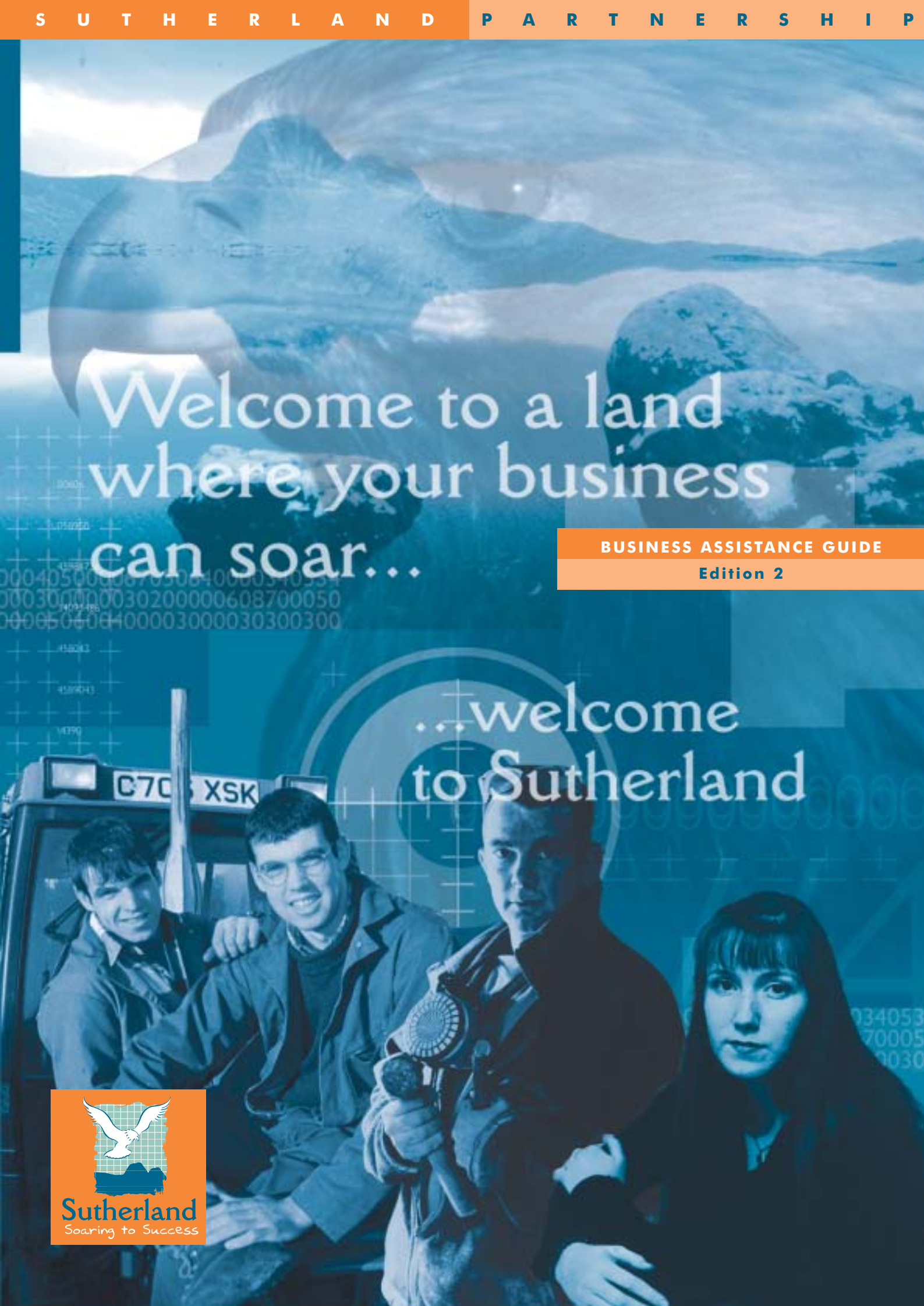


Welcome to a land
where your business
can soar...

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GUIDE

Edition 2

...welcome
to Sutherland





Every care has been taken to make this guide accurate but the Sutherland Partnership does not accept any responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions, or their consequences.

The Sutherland Partnership gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance provided for this guide by The Highland Council and Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise.



This second edition of the Sutherland Business Assistance Guide contains comprehensive details of a wide range of schemes offering practical advice, financial assistance, help with training and marketing, and access to commercial and industrial premises to existing and new businesses in the county.

Schemes are listed alphabetically in the main part of the guide, while, at the back, you'll find listings highlighting particular types of help available as well as an alphabetical index of all schemes. Symbols (see below) on each entry show at a glance the type of help on offer.

These schemes – and the organisations who operate them - are there to help you and your business. So look through the guide now and see what could be available to help your business soar to success in Sutherland.

Alison Magee

**CLlr Alison Magee, Chair
Sutherland Partnership**

Key to symbols



Information



Financial Assistance



Marketing Assistance



**Training/
Recruitment**



Sutherland
Soaring to Success

SOAR TO SUCCESS IN SUTHERLAND

Sutherland... 6,000km² of breathtaking scenery, fresh air, superb quality of life – the natural place for your business to soar to success.



A place for people to thrive

In this special place, people can thrive. A beautiful natural environment, rich heritage and communities where the individual still matters - all these factors contribute to providing a superb quality of life for those who live and work here. Nor does space to live and breathe mean making sacrifices in other matters - Sutherland enjoys some of the highest standards of education and health in Scotland – and low levels of crime.

Did you know

Education

- Educational achievement in Sutherland is consistently above Highland and Scottish averages – 89% of S4 pupils in Sutherland schools achieved 5 or more standard grades in 1999/2000 (compared to only 75% in Scotland as a whole).
- Absence levels in Sutherland schools are very low – the secondary schools absence rate in 1999/2000 was almost 40% lower than the Scottish average.

Health

- The Sutherland population has more family doctors and dispensing pharmacies than any other area of the Highlands – there is one doctor per 724 people in Sutherland compared to one per 964 in the Highlands as a whole.
- Mortality rates in Sutherland from heart disease, cancer, stroke, respiratory diseases and digestive diseases are all well below the Scottish average.

Crime

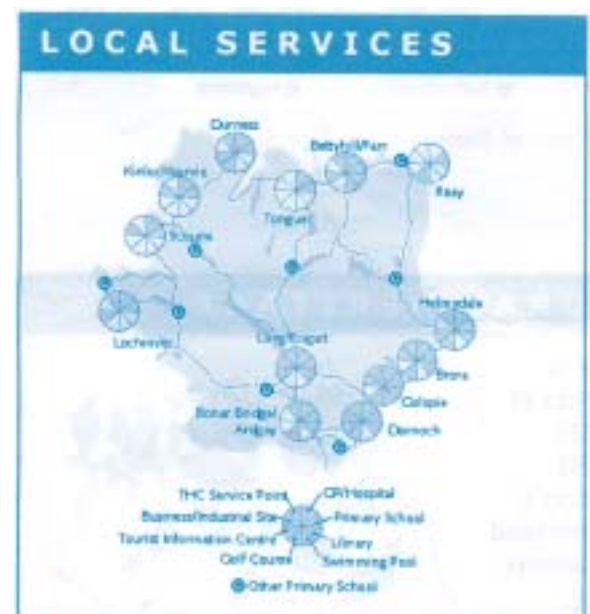
- Crime rates in Sutherland are almost 75% lower than in Scotland as a whole – in 2000/2001, only 22 crimes were committed per 1,000 population compared to 82 per 1,000 in Scotland.

Traditionally, businesses in Sutherland have been very much linked to the area's rich natural resources, and businesses in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism are still vitally important. But other types of businesses have also flourished here – from makers of high-quality stoneware to producers of curries – and, thanks to new communication technologies, the dream of running a business with clients all over the world from a scenic Sutherland glen or clifftop village is now, more than ever, a realistic proposition.

