



Department  
for Transport

# Maritime Accessibility Fund: Isle of Wight, Isles of Scilly Applicant Guide 2021/22

**Moving Britain Ahead**

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## Section 1: The Accessibility Fund for the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly

This section explains the Accessibility Fund (the Fund), who is eligible to apply for a grant and the bid assessment process. It also provides advice about the main features of this funding.

The Department for Transport (DfT) provides and administers the Fund.

### History

The Fund is being provided to help improve the accessibility of ferry operations on the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly. These islands rely on ferries to connect to the mainland so residents can access services, employment and leisure activities. Hovercraft and hoverports are also eligible to apply for this funding.

The fund is £1m in total that ports, harbours, hoverports and ferry or hovercraft operators can bid for to improve the accessibility of their services for disabled and reduced mobility passengers.

It is not expected that there will be similar funding again so potential applicants should make full use of this opportunity.

### Who can apply?

Funding is open to bids from all ports servicing the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly. The ferries that operate to and from these ports can also apply.

Organisations applying must provide proof that their business activity meets the criteria contained in this document.

### What costs are supported?

The fund will consider bids for up to 100% funding of proposals that will improve accessibility of ferry services (ports and ferries) to these islands.

VAT will not be funded as this can, in most cases, be claimed back, subject to HMRC rules.

Bidders will need to demonstrate a financial ability to maintain and continue to use any assets funded.

## How bids are assessed

Once the application window closes, all bids are checked against the eligibility criteria. Please note that bids may be rejected at this point if they do not meet the eligibility criteria or include all of the requested information to a sufficient level of detail to enable the bid to be considered.

Eligible applications will then be considered by an Expert Panel (the Panel). The Panel will be chaired by DfT and includes representatives from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and DPTAC. The Panel will consider each application individually on its merits. Based on the overall call on the available funding, the Panel will also consider how to ensure funds are distributed fairly and to best effect around the two islands.

**Section 2** provides further advice on how the Panel reaches a decision on which bids are recommended to DfT Ministers for funding.

We expect to be in a position to notify applicants of funding decisions by the end of December 2021.

## Grant conditions

Organisations that are offered grants are required to meet certain conditions including that:

- any grant-funded equipment must be maintained and used during its life expectancy;
- grant recipients must be able to present paid invoices for the funded equipment to the DfT in time for the funding contribution to be paid within the 2021/22 financial year; and
- grant recipients must agree to an audit by the DfT of any funded purchases.

Grant recipients will be asked to sign a formal Grant Agreement with the DfT which sets out standard provisions relating to the payment and use of the grant as well as subsequent monitoring and reporting. The Grant Agreement must be signed by one of the organisations CEO's or equivalent and recipients will be asked to provide bank details to the DfT to facilitate payments.

## Section 2: Application guidance

This section explains the information which DfT expects to be included in an application. It is intended to assist applicants in structuring their bids and to provide advice about how the Expert Panel will reach its funding recommendations.

Applicants should use the headings below in their application and read the guidance carefully to ensure they include all the information requested as well as the required supporting documentation.

If the DfT receives a significant number of applications for funding it would be useful if those preparing bids could ensure that they focus on the requested information in their main bid document. Supporting material is welcome but should ideally be placed in an annex. Please also check the advice at the end of this section about limits on application length.

*Applications may be rejected if insufficient information or the required supporting documents are not supplied.*

## Organisation details

Outline your organisations (company, business, etc) details including company details and what ferry services it supplies to the Isles of Wight or Scilly.

## Bid summary

A short summary of the type of equipment or building works that will be purchased if funding were received and how they will maintain and/or enhance current services provided.

## Detailed bid items

The application summary and checklist form has a section for you to list specific bid items and estimated costs which should be checked against current prices or quotes. If you need to use an additional sheet, or replicate the summary list in the body of your application, it should follow the format that is used on the form:

- give a short description of each item of equipment or building works you intend to purchase (including how many);
- give each item's estimated total cost excluding VAT and identify the applicant's contribution (if any); and
- list items in priority order and note any interdependencies. This is important because, due to pressure on available funds, the Panel may decide to recommend a grant for only some of the items you are bidding for.

