**Guidance for Applicants: Businesses**

The Community Fund can support new and existing businesses based within the fund area. There are times, when the fund can consider applications from businesses based outside of the fund area, but they would need to be offering something unique, that is not provided by anyone in the fund area. A business can be a sole trader, partnership or incorporated such as a Ltd Company.

The fund has a commitment to helping the local economy, whether that be through support to keep well kept, attractive highstreets, keeping money local, creating or support to sustain jobs and skills in the local area or encouraging more visitor attractions and places to stay. The Community Fund is bold and innovative in its approach and is open to proposals from new and existing businesses across the fund area to address a wide range of priorities. The Fund [Prospectus highlights](https://penycymoeddcic.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Condensed-Prospectus.pdf) the priorities:

1. Investing in the retail sector – attractive and well-maintained streets
2. Investment in tourism and leisure infrastructure
3. Employment and training support
4. Investing in start-ups
5. Developing local supply chains
6. Businesses and entrepreneurs make better use of the internet
7. Developing more enterprising and entrepreneurial communities

The Community Fund can support businesses at all stages of their business journey, whether you are still exploring the idea stage, newly established or been running for a long time. ***Please contact for an early informal chat about your plans.***

We would urge you to work on a business plan along with cash flow forecasts – this does not need to be a large document, but it will help you pull your ideas together and give you a plan to work towards. By investing your time in developing this plan early on, you will be able to answer lots of the questions we may have on your proposal for support.

Your business plan should be able to answer:

1. *What do you want to do?*
2. *Who else offers the same or similar business (within a 10 mile radius at least)?*
3. *How do you know there is a need for the service or product?*
4. *How will you promote your product and or service?*
5. *What staffing/ volunteers will be needed/ created to help achieve these plans in the first 12 months?*
6. *What will this cost and what income will this generate in the first 12 months?*
7. *Will you be investing in the business yourself and/ or what other funding are you exploring to achieve this vision?*
8. *What difference will this make to you, the business and the wider community?*

Templates are available on [**the Business Wales website**](https://businesswales.gov.wales/starting-up/business-plan) **or you** *can find a basic* [***business plan template***](https://penycymoeddcic.cymru/guides-contacts/) *on our website, which gives an idea of the details and information we are looking for, but feel free to add to it as you need too.*

If your application for funding is successful, you will need to provide us with:

**Bank account** – this does not need to be a business bank account, but **MUST** be used solely for the purpose of business activity and where possible, have the account name changed to the business name

**Insurance –** We would require adequate insurance cover in place for the business, including Public Liability Insurance, Employers Liability Insurance (where applicable) and Indemnity Insurance (where applicable)

**Latest set of accounts** – income and expenditure for the last 12 months or if a new business, 12 months forecasting.

**Quotes** – for anything up to £5,000, we require one quote. For anything over £5,000, we require three quotes. **Reference details** – this can not be a member of your family. This will be someone who is supportive of your business plans.

**Permissions** – We will need proof that all permissions are in place from landlords, local authorities and any landowners affected by your plans. *This list is not exhaustive and may need you to provide additional information as a special condition of your award.*

**Business Support available**

There are lots of support agencies and guidance available for businesses across the fund area that could really help you. We work closely with support agencies, however none are affiliated with the Community Fund and engaging with these does not guarantee that an application will be successful.

* **[Business Wales](https://businesswales.gov.wales/)**
* [**Welsh ICE – 5-9 Club**](https://welshice.org/)
* [**Purple Shoots – Self Reliant Groups**](https://purpleshoots.org/self-reliant-groups/)
* [**Prime Cymru**](https://www.primecymru.co.uk/)
* [**Big Idea Wales**](https://businesswales.gov.wales/bigideas/) **– up to 25 years of age**
* [**Cwmpas**](https://cwmpas.coop/what-we-do/services/)
* **Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council –** [**Innov8 Business Club**](http://www.npt-business.co.uk/2131)

There are also other potential funders available for businesses across the fund area, that are perfect to use as match funding with Pen y Cymoedd funding, to achieve your plans.

* **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council:** [**Enterprise Support Programme**](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Business/FundingandGrants/EnterpriseSupportProgramme.aspx) **–** a flexible grant programme to provide support to new or existing private and social enterprises, based, or planning to locate in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
* **NPT County Borough Council:** [**Innov8 Grant**](http://www.npt-business.co.uk/2204)  **–** flexible grant scheme to support with up to 50% of capital project costs.
* **Development Bank of Wales** [**–** Micro Loans](https://developmentbank.wales/small-business-loans-wales) - repayable loans between £1,000 and £50,000

***NB: compliance with this guidance note does not guarantee that the application will be successful – it is only an indication of some elements of our assessment process and criteria.***

**How the fund supports businesses**

The Community Fund support businesses with a range of funding options including grants, loans or a mix of both. This may vary depending on the stage of your business idea, the size of your business and how much you are looking for.

**Repayable Loans -** The Community Fund is committed to providing businesses across our fund area with access to secure, favorable terms of funding whilst establishing or expanding their business plans. For commercial businesses, this support may be in the form of a soft loan and has been a fantastic source of funding to support them until the business is in a place where they can repay back to the fund, recycling these funds for other projects in the fund area, for years to come. Loans can be offered to all business models, which includes sole traders, partnerships and limited companies.

As a Community Fund, we are committed to working with you to determine what your business can afford and with what terms, including any repayment holidays, to allow your business to start achieving its goals. For this reason, interest rates and terms and set on an individual basis.

***We would encourage you to have an informal chat with a member of the team, who will be able to chat about what support may look like for your business.***

**What happens if you cannot repay your loan?** Loans are repaid on a monthly basis, as per the loan agreement and schedule set out with any offer made. We appreciate running a business is difficult and there may be times, when the business is not able to repay as per the loan schedule and we would ask you to talk to us. We may be able to agree a repayment holiday or alter terms of loan payments but we cannot do that if you don’t keep us informed, we are here to help. Unfortunately, if payments are missed and there is no contact from the business we will have to formally chase and follow escalation routes available to us, which ***may*** include:

1. Issuing letters to business address seeking payments.
2. Instructing a solicitor to act on our behalf to recover funds.
3. Instructing a solicitor to issue a claim with a county court to recover funds.
4. Apply for a judgement against the business to recover funds.
5. Instruct a solicitor to enforce any judgement awarded.

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