Whether you are a native of Sutherland or someone who would like to make your home here, there is a network of support available to help your business establish and grow.

Look through this guide, then get in touch with the people waiting to help you – with your ideas and the support available to help them happen, your business can soar to success in Sutherland.

But don't just take our word for it...



A PLACE FOR BUSINESSES TO PROSPER

...here's what people already running businesses in Sutherland say!

BILL BENNETT, NEXUS MANAGEMENT UK LTD



Nexus Management UK Ltd now operate a global IT support and services helpdesk from a new complex on the Dornoch Industrial Estate in East Sutherland. Clients are provided with advanced, fully secure, integrated IT support service including desktop support, network support and remote helpdesk by use of the Internet and leading edge 'Virtual Private Networking' (VPN).

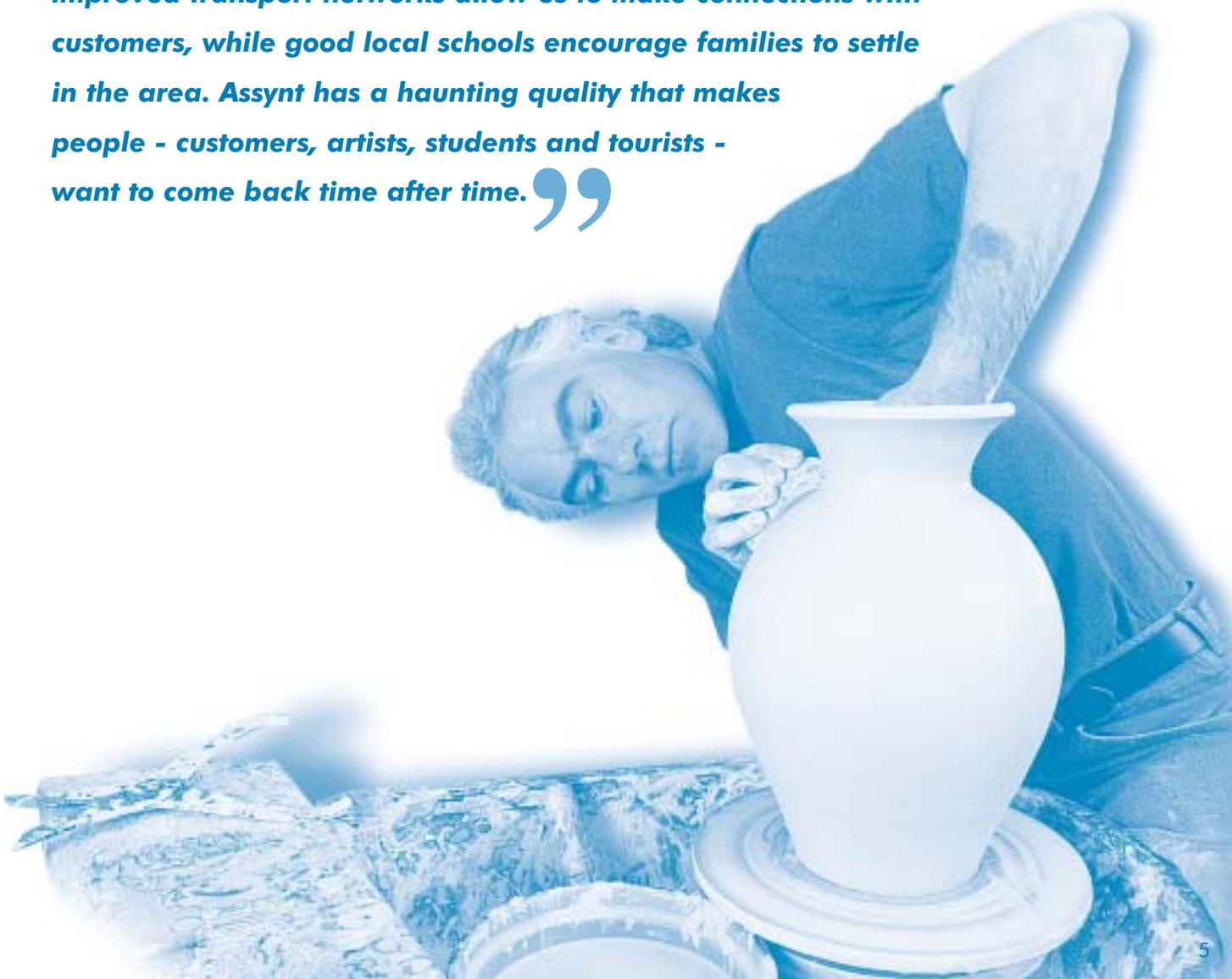
“By working very closely with business advisers from Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise at local level, this project was brought from paper to premises and subsequent operation in a very short time. The assistance and support provided by CASE was of the highest quality and I would emphasize that this type of support at local level is essential in assuring the success of any project.”

DAVID GRANT, HIGHLAND STONEWARE

From their base in Lochinver, Highland Stoneware have built up an international reputation as producers of high-quality tableware whose designs reflect the beauty of West Coast's scenery, flowers and wildlife.

“With gales howling, boats taking shelter in the harbour and white horses in Lochinver bay, is this the best time to be taking about the joys of living and working in Sutherland? ‘But it so exciting’, say my customers, who come to us because they love the rugged landscape, remote location and unique atmosphere of this part of Scotland.

Since we set up in 1974, most of the practical difficulties of working in a remote area have disappeared. Electronic communications and improved transport networks allow us to make connections with customers, while good local schools encourage families to settle in the area. Assynt has a haunting quality that makes people - customers, artists, students and tourists - want to come back time after time.”



ADULT GUIDANCE INFORMATION SERVICE

ALL SECTORS



Description

The aim of the Adult Guidance Information Service is to establish and provide a Careers Information Service for adults, both employed and non-employed, resident in Caithness and Sutherland who are over 18. The service may be accessed via a freefone service, an information resource base and a computerised resource base.

Who can apply?

Service users should be over 18 years of age and non-New Deal gateway clients (for whom there is other provision).

How do I apply?

The service is funded by Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise and is delivered by Careers Scotland. It is completely informal. Come along in person or telephone 0800 028 5881

Anne Sutherland – Head of Skills Development

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805204 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: s.anne@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (ABDS)

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

The Agricultural Business Development Scheme is an innovative business development scheme for farmers/crofters and their immediate family members. It can provide assistance in agricultural holdings and the development of new or expansion of existing agricultural or non-agricultural enterprises, based either on or off farm/croft to increase the income generating capacity of the farming family. Agricultural investments include new buildings, fank and dipper and stock handling facilities, while the possibilities for diversification can include new buildings for any other economic activity, mobile machinery, pony trekking and IT equipment. The scheme is subject to a maximum grant ceiling of £40,000 and the rate of the grant is variable up to a maximum of 50%.

Who can apply?

ABDS operates throughout the Highlands and Islands area. You can apply to the scheme if you are a farmer or crofter and have been actively engaged in agriculture for a minimum of 2 years. Immediate family members living on or adjacent to the agricultural unit are also eligible to apply for diversification projects.

Normally a business plan is required which will detail the current viability of the business and will highlight how the investment/diversification project will enhance the business.

How do I apply?

Applications to be submitted to local Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD) office. These applications will eventually be assessed by the Programme Assessment Committee (PAC) who will approve/reject proposals and set the grant rate.

Murdo MacKenzie – Higher Agricultural Officer

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department, Ord Croft, Lairg, Sutherland IV27 4AZ

Tel: 01549 402167 Fax: 01549 402117 Email: murdo.mackenzie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

The British Red Cross run a number of courses for businesses in First Aid at Work (FAW) and Manual Handling. FAW courses are from 7 to 28 hours. Although these are most appropriate to employees, the British Red Cross also run courses for individuals from 2 hour introductory courses to 14 hour courses. At public events the British Red Cross can supply teams of First Aiders according to insurance and legal requirements.