## Standards

This section of your bid should confirm that funded items will meet relevant standards and/or specifications set by legislation. For example, the requirements of EUR 1177/2010 as retained in UK law.

## **Why grant funding is required**

The Panel will consider how the equipment or building works listed will support and/or enhance your provision of ferry services to disabled and reduced mobility passengers. It will not award funding for items that you have already purchased or committed to purchase.

The Panel will consider information about how the items bid for will improve the journey for passengers. The beneficial impact provided to passengers and the number of passengers who will benefit will also be a consideration to maximise the benefit.

Your bid should make clear whether you are receiving, or are bidding for, other government funding or had any funding in the past three years. DfT and the Panel reserve the right to make enquiries to corroborate claims that you make about your organisation's current assets or your relationship with other organisations.

The Panel will give priority to equipment or builds that have been proven to assist disabled passengers. It will not give priority to items whose use is unproven, or items for which other funding is readily available.

## **How long the effects of grant funding will last**

Your bid should indicate the anticipated working lifespan of the equipment or builds purchased. An organisation receiving a grant will be responsible for the maintenance of any physical equipment or buildings/adaptations and the Panel will look for assurance that the organisation will be able to sustain the equipment or buildings over time.

The Panel will also look for evidence that the items funded represent good value for money. This includes evidence of the sustainability of your organisation which may include the financial security of your business as shown in its accounts.

## **VAT**

The Fund will not pay the VAT element of costs. Applicants should consider whether they can meet the VAT costs of all the items in their application were these to be funded. Before doing so, we strongly suggest you review the guidance available from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs as DfT is unable to provide any advice about VAT matters.

## **Recovery**

Organisations may be able to recover VAT paid on purchases from HMRC. This depends on the nature of the purchase and of the organisation.

## **Zero-rate**

Some purchases attract a zero-rate of VAT i.e. no VAT is charged by the supplier when the purchase is made. As with the recovery process, this will depend on the nature of the purchase. More information about the zero-rate of VAT can be obtained from HMRC.

## Supporting documents

As well as the application and the summary and checklist form, bids should also include a copy of their organisation's **latest annual accounts** and **a letter of support from local disability group or individual**.

The letter of support should provide an independent view that the equipment or building works bid for will be useful to disabled passengers.

Applicants are encouraged to contact DfT ([MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk](mailto:MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk)) if they have any questions about obtaining an appropriate letter of support.

## Submitting your application

You should ensure the completed application form and checklist form is submitted with the bid. The form is published alongside this Applicant Guide on the gov.uk web site. The checklist is intended to assist applicants in ensuring that their bid meets the specified Fund conditions and passes the initial checking stage.

Your application (not including the summary sheet and supporting documents) **should not exceed 20 sides (10 pages) of A4** and, if typed, the font size should not be smaller than 12 point.

Applications should be submitted to reach the DfT by no later than midnight on 30 November 2021. Applications can be sent to: [MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk](mailto:MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk)

Please add the following subject line: [ORGANISATION NAME]: Accessibility Fund for Isles of Wight and Scilly Application

Or post to:

Accessibility Fund for Isles of Wight and Scilly Application

Fourth Floor

Great Minster House

Department for Transport

33 Horseferry Road

London SW1P 4DR

Any requests for further information or questions about the Fund or the application process should be sent to [MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk](mailto:MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk)



## Section 3: Your questions answered

### **1. What is the Accessibility Fund for the Isles of Wight and Scilly for?**

This funding will support the ports and ferries servicing the Isles of Wight and Scilly by improving the accessibility of those services. This will help disabled and reduced mobility passengers use these services to access the mainland. This is important to improve people's lives especially when travelling for leisure, work or medical services.

### **2. Who can apply to the Fund?**

Funding is open to organisations (businesses, companies, etc) that operate port or ferry services to and from the Isle of Wight and the Isles of Scilly.

### **3. How much funding is available?**

£1 million is available in 2021/22.

There has been no previous such funding and there is no proposal for any similar future funding. This is "one off" offer.

