £500+ per month (if you have a lower revenue or are pre-revenue, see Start-up Grant).

SWEF wants to fund young adults who need financial support to help their business grow and succeed. To access a grant, you need to fill in our online application form showing:

- In the last 2.5 years you have set up a business that is generating £500+ a month of revenue (this can be an average over a 3-month period if your income is variable e.g. seasonal or cyclical).
- You need financial help to grow your business.

This is not a loan scheme, and you do not need to pay the grant back.

If you'd like to find out about other small businesses SWEF has funded, please have a look at these case studies: <https://www.swef.uk/case-studies>

We want this to be a supportive process, so please do drop us a line if you have questions about the application process or need help completing the application form.

Please get in touch with us by emailing grantsadmin@hiwcf.com

To apply: Complete our Application Form here: www.hiwcf.org.uk/grants

Please read the full eligibility below before completing your application

Eligibility

- You are aged **18 to 30**.
- Your UK business has been trading for less than 2.5 years.
- You currently live in **Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, or the Isle of Wight**.
- You are facing financial challenges preventing you from developing your business.
- You are the majority shareholder of the business.
- You have a business bank account (grants are only paid into business bank accounts).
- You are a sole trader/limited company/CIC limited by shares.

Applying for a Business Grant

- To qualify for a Business Grant your business should be generating £500+ in monthly revenue. If you are not generating this level, please read the criteria for our Start-up Grant.
- You can apply for up to £2,000.
- Grants should be for immediate use and be fully spent within 12 months of receipt of funds.

Your Business Grant application form must show that

- Your business is your full-time/ majority work focus, or there is an intention to move to this being your majority income stream as soon as possible.
- The grant will be used to transform the business and take it to the next stage.
- You have specific plans for how you will spend the grant, such as web links and costs for the items requested.
- Applications that involve the purchase of second hand items are particularly welcome.
- That you are not asking for a contribution to an item of equipment exceeding £10,000 in value.

This table explains the type of things we can and cannot fund. Please contact us if you'd like to chat about your grant budget.

How can you use the grant?	You CANNOT use the grant for the following
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Equipment that will help achieve increased profit. ✓ Prototypes and product development. ✓ Building a website or booking system. ✓ Training. ✓ Other business costs that will make a significant impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> × Salaries. × Debt repayment or retrospective purchases. × Rent or utilities. × Ongoing costs like software subscriptions. × Stock, materials or ongoing costs for existing product lines (we will also not fund stock for re-sellers e.g. preloved clothes). × New computers, phones, tablets (we can consider second hand or refurbished items). × App development or software development costs – apps/software should be ready to launch or already launched at the point of applying to SWEF. × Invasive beauty treatment such as Botox, aesthetics, semi-permanent make up, facial tattoos, dermal fillers; Property development; Drugs (including any idea linked to vaping or tobacco); Political or religious agendas; Gambling; Illegal or unregulated activity (such as cryptocurrencies); Finance or trading (e.g. we will not fund ideas that need FCA approval).

Application Process

Complete our online Application Form

The application form asks about your business and how a grant would help you to make it more successful or help you to take your business to the next stage.

Please ensure you attach the following 2 documents; these form part of your application:

- An image of your business bank statement showing sort code and account number. Grants are only paid into business bank accounts.
- Figures that help show your revenue figures (e.g. details of your costs and your sales).

You can save and return to the form.

After we receive your application we will review it against the criteria and contact you to let you know if we are able to progress the bid. We may at this stage ask you for further information.

- If your bid meets all fund criteria, HIWCF will have a short chat with you (online or by phone) to add any final details to your application before it is submitted to SWEF.
- If SWEF are interested in your bid, you will be invited to an online meeting with SWEF staff. This 15-30 minute online meeting helps them to decide if they will offer you a grant.

Support after the Award

- If you are awarded a grant, you will have an opportunity to be part of an online community run by SWEF; this includes a Facebook group and newsletters.
- You will need to **spend your grant within one year** and provide light-touch feedback to SWEF and HIWCF 12 months after you receive the grant.