Who can apply?

Any size or type of business may apply for these services

How do I apply?

For First Aid at Work and Manual Handling courses, phone Sandy Dryden on (01463) 231620.
For individual First Aid courses or First Aid at public events call (01408) 621285.

Barbara Watson – District Services Manager
British Red Cross, Gower Street, Brora, Sutherland KW9 6NX
Tel: 01408 621285 Email: redcrossbrora@lineone.net

BUSINESS INFORMATION SOURCE (BIS)

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Business Information Source is a free service available through Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise to businesses, community groups and individuals throughout the Caithness and Sutherland area.

The BIS has a huge range of resources available both locally and through links with regional and national information sources, and is able to tackle enquiries on any business-related topic for businesses large and small, new or long established.

Typical subjects covered include:

- preparing a business plan
- finding new suppliers
- identifying new markets
- dealing with paperwork for tax, PAYE and VAT
- explaining the new technologies and how IT can help a business develop
- finding sources of finance, including grants and charitable trusts
- compiling statistical information for business and marketing plans
- coping with red tape!

All businesses, community groups and individuals in Caithness & Sutherland may use this service.

Keith Muir, Business Information Source
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ
Tel: 01847 896115 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: keith.muir@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

The concept of Business Mentoring Scotland is one of tapping into the expertise of successful business people to assist businesses which have growth potential (jobs and turnover), and have a desire to grow and to accept external advice. Mentors provide their time free of charge and receive travel and subsistence expenses and induction training from Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE).

BMS was launched in April 2000 by Henry McLeish in his then role of Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning. It has been delivered across Scotland over the past year, by HIE and Scottish Enterprise (SE) in their respective areas.

Who can apply?

The programme as delivered in the HIE area has no restrictions on eligibility. Businesses that join the scheme:

- must have a desire to develop and grow their business and readily accept advice from others
- are responsible for getting as much benefit as they can for their business from the relationship with the mentor
- are prepared to commit time and energy to working towards achieving the plans they set.

How do I apply?

Contact Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise in first instance.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN
Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk
www.businessmentoringScotland.org

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN
Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

BUSINESS RATES – RELIEF/REMISSION

ALL SECTORS



Description

For details of Business Rates and of relief and remission which may be available to certain groups contact the Non-Domestic Rates Section, Highland Council, at the address below.

Non-Domestic Rates Section
The Highland Council, Exchequer Section, PO Box 5650, Inverness IV3 5NX
Tel: 01463 702984 Fax: 01463 702468 Email: rates@highland.gov.uk

FISHING/AQUACULTURE/ TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The Caithness and Sutherland Trout Angling Group was set up to maximise the benefits of wild brown trout angling for local people and businesses in Caithness and Sutherland. Our membership comprises local angling clubs, angling instructors, ghillies and tackle shops, sporting estates, tourism businesses, the Highland Council, Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise and Scottish Natural Heritage. Our activities currently include:

- production and distribution of our promotional leaflet, "Head North to an Angling Paradise";
- our own promotional website (www.fishing-highland.co.uk);
- advertising and publicity; and
- various special promotional and conservation projects.

By joining CASTAG members can:

- help shape our future activities
- meet and work with like-minded businesses and organisations interested in developing brown trout angling in Caithness and Sutherland
- take part in various highly cost-effective joint marketing activities (including inclusion in our website), and
- participate in various special events, market research and conservation initiatives.

Who can apply?

Membership is open to all individuals and organisations in Caithness and Sutherland who have an interest in brown trout angling, including accommodation providers, angling clubs, angling instructors, ghillies, tackle shops, sporting estates and tourism businesses.

How do I apply?

If you would like to join CASTAG, or to find out more about the group, please contact:

Lesley Crawford – Hon. Secretary
Askival, Reay, Caithness KW14 7RE

Tel: 01847 811470 Fax: 01847 811470 Email: enquiries@fishing-highland.co.uk www.fishing-highland.co.uk

CAREERS GUIDANCE FOR ADULTS

ALL SECTORS



Description

Careers Scotland provides free information and an advisory service to all adults in the Caithness and Sutherland area. We have a wide range of information on jobs, career routes, education and training opportunities. We can also provide information on finance for learning, jobsearch skills and interview techniques. If you need fresh ideas we can help you using the most up-to-date computer-assisted careers guidance packages. Individual interviews are arranged by appointment as close to your home as possible.

Who can apply?

All over 18's are eligible

How do I apply?

For further information, please contact Denise Holden, Area Manager.

Denise Holden – Area Manager

Careers Scotland, Caithness and Sutherland Careers Centre, 2 Princes Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 7BU

Tel: 01847 895310 freephone 0800 028 5881 Fax: 01847 893740

Email: denise.holden@careers-scotland.org.uk www.careers-scotland.org.uk

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES (HIGHLAND COUNCIL PROPERTY & ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES)

ALL SECTORS



The Highland Council has a wide selection of commercial and industrial units and development sites available to let in the Sutherland area.

Mr Duncan Reid – Principal Surveyor (Property Management)
Property & Architectural Services, Highland Council, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX
Tel: 01463 702215 Fax: 01463 702222 Email: duncan.reid@highland.gov.uk www.highland.gov.uk

CROFT ENTRANT SCHEME

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

The Croft Entrant Scheme aims to:

- identify suitable young entrants into crofting
- facilitate the entry of suitable young entrants into crofting
- assist young entrants to become established in crofting by way of financial support, advice and guidance
- make crofts available by encouraging outgoing crofters to release their crofts to suitable young entrants- assistance is in the form of an outgoer's incentive payment and an ingoer's management premium (maximum £5,000 for any approved case).

Who can apply?

Potential new entrant requirements are:

- normally to be aged between 18 – 40
- find a suitable croft and submit a plan for its development for approval by Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise
- take up residence on the croft within the period of the plan
- not previously either a tenant or owner of a croft. (This may be relaxed in exceptional circumstances)
- be acceptable to the Crofters Commission if the transfer of the tenancy is by way of a non family assignation. In the case of a family assignation the approval of the landlord is necessary.

In all cases, including family assignation, proposal for entry to the scheme must be submitted to CASE prior to the croft being assigned.

How do I apply?

Contact the Crofters Commission in the first instance.

Elizabeth Urquhart – Development Officer
Crofters Commission, 4-6 Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ
Tel: 01463 663413 Fax: 01463 711820
Email: elizabeth.urquhart@crofterscommission.org.uk www.crofterscommission.org.uk

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

The Crofts (Scotland) Act 1993 allows an individual crofter, or group of crofters to require their Grazings Committee to seek the landlord's consent and the Crofters Commission's approval that part of the grazings can be used as woodland. The Act does not allow planting of the entire area of the grazings and shareholders may only apply to establish an area of Crofter Forestry in proportion to the plantable area of the Common Grazings and their respective share.

The long term benefits of woodland scheme are, at a local level: managed livestock grazing within a sheltered woodland environment (a key objective on many common grazing schemes); timber production (if commercial conifers are planted); enhancement of the landscape; creation of wildlife habitats; and the creation of recreational opportunities through woodland walks.

Who can apply?

An individual shareholder or a group of shareholders can require the Grazing Committee to apply for the landlord's consent and our approval to plant trees on the Common Grazings. The grazings need to be regulated and should include a Crofter Forestry Appendix. The whole of the grazings cannot be planted. Grants are available for planting trees through the Forestry Commission and the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department (SEERAD).

How do I apply?

The Grazing Committee, after obtaining the agreement of the shareholders and the consent of the landlord on the area to be planted, should complete an application form with a plan of the scheme and send it to the Crofters Commission for our consideration.

Janice McCauley - Crofters Commission, 4-6 Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ.