### **4. Is there a minimum/maximum grant awarded per application?**

No, there is no minimum or maximum amount per application. The Expert Panel, which considers applications, reviews each bid individually on its own merits and will ensure that the available funding is distributed fairly and to its best effect. The Expert Panel may also decide to recommend only part of a charity's bid rather than the entire bid for funding.

DfT Ministers make the final decision on whether a bid will be funded.

### **5. What are the main features of the funding?**

The main focus is on improving the accessibility of ports and ferries servicing the Isles of Wight and Scilly by providing funding for equipment and building improvements. It does not fund training costs or the costs of maintenance.

### **6. Why do you need a letter of support from a local disability group or person?**

The letter of support provides DfT with an independent opinion that the bid is for an improvement that will make a real difference to disabled passengers.

## **7. What happens if purchases cost less/more than estimated in the original bid?**

DfT will pay 100% of the actual (ex-VAT) costs shown on invoices submitted by applicants. If, after all purchases are made, there is any underspend against the original fund amount, DfT will have to return this excess to the budget.

If costs are higher than expected, applicants should plan to meet the excess themselves. Applicants must inform DfT as soon as possible if costs are expected to change and, in particular, if they expect to be unable to meet the costs of items agreed for funding. DfT will consider whether any flexibility may be possible.

## **8. Can one application cover all items requested for funding or is a separate application needed for each item?**

Organisations must submit only one application for funding which should include all items they are seeking support to purchase through this fund.

## **9. Can applications seek to support activities such as ongoing maintenance of an asset?**

Where there is an on-going cost in maintaining an asset, the organisation should provide evidence in its application of how it will sustain it in the future.

## **10. Can applications seek support for equipment already purchased?**

No; the Fund's purpose is to enable purchases of equipment or building updates to develop accessible transport. It must not be used to bid for equipment that has already been purchased.

## **11. How will applications be decided?**

DfT will make an initial check that the organisation is eligible and the application meets the basic requirements. Applications that pass this check will go forward for consideration by an Expert Panel which includes representatives from the DfT, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and DPTAC.

The Expert Panel will consider each application individually on its own merits. The Expert Panel has developed evaluation criteria which takes into account factors including how bids will support disabled passengers, has equipment or building works been proven to help, the number of passengers likely to benefit.

## **12. Is there an appeals process against a failed application?**

There is no appeals process and the DfT Minister's decision is final.

### **13. How will the Government monitor whether the grant received is being used for its intended purposes?**

Organisations who have been awarded a grant will need to provide proof of purchase before funds will be released. DfT may also carry out independent checks on payment records and visit a sample of organisations to see the funded assets in use. Organisations may be liable to return any funding to the DfT if it is found it has been used for any purposes other than those intended.

### **14. What if the organisation cannot afford to pay for items in advance?**

Like many other Government grant schemes, the Fund is designed to ensure payments are only made once evidence of purchase has been provided by the applicant.

However, it is understood that this may be particularly difficult for smaller operators in terms of managing their cash flow. Therefore, in exceptional circumstances only, we may agree to support an application (or parts of it) where an organisation has provided evidence that demonstrates it does not have sufficient funds available to purchase a particular item, or items, in advance of grant funds being made available.

### **15. Are organisations free to procure equipment and services, from whoever they wish?**

DfT does not prescribe the providers from whom operators can purchase from. Purchases must meet any specifications or other requirements as appropriate. For example, where the cost of any one Grant Item or permitted related expenditure is £5,000 or more, operators must, if practicable, obtain at least 3 written tenders. Successful applicants will be responsible for procuring goods or services for which grant funding has been agreed

### **16. How long will it take DfT to transfer funds after the bank details have been provided?**

We will request an organisations bank details when a successful application has been confirmed. After we receive bank account details, and any other information requested, DfT may then need to add the organisation to its financial system. This process can take up to ten working days to complete.

Once received, we aim to review and process grant claims and supporting invoices within five working days. Payments will be made through our usual methods (such as BACS) and should reach the organisations nominated account within a further six working days.

In the case of organisations that have been exceptionally awarded funding in advance of purchase, payments will be made following submission of relevant documents which will include a signed copy of the DfT Grant Agreement.

If you have any further question about the Fund which aren't covered above, please e-mail us at [MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk](mailto:MaritimeAccessibility@dft.gov.uk).