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| A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated**Description: LogoERDF_Col_Portrait**Media Release 6 August 2020 |
| **£1.15 MILLION IN COVID restart grants FOR CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON SMALL BUSINESSES** **Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is launching a new £1.15 million grant programme to help small businesses meet some of the extra costs created by the COVID-19 pandemic.** The Cheshire & Warrington Recovery & Restructure Grant can offer grants of up to 80% to a maximum of £5,000 (or up to 60% on items purchased from 01 May – 23 July 2020) to support eligible Cheshire & Warrington businesses adjust to the Covid-19 outbreak.  The grants are open to trading small and medium enterprises, social enterprises, charities or sole trader\* based in the Cheshire or Warrington LEP area. To be eligible, businesses need to have been trading for at least 12 months. The project is being managed by Blue Orchid Enterprise Solutions of behalf of the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership. Around 50% of the funding is being directed towards the region’s hard hit visitor economy, targeting tourism, hospitality and retail businesses with support. The balance will be paid to SMEs in the wider economy.There are two strands to the programme - capital items and consultancy cost. The grant can, for instance, pay towards capital items businesses may need to recover or restructure their business to trade through the Covid-19 outbreak Examples of the support that can be provided includes:* IT equipment, e.g. Tablet & Contact payment systems, ICT equipment to support homeworking
* Fixed PPE equipment e.g. plastics screens & sanitiser dispensers
* Building alterations e.g. creation of one-way systems, building of outdoor seating, serving hatches etc.

Consultancy grants will help business to bring in external expertise to support their entry into new markets, engaging new customers or improving efficiency, for example through re-branding or promotional campaigns, market research or improving their online presence. The grant cannot pay for day-to-day running costs, servicing debt or towards cash flow. Other Government programmes are available to help with these issues.  Clare Hayward MBE DL, Chair of Cheshire and Warrington LEP said: “We know all too well through the work our Business Growth Hub team is doing, supporting local businesses, just how tough it is out there. These are market conditions that no one has experienced before. We will continue to work tirelessly to help companies of every size get along the road to recovery. This round of small business grants has a big focus on the visitor economy and follows on from the £15.5 million of support we have secured from the government’s Getting Building Fund for key projects in Cheshire East, Chester West and Warrington.”Some 50% of the cash for the Restructure & Recovery Grant comes from the Growing Places Fund which the C&W LEP Board has approved the use of in the form of grants to small businesses to be invested in ways that will support businesses to re-open, operate and grow in a Covid-safe way.  The balance has been made available through the Growth Hub network for existing European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)) Growth Hub projects or a nominated ERDF project under Priority Axis 3, ‘Enhancing the Competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises’. *To apply, please visit the Blue Orchid website* [*https://blueorchid.co.uk/cheshire-warrington-recovery-restructure-grant/*](http://)                                                                     **ENDS** ***For media enquiries please contact Chris Hulme, Influential,*** *Email hulme@thisisinfluential.com or call 07971 350116* **Notes to Editors:** **European Regional Development Fund**The project has received £615,113 of funding from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit [https://www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding](http://).**About Cheshire & Warrington LEP**Working in partnership with local government, businesses, educational institutes and other public, private and community sector organisations, the Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership keeps Cheshire & Warrington firmly on the map. Our region covers three local authority areas – Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington. [http://www.871candwep.co.uk/](http://)@candwep |