Tel: 01463 663459 Fax: 01463 711820

Email: janice.mccauley@crofterscommission.org.uk www.crofterscommission.org.uk

CROFTING COUNTIES AGRICULTURAL GRANTS SCHEME (CCAGS)

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

The Crofters Commission scheme objective is to aid and develop agricultural production on crofts and similar holdings. The ultimate objective of CCAGS is to sustain the economic basis and way of life of crofting communities and so help retain population in crofting areas. To achieve this strategic aim, CCAGS is designed to provide assistance to crofters and other eligible occupiers towards the cost of capital works on holdings and common grazings in order to encourage the investment necessary to help compensate for the natural disadvantages of those areas for agricultural activity.

Who can apply?

Crofters are eligible for assistance who are tenants on a registered croft or the official sub-tenant (as approved by the Crofters Commission). Official sub-tenants are advised to obtain the principal tenant's permission for any improvement works. In addition, the length of the sub-lease approved or remaining may restrict your entitlement to major capital improvement works.

A Common Grazings Committee or Grazing Constable should apply where the proposed operation is on common grazings. Those who do not reside on their crofts, croft owners and those with holdings which are not crofts, may be eligible subject to conditions and/or economic status test.

How do I apply?

Contact the Crofters Commission in the first instance for full details of assistance, eligibility and application procedure.

Miss Andrea Pow – Grants Officer, Crofters Commission, 4-6 Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ

Tel: 01463 663412 Fax: 01463 711820

Email: andrea.pow@crofterscommission.org.uk www.crofterscommission.org.uk

DISABILITY SERVICES

ALL SECTORS



Description

Disability Services offers assistance with recruiting and retaining employees with disabilities. Assistance may be given with training and special equipment.

Who can apply?

All businesses are eligible for support.

How do I apply?

Apply by telephone in the first instance to Wick Jobcentre at the address below.

Sue Whitelegge – Business Manager

Wick Jobcentre, Government Buildings, Girnigoe Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 4HJ

Tel: 01955 673200 Fax: 01955 673250

Email: susan.whitelegge@employment.gov.uk www.employmentservice.gov.uk

E-BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

ALL SECTORS



Description

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise's E-Business Support Programme is available to help businesses in Caithness and Sutherland make maximum use of the internet.

The E-Business Adviser can offer free advice and guidance to businesses on a variety of topics, including how to:

- get your business on-line
- e-mail effectively
- make best use of the internet
- set up a website
- improve in existing website
- manage your own website
- trade over the internet.

Who can apply?

All businesses in Caithness and Sutherland may use this service.

How do I apply?

Contact:

John Stodgell

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: john.stodgell@hient.co.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

The scheme is designed to encourage employers to create new jobs for unemployed people by offering financial incentives to employers to take on new workers. The Highland Council runs the scheme with support from the European Social Fund. Firms in all sectors of industry located within the Highlands and employing fewer than 250 employees (full-time and part-time) are eligible. Community businesses and independent voluntary organisations are eligible but not other public sector organisations. New firms may also be eligible but a business is not regarded as new merely because of a change of name, ownership or address.

The level of grant payable is 30% of the eligible gross wage up to a maximum decided by the European Commission. An enhanced level of 40% grant is payable towards the recruitment of a person unemployed for more than 6 months, 50% towards recruitment in selected geographical target areas with a further level of 75% available for the recruitment of an unemployed disabled person.

Who can apply?

Eligibility is as stated above. Recruits must not have started prior to approval. Jobs must be additional, adding to the maximum number of employees of the company in the Highlands over the six month period prior to making the application. The increased total number of employees must be maintained for the grant period. The new jobs must be permanent – they are not considered to be permanent if they are created for the execution of a specific/temporary contract. The basic hours must be between 21 and 45 per week. The National Minimum Wage must be satisfied and the recruit must be located within the Highland Council area.

How do I apply?

Approval is issued allowing eight weeks to fill the post(s) applied for once a completed application form has been checked through and a satisfactory bank reference received.

Jane Gair – Employment Initiatives Officer

Planning and Development Service, Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX

Tel: 01463 702545 Fax: 01463 702298 Email: jane.gair@highland.gov.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

European Business Services is the Euro Info Centre for the North of Scotland, part of a network of centres located in business development agencies throughout Europe and Eastern Europe. A network set up by the European Commission to inform, advice and assist companies on every aspect of conducting business in Europe. Information services include, European legislation, funding and programmes, market information, business contacts and public procurement

European Business Services is your local gateway to new markets, suppliers, contracts and potential business partners.

Services cover:

- AccessEurope: practical assistance on doing business in Europe
- AccessFunding: advice on UK and European Sources of business finance
- AccessMarkets: tailored information on European markets
- AccessTenders: daily tailored alerting service on contracts out for tender
- AccessDirect: tailored alerting service to give your business the edge.

Who can apply?

Anyone interested in European and Eastern European business issues. Please note that some services are chargeable.

How do I apply?

Contact European Business Services at the address below, or visit www.euro-info.co.uk for details.

Caroline Gray-Stephens, European Executive
European Business Services, 81 Castle Street, Inverness IV2 3EA
Tel: 01463 702560 or 01463 715400 Fax: 01463 715600
Email: eic@euro-info.co.uk www.euro-info.co.uk

EXPORTISE IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS

ALL SECTORS



Description

Exportise offers a range of activities, initiatives and support, delivered on behalf of the Highlands and Islands Trade and Export Partnership (HITEP) by the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network, to prepare and engage local businesses in exporting. HITEP includes the Highland and Islands Enterprise network, six local authorities, the Chamber of Commerce, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and the Highland Export Club.

With access to advice from experienced exporters, we are prepared to work on a one-to-one basis with any company, whatever their level of export experience. Our aim is not simply to raise awareness of the many benefits of exporting, but, more importantly, to assist your company with every aspect of export training, strategy development and market implementation.

We are able to draw on the experience of organisations as diverse as the Chambers of Commerce, Scottish Development International (SDI), Trade Partners UK and the British Consular Network. This ensures that you receive the best export advice and in-market support right on your doorstep

If you would like more information on Exportise, or would like to arrange an initial consultation, please contact:

Valerie Fraser – Business Advice and Information
Highland & Islands Enterprise, Cowan House, Inverness Retail and Business Park, Inverness IV2 7GF
Tel: 01463 244267 Fax: 01463 244241 Email: v.fraser@hient.co.uk



Description

No business can be expected to grow and succeed without investment. The cost of obtaining investment capital can be high and Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise services aim to help reduce this cost. At present financial assistance is targeted on businesses whose activities contribute to the area's income, either through exporting goods or through increasing tourist income to the area. Current policy on the various sectors can be summarised as follows:

Manufacturing, assembly, processing and craft based industries

Priority will generally be given to assisting projects which involve manufacturing, product assembly, processing and craft based articles provided that they are not intended to compete in a predominately local market which is already adequately supplied by established local businesses.

Fishing industry

Re-distribution of the UK fishing fleet is now the only way to improve the relative position of fleets in the area. Priority is given to maintaining an age profile for the fleets and diversification into fishing for less pressurised fish stocks and shell fish.

Tourism

CASE considers that although the area is adequately served in terms of accommodation there is still capacity for further development to increase the value of tourism to the economy of the area. Priority will therefore be given to improving the standards of accommodation and catering facilities available, and to encourage the provision of a wide range of recreational facilities which will encourage tourists to come to (and stay longer in) the area.

Construction, quarrying and mineral extraction

CASE considers that the capacity of the building industry and related trades in the area are adequate to meet local demand at this time. Quarries would need to be clearly exporting their products outwith the Highlands to be considered eligible.

Land

The land sector comprises the primary land uses of agriculture, forestry, estate management and horticulture. Policy has been to encourage developments beyond the individual production unit – for example, value added processing, together with consideration being given to new entrants to farming and crofting. Diversification also plays a prominent role and encouragement is given to all farmers and crofters to ensure that they are maximising their business potential.

Service industries

Assistance to businesses in this sector is selective in terms of the type of project and the geographical location. In particular there is a need to avoid the distortion of fair competition between small businesses and the need to concentrate funds in areas of activity where market forces alone are unlikely to provide adequate incentive for investment.

Who can apply?

The consideration of assistance is discretionary with each case taken on its own merits. However, the rationale is based on two broad principles which CASE seeks to apply:

- Financial assistance should be offered to encourage business developments which would not proceed at all, or which would only proceed on a more limited basis, in the absence of such assistance.
- Financial assistance should only be offered to projects which will add or retain employment and/or otherwise improve the general level of economic activity in the area. Most of our assistance is aimed at increasing the return on investment in buildings and equipment by the provision of lump sum investments (grants).

Each case will be judged on its own merits.

How do I apply?

Contact CASE for further details.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager, Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN. Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN
Tel: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Federation of Small Businesses is the largest organisation in the UK (165,000 members) representing and lobbying on behalf of small businesses. It is member funded and non-party political. Membership costs between £70 and £650 per annum depending on the number of employees.

Locally, assistance is available on all business issues although this is often a sign-posting service.

There is a range of benefits with membership including support and assistance in the event of VAT/tax investigation, employment disputes, threat to operating licence, prosecution under Health and Safety at Work Act and free legal, employment and tax help 24 hours per day.

Who can apply?

Businesses must have fewer than 200 employees at time of joining.

How do I apply?

Contact Regional Office/Regional Organiser

Fay Thomson – Regional Organiser

Federation of Small Businesses, 22 Market Brae, Inverness IV2 3AB

Tel: 01463 237772 Fax: 01463 237775 Email: fsbhighland@fsbdial.co.uk www.fsb.org.uk

GOLF HIGHLAND

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

Golf Highland was set up to maximise the benefits of golf to the local communities in the Highlands by working with local golf clubs, tourism operators etc, and developing the golfing experience through research, training and marketing.

Who can apply?

Golf Highland can offer assistance to any business related to golf that is a member of The Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board (HOST).

How do I apply?

For further information contact Golf Highland at the address below.

Fraser Cromarty, Manager

Golf Highland, North Highland College, Grange Road, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3LE

Tel: 01847 889373 Fax: 01847 889380

Email: frasercromarty@golfhighland.com www.golfhighland.com

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The Green Tourism Business Scheme is an assessment of the environmental good practice of tourism businesses. An environmental auditor visits properties to assess how the business is run in terms of efficiencies in, for example, waste, water and energy usage. Three levels can be achieved and the scheme is run by VisitScotland, formerly the Scottish Tourist Board.

Who can apply?

The scheme is currently open to businesses which are already in the relevant VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. tourism accommodation, holiday parks and visitor attractions. It will soon be opened up to other tourism businesses e.g. conference centres, food outlets.

How do I apply?

Currently self assessment to one of three levels, then the external verification. There will soon be a single process whereby certain management information is collected.

Lorraine Thomson – Manager, Quality Assurance

VisitScotland, Thistle House, Beechwood Park North, Inverness IV2 3ED

Tel: 01463 723027 Fax: 01463 717244 Email: lorraine.thomson@stb.gov.uk www.visitscotland.com

HIE ACTIVITY

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The 'HIE Activity' scheme is delivered by each of the ten Local Enterprise Companies in the Highlands and Islands. The objective of the scheme is to encourage businesses involved in the provision of activity and special interest holidays to improve quality.

Who can apply?

The range of types of operation eligible for consideration includes, for example, activity and adventure centres; wildlife tourism; cruising and sailing; and events and festivals. Funding can be considered for building improvement and equipment purchase.

How do I apply?

Assistance is discretionary and individual businesses interested should contact Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Office, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN

Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING/ FOOD PROCESSING



Description

The HIE Efficiency Programme will provide businesses with a source of funding to encourage investment in product/processing equipment for the production of new products, will stimulate investment in research and development and will be targeted towards businesses which are involved in processing or manufacturing. Eligible expenditure can include plant and equipment; installation and commissioning; professional fees and technical studies; initial market development costs for new products.

Who can apply?

The ceiling for business size is SME (small and medium-sized enterprises) which is defined as:

Having fewer than 250 employees; and has either

- an annual turnover no more than EUR40M (euros), or
- a balance sheet total no more than EUR27M (euros), and
- is no more than 25% owned by one or more companies not falling within this definition.

The Programme is eligible for commercial undertakings within the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network area. Exclusions include local service projects, franchisees and agriculture. Charities/voluntary organisations, acquisitions/mergers and phoenix companies may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

How do I apply?

Contact the Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Project Officer to discuss the eligibility of the application and the creation of a tailored package to suit the needs of the applicant business. If appropriate, an application form will then be issued. If successful, a formal written notification will be sent to the applicant. The CASE Project Officer will thereafter manage the application.

A list of Local Enterprise Company contacts can be provided by:

Pat MacLeod – Innovation Manager
Highlands & Islands Enterprise, The Green House, Beechwood Business Park North, Inverness IV2 3BL.
Tel: 01463 667248 Email: pp.macleod@hient.co.uk www.hie.co.uk

HIE STANDARDS - 3

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The 'HIE Standards - 3' scheme is delivered by each of the ten Local Enterprise Companies in the Highlands and Islands. The objective of the scheme is to encourage businesses involved in the provision of tourist accommodation to improve quality and businesses such as hotels, youth hostels, touring caravan and camping sites, and bunkhouses are eligible for consideration for funding for buildings and equipment improvement.

Who can apply?

Owners of existing or new visitor accommodation in the area are eligible for assistance.

How do I apply?

Assistance is discretionary. Individual businesses interested should contact Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN
Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Office, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN
Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

HIE STARTS

ALL SECTORS



Description

Starting a new business can be difficult and demanding in even the most favourable of circumstances. The Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise (CASE) HIE Starts programme aims to overcome some of the initial financial problems of the proposed new business by offering a monthly grant for the first twelve months plus small scale capital grant assistance. This monthly grant is seen as a contribution towards the working capital requirement, helping to ease the cash flow problems that the majority of new businesses face.

HIE Starts grants are entirely discretionary and vary in size according to the nature of the business proposal. They are paid for a twelve-month period, credited to the business account at the end of the month. During this period CASE's Business Counsellor will carefully monitor the performance of the business and be on hand to provide any necessary advice as and when required.

Who can apply?

Qualifying businesses may be started on a full-time, part-time or seasonal basis. Any person resident in Caithness or Sutherland can be considered under the HIE Starts programme whether they are employed, self-employed or unemployed. Applicants will receive business information and advice to assist them in producing a business plan.

How do I apply?

HIE Starts programme is delivered by the Local Enterprise Companies according to local priorities. The programme has received support from the European Union through the Highlands and Islands Transitional Programme.

George Munro – HIE Starts Manager, South East Sutherland
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN
Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: g.munro@hient.co.uk

Mary MacKay – HIE Starts Manager, North West Sutherland
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN
Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

HIE VENTURES LTD

ALL SECTORS



Description

HIE Ventures Ltd provides venture capital to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) located within the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Funds up to £250,000 are available to assist with start-up, early stage and development capital requirements. All sectors will be considered.

Who can apply?

Businesses i.e. limited companies located within the Highlands and Islands.

How do I apply?

A business plan with 3-year financial projections is required. Assessment will be made by Aberdeen Asset Managers Limited.

Robert Beattie – Investment Director
Aberdeen Asset Managers Limited, 84 Academy Street, Ballantyne House (4th Floor), Inverness IV1 1LU
Tel: 01463 717214 Fax: 01463 717211 Email: robert.beattie@aberdeen-asset.com

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Highland Business Women's Club aims to bring together women from private, public and voluntary sector organisations. The objectives of the club are to:

- to provide a framework to support woman in business by creating opportunities to make new social and professional contacts, exchange ideas and learn from experienced members of the business community
- to promote representation of the opinions and attitudes of members, relating to issues which concern women in business in Scotland, gained through a continuing and active resource programme
- explore and develop new technology to combat the problems of networking in remote areas
- develop a comprehensive membership database (regulated under Data Protection Act), and
- keep members informed of all activities relating to the club through regular meetings in/around the Inverness Area.

Who can apply?

The Club is open to women from private, public and voluntary sector organisations – basically, woman who work. Individual membership is £40 p.a. and Corporate membership £200 p.a. (max. of five individuals)

How do I apply?

Contact the Club Administrator for an application form.

Mrs Barbara RF Simpson – Club Administrator

Highland Business Women's Club, Badgerswood, Boblainy, Kiltarlity, By Beauly, Inverness-shire IV4 7HX
Tel: 01463 741736 Fax: 01463 741736 Email: barbarasimpson@lineone.net

HIGHLAND FUND

ALL SECTORS



The Highland Fund has been in existence since 1954 giving loans (unsecured) based on character references to small business start-ups, existing fishing, crofting and farming businesses, and tourism projects in the Highland and Islands. The Fund is a registered charity and entirely independent of any political movement and operates as a non-profit making company limited by guarantee. Loans vary from £3000 - £6000 at 8% over 6 years. Repayment is monthly by standing order.

Who can apply?

No specific exclusions apply but a personal input of funds is expected and applicants should show the potential for success based on a simple business plan.

How do I apply?

An application form should be completed. Reference reports will be sought, including bank references. Applications will be placed before the Council of the Fund who will make a decision.

R Macdonald – Secretary

Highland Fund Ltd, Unit 5, 110A Maxwell Avenue, Westerton, Bearsden, Glasgow G61 1HU

Tel: 0141 942 2484 Fax: 0141 942 2484

HIGHLAND OPPORTUNITY LTD

FISHING/AQUACULTURE/MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING/TRANSPORT/DISTRIBUTION/
RETAIL/FOOD PROCESSING/CONSTRUCTION/TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

Highland Opportunity Ltd is the enterprise trust for the Highlands which provides financial assistance, business support, youth services and European consultancy for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in all economic sectors and particularly to new and young SMEs. It is a non-profit-distributing company, limited by guarantee, with a board of directors drawn from the elected members of the Highland Council.

The Highland Opportunity Fund is managed and run by Highland Opportunity Ltd and offers low-interest loans of £1,000 - £30,000 and associated business support for the establishment and development of viable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Highlands.

Who can apply?

Assistance provided to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in most economic sectors.

How do I apply?

Initially contact the Highland Council's local Area Development Manager.

Gordon Todd – Area Development Manager

Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council, The Meadows, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3SG.

Tel: 01862 812053 Fax: 01862 810188 Email: gordon.todd@highland.gov.uk

HIGHLAND OPPORTUNITY LTD - EMPLOYMENT FUND

MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING/ FOOD PROCESSING



Description

The Highland Opportunity Ltd Employment Fund, part financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the Highlands and Islands Objective 1 Partnership Programme, aims to create permanent employment by sustaining business throughout the Highland area.

The Fund offers discretionary interest-free loans of £1,000 - £30,000 and associated business support for the establishment and growth of viable SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) in the Highlands

Who can apply?

Assistance is provided to SMEs in most economic sectors and particularly to new and developing businesses. Finance may be provided to those SMEs safeguarding or creating employment. Maximum public sector assistance is 25% of the total project cost.

How do I apply?

Initially contact the Highland Council's local Area Development Manager.

Gordon Todd – Area Development Manager

Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council, The Meadows, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3SG.

Tel: 01862 812053 Fax: 01862 810188 Email: gordon.todd@highland.gov.uk

HIGHLAND PROSPECT LTD

MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING/RETAIL/ TOURISM/LEISURE/FOOD PROCESSING



Description

Highland Prospect Ltd was established to respond to approaches from the private sector to participate in securing major investment projects in the Highlands of Scotland. The resources of the company are available to support local and inward investment opportunities, and are to be considered complementary to sources of public and private sector assistance. The company is conscious of the high threshold costs attached to expanding or establishing any new venture especially in the initial years of operation. The intention is to therefore focus on those areas of the private sector investment which, without the company's participation, would not take place.

Assistance is available from the company as discretionary finance to encourage major economic investment in the Highlands. The type of financial assistance can generally be split into the following categories:

- property development undertaken by the company for and on behalf of an identified occupant/occupier
- low interest secured loans from £30,000 to £500,000 (up to 50% of the total project costs).

Highland Prospect will attempt to ensure that appropriate packages of assistance, including that from the company or other possible sources are identified. Sources of matching funds should be approached at the same time as Highland Prospect Ltd to avoid possible delays in the time an application is processed.

Who can apply?

Enquiries for assistance are open to all those who are, or propose to be, involved in establishing or developing a major business enterprise in the Highlands. The type of project that can be assisted are generally in the following three areas of activity:

- manufacturing/processing industry
- service sector
- tourism/leisure-related.

How do I apply?

The company is managed throughout the Highlands by the Planning and Development Service of the Highland Council. The first point of contact is through the network of local Area Development Managers.

Gordon Todd, Area Development Manager

Planning and Development Service, The Highland Council, The Meadows, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3SG.

Tel: 01862 812053 Fax: 01862 810188 Email: gordon.todd@highland.gov.uk

FISHING/AQUACULTURE/ FOOD PROCESSING



Description

This scheme offers support for capital investment in the processing and marketing of agricultural and fisheries/aquaculture produce. Assistance may be available with the construction of buildings, the purchase of machinery and equipment and related professional costs. The maximum level of public sector assistance is 50% for agricultural projects and 60% for fisheries/aquaculture projects

The scheme also offers support for activities to improve the marketing of agricultural produce. Support may be available for market research and the development of marketing plans, product development, marketing literature, attendance at trade shows/exhibitions, establishment of marketing groups and education and sales visits. The maximum level of public sector assistance is 50% of project costs.

All projects must demonstrate:

- benefit to primary producers
- the existence of a market for the product
- viability of the business.

Assistance is discretionary and it is unlikely that all eligible projects will be assisted.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to businesses who process and/or market agricultural produce. This may include farmers, crofters, groups of producers and food businesses who process and market agricultural produce.

How do I apply?

Potential applicants should, in the first instance, contact Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise to discuss the eligibility of the project. Guidance notes and application forms are available from CASE.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Office, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN

Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The Highlands of Scotland Tourist Board offers advice and support in kind to new and existing tourism operators. The Board is committed to providing the highest standards of quality in all our activities, and encouraging similar standards throughout the industry.

Mission Statement:

To promote and develop the Highlands of Scotland as a world class tourist destination through excellence in visitor servicing, marketing and professional support for our industry

Who can apply?

New and existing businesses working within the tourism industry in the Highlands of Scotland

How do I apply?

Contact the Industry Support Manager.

Sandra Peterkin – Industry Support Manager

HOST, North Highland College – Dornoch Centre, Grange Road, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3LD.

Tel: 01862 811211 Fax: 01862 810644 Email: sandra.peterkin@host.co.uk www.highlandfreedom.com

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

ALL SECTORS



Description

This programme provides up to 75% of training course costs to individuals who are at least 3 months unemployed, up to a maximum of £750 in any one year, or to part-time workers who are employed for less than 16 hours per week. The objective is to help people back into the world of work, or to help upgrade from part-time to full-time work. Assistance is towards course fees, travel, subsistence, material expenses etc.

Who can apply?

Exclusions are full time, part-time education or higher education, academic courses, access courses, summer schools, driving lessons, night classes. Post graduate training and National Certificate/Higher National Certificate courses also excluded.

How do I apply?

Application form must be completed and written approval given before the course starts or any money is paid out.

Simon Moodie – Skills Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805213 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: s.moodie@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

INLAND REVENUE BUSINESS SUPPORT TEAM

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Business Support Team assists mainly new and small businesses and employers to meet their obligations to pay tax and National Insurance correctly and on time. We aim to help this sector to reduce the cost of complying with Government regulations. The assistance is offered through a series of half day workshops, held in many locations in the North, covering the subjects which cause most concern for those starting out in business or taking on their first employees. If it is not suitable for the business or employer to attend a workshop we can arrange a meeting at a suitable venue (normally the business premises). The service is free of charge.

Who can apply?

The service is offered to any business sector and as locally as can be arranged. Although it is primarily aimed at new and small business, we are able to offer places on our workshop programme to medium and large employers if a need arises.

How do I apply?

Details of our workshops can be found on the Inland Revenue website (details shown below) where bookings can be made on-line. Alternatively, telephone or fax the numbers below if you wish to attend a workshop or arrange a visit - just give your contact details and we will get in touch.

Martha McCarry/Duncan Gracie – Support Assistants

Inland Revenue Business Support Team, Queensway House, Stewartfield Way, East Kilbride G79 1AA

Tel: 01355 275207/275868 Fax: 01355 275492 www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/bst.index.htm



Description

The main objectives of the Innovation Support Scheme are to provide assistance (grant aid and advisory support) to small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and other eligible bodies to help them:

- undertake R&D (Research and Development), involving technical risk, which leads to the development of new products and processes
- update and improve product ranges on a regular basis in response to market demand
- make greater use of the expertise and information offered by external sources (e.g. technical experts, trade associations, specialist information provider)
- access proven technology and skills in partnership with universities and colleges
- access patent, copyright, IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) and trademark support and commercialisation advice.

Who can apply?

The ceiling for business size is SME (small and medium-size enterprises) which is defined as having fewer than 250 employees; and either

- an annual turnover no more than EUR40M (euros), or
- a balance sheet total no more than EUR27M (euros), and
- is no more than 25% owned by one or more companies not falling within this definition.

There is no lower limit on business size, sole traders being eligible. The Innovation Support Scheme is available throughout the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network area. The programme is mainly targeted at the manufacturing/IT sector. Exclusions include local service projects, franchisees and agriculture.

Charities/voluntary organisations, acquisitions/mergers and phoenix companies may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Further details from Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise.

How do I apply?

Contact the Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Project Officer to discuss the eligibility of the application and the creation of a tailored package to suit the needs of the applicant business. If appropriate, an application form will then be issued. If successful, a formal written notification will be sent to the applicant. The CASE Project Officer will thereafter manage the application.

A list of Local Enterprise Company contacts can be provided by:

Pat MacLeod – Innovation Manager

Highlands and Islands Enterprise, The Green House, Beechwood Business Park North, Inverness IV2 3BL
Tel: 01463 667248 Email: pp.macleod@hient.co.uk www.hie.co.uk

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP)

ALL SECTORS



Description

Investors In People is a national standard which sets a level of good working practice for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The standard provides a framework for continuous improvement of both the organisation and its people.

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise offers an advisory service to organisers wishing to achieve Investors In People recognition. This involves looking at the current position of the organisation, building on current good practice as well as preparation for assessment.

How do I apply?

Contact CASE for further details.

Carol Gunn

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805207 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: c.gunn@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

Ram Purchase Element: This scheme assists crofters or occupiers of similar status to improve the quality of their flocks by providing the opportunity to purchase good quality commercial Blackface and Cheviot rams at a subsidised cost.

Bull Supply Element: The purpose of the scheme is to maintain the numbers of cows in crofting areas and to increase crofters' returns from cattle production through genetic improvement.

Who can apply?

Ram Purchase Element: Normally applications should be made by Clerks of Grazing Committees and Grazing Constables on behalf of crofting townships. However, applications will also be accepted from a secretary of representative of other groups approved by the Commission consisting of crofters, occupiers of similar status to crofters or both. Applications from individual crofters will not be accepted.

Bull Supply Element: As above. Each committee or group must represent a least 3 cow owners.

How do I apply?

Ram Purchase Element: You can obtain an application form RPS1 from the address below. The closing date is around mid-September and announced each year. Applications will be dealt with on a first come, first served basis.

Bull Supply Element: You should apply on the SBS1 form which can be obtained from the address below. In addition members of groups must complete form SBS2 in respect of a first application. Completed forms should be submitted no later than 30th September.

Mrs Elizabeth Urquhart – Development Officer

Crofters Commission, 4-6 Castle Wynd, Inverness IV2 3EQ

Tel: 01463 663413 Fax: 01463 711820

Email: elizabeth.urquhart@crofterscommission.org.uk www.crofterscommission.org.uk

MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING



Description

As a marketing company specialising in craft industries, Made In Scotland can give advice on design, printing, packaging, marketing and selling.

Who can apply?

Available to crafts and giftware, textile and publications etc

How do I apply?

For details call:

Kathleen Hardie – Chief Executive

Made In Scotland Ltd, Station Road, Beauly, Inverness-shire IV4 7EH

Tel: 01463 782578 Fax: 01463 782409 Email: mis@enterprise.net www.made-in-scotland.co.uk

MARKETING ADVISORY SCHEME

ALL SECTORS



Description

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise's Marketing Adviser provides free marketing guidance and advice to small and medium-sized businesses in Caithness and Sutherland.

The Marketing Adviser can help you develop your marketing approach by giving advice on many aspects of marketing, including:

- researching your target markets and identifying market trends
- undertaking primary research
- developing your marketing strategy
- generating promotional materials and sourcing advertising
- writing press releases
- constructing a marketing plan.

Who can apply?

All small and medium-sized businesses in Caithness and Sutherland are eligible.

How do I apply?

Contact:

Robin Paterson – HIE-Marks Adviser

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: robin.paterson@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

MARKETING DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/CROFTING/ FORESTRY/WOODLANDS/FOOD PROCESSING



Description

The Marketing Development Scheme seeks to improve the efficiency of the food marketing chain in Scotland by helping farmers, growers and processors improve their commercial and marketing expertise. The scheme offers 50% grant towards certain kinds of non-capital and management expenditure, up to a maximum of £150,000 grant per project.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to applications from a wide range of those involved in agricultural, horticultural or food marketing including:

- groups involving collaborating producers, and involving producers collaborating with others in the food chain.
- individual farmers and growers
- food processors or manufacturers with a turnover of less than £100 million
- trade associations or industry bodies.

How do I apply?

In all cases we recommend that you speak to Scottish Executive Environmental and Rural Affairs Department before submitting an application.

Louise Stewart – Grants Manager

Scottish Executive Environmental and Rural Affairs Department, Room 259, Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh EH14 1TY

Tel: 0131 244 6294 Fax: 0131 244 3110 Email: louise.stewart@scotland.gov.uk

MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Modern Apprenticeship Programme is part of Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise's Skillseekers package and is geared to the achievement of Scottish Vocational Qualifications to at least Level III. Each modern apprenticeship has been designed by the Industry Training Organisation representing that industry after consultation so that it meets the needs of employers in that sector.

Who can apply?

Most modern apprenticeships are open to young people up to the age of 21. Recent changes, however, mean that those over the age of 21 may be considered for funding. To be eligible individuals must be:

- resident in Caithness and Sutherland
- employed
- looking towards achievement of a Vocational Qualification to at least Level III standard.

How do I apply?

Contact Careers Service, local employers or relevant training providers.

Lynne Johnstone – Skills Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805203 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: l.johnstone@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

NEW DEAL

ALL SECTORS



Description

New Deal has been created to help unemployed people into work. Through work, education and training it aims to help people gain the qualities and skills they need to increase their employability and to get and keep jobs.

New Deal is designed and delivered by local partnerships of businesses, local authorities, career service companies, Jobcentres, voluntary organisations and training providers, so that it meets the varying needs of both individual jobseekers and employers. In return for the commitment to take on an unemployed person, the Government will pay the employer up to £75 a week for up to six months for each full-time New Deal employee taken on. In addition, the government may contribute towards the training costs of each person recruited.

Who can apply?

All businesses are eligible for support under the programmes shown above.

How do I apply?

By telephone in the first instance to the Jobcentre.

Sue Whitelegge – Business Manager

Wick Jobcentre, Government Buildings, Girnigoe Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 4HJ

Tel: 01955 673200 Fax: 01955 673250

Email: susan.whitelegge@employment.gov.uk www.employmentservice.gov.uk

NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE

ALL SECTORS



Description

The North Highland College has a policy of encouraging ready access to learning and hence tries to provide flexibility of pace and mode of learning to support a wide range of student needs. Education and training programmes are usually directed towards nationally recognised qualifications and the majority are awarded through the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). As well as full-time and part-time study, the college offers opportunities for day release, block release, evening classes and home and flexible study courses.

Who can apply?

Entry qualifications are, where applicable, as per SQA guidelines. However, the college, wherever possible, attempts to make ease of access to its courses a prime objective. The college strives to provide progression from its basic courses through to higher levels such as HNC, HND and degree programmes. See prospectus for details.

How do I apply?

Application is by filling in a college application form normally after consultation and advice from the qualified staff at one of the North Highland College's centres.

Thurso (Main Campus) Tel: 01847 889242 or 889233

Dornoch – Tel: 01955 606535

Wick – Tel: 01955 606535

Alness – Tel: 01349 882545

James M Labor – Marketing Manager

North Highland College, Ormlie Road, Thurso, Caithness KW14 7EE

Tel: 01847 896161 Email: marketth@thurso.uhi.ac.uk www.nhscotland.com

ALL SECTORS



Description

North Highland College - Dornoch Centre is in the business of providing quality, certificated training in management and business skills from National Certificate through to Degree level. The college's mission is to deliver accessible, flexible and cost-effective training to private and public sector organisations. It is able to provide full and part-time business and management courses or similar short course programmes designed to move the clients and their staff rapidly on to new levels of understanding of specific subjects.

How much will it cost?

Courses for commercial concerns are normally delivered on a full-cost retrieval basis or are subject to government grants available at the time. Generic course provision aimed at individuals wishing to improve their vocational skills will be subject to the normal fee waivers, government grants and conditions as per the college's regulation documents.

How do I apply?

Telephone or write to the college direct and receive information and advice direct from a member of the management team or teaching staff.

Iain Fraser – Director

North Highland College - Dornoch Centre, Grange Road, Dornoch, Sutherland IV25 3LE

Tel: 01862 811854 Fax: 01862 811853 Email: iain.fraser@thurso.uhi.ac.uk www.nhcdornoch.com

NORTH HIGHLAND FOREST TRUST

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/CROFTING/ FORESTRY/WOODLANDS



Description

North Highland Forest Trust is a company limited by guarantee with charitable recognition. It incorporated in 1999 with the purpose of developing sustainable woodland cover throughout the North Highlands and its guiding principles are:

- to promote social inclusion
- increase community involvement
- promote integrated development in all aspects of woodland development.

Services offered include:

- site meeting and survey
- production of costed proposals in consultation with community
- assistance with funding applications
- information, advice and expertise forum
- development of training and demonstration projects.

Who can apply?

We are keen to hear from communities, groups, common grazings etc who wish to become involved in woodland management or establishment throughout Caithness, Sutherland and the coastal communities of Wester Ross to Dundonnell.

How do I apply?

Contact either Jon Priddy or Jon Hollingdale.

Jon Priddy/Jon Hollingdale – Chief Executive/Community Forester

North Highland Forest Trust, Alba, Main Street, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6TG

Tel: 01408 633986 Fax: 01408 634342 Email: jon.priddy@nhftgolspie.f9.co.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

The aim of the Prince's Scottish Youth Business Trust is to provide seedcorn finance and professional support to young people in Scotland aged 18-25, whoever they are and wherever they come from, so that they can set up and continue to run their own businesses. The Trust has particular concern for the disadvantaged.

We provide:

- soft loans (normally up to £5,000) and, in certain circumstances, grants of £1,000.
- advice on starting a business, preparing a business plan and accessing assistance from other organisations.
- a comprehensive aftercare service to help the business develop. An aftercare counsellor is allocated to the business for two years to provide ongoing advice and support.

Who can apply?

- Age range is normally 18 to 25. (In cases of extreme disadvantage the age limit can be raised to 30. 16 to 18 year olds can be considered for a grant-only award if approved by PSYBT Head Office)
- The venture must have a reasonable chance of success.
- Certain business types are excluded because they have a disproportionate risk of failure.
- PSYBT is a funder of last resort. Applicants should demonstrate that funding is not available elsewhere.

How do I apply?

First point of contact is normally the PSYBT Regional Manager. Applicants produce a business plan (PSYBT will assist with this) which is presented by the applicant to a local panel.

David Knight – PSYBT Regional Manager

PSYBT, Highland Opportunity Limited, PO Box 5649, 81a Castle Street, Inverness IV3 5YA

Tel: 01463 702558 Fax: 01463 710848 Email: david.knight@highland.gov.uk www.psybt.org.uk

RECRUIT SUTHERLAND

ALL SECTORS



Description

Recruit Sutherland provides an integrated package of support/advice to SMEs (small and medium-sized businesses) who have the potential to recruit an additional employee. Typically, this includes help with a range of staffing matters, PAYE, Health & Safety, contractual arrangements, wage subsidy advice, employment law, recruitment procedures, work trials and other personnel development support.

Who can apply?

All SMEs and community-owned enterprises with a particular emphasis on those micro-businesses who have yet to take on their first employee.

How do I apply?

Contact:

Telephone our free inquiry line on 0800 0858560 or alternatively we can be contacted via e-mail at recruitsutherland@ecosse.net or by fax 01408 633873

RURAL PETROL STATIONS SCHEME

PETROL STATIONS



Description

The Rural Petrol Stations Scheme is funded by the Scottish Executive and administered in the North through the Highlands and Islands Enterprise network. The scheme offers financial assistance (normally up to 50% of the total costs) to petrol station operatives to renew tanks and pumps and to install LPG facilities.

Who can apply?

The scheme is available to all rural petrol stations throughout Scotland. "Rural" is defined as:

- at least 30 minutes drive from the edge of a peri-urban area (population over 30,000).
- having a throughput of less than 1 million litres per annum.
- at least 8 miles from the nearest neighbouring petrol station.

Petrol stations must sell both lead-free and diesel fuel to qualify. In the case of LPG installation, the station should be at least 15 miles from the next nearest LPG supplier - the condition of a throughput of less than 1 million litres does not apply.

How do I apply?

Applications in Sutherland should be made to through Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise.

Susan Smith – Senior Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: s.smith@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

Mary MacKay – Business Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise Office, Durine, Durness, Sutherland IV27 4PN

Tel: 01971 511236 Fax: 01971 511236 Email: m.mackay@hient.co.uk

RURAL STEWARDSHIP SCHEME (RSS)

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/ CROFTING



Description

The Rural Stewardship Scheme is an agri-environment scheme designed to encourage farmers/crofters to adopt environmentally friendly practices and to maintain and enhance particular habitats and landscape features. The scheme is expected to contribute to the achievement of a wide range of rural policy objectives including delivering benefits to the environment, contributing to farm income and providing employment opportunities.

Annual payments are available for managing agreed habitats and features to enhance the conservation interests on the farm/croft. It is hoped that farmers/crofters will remain in the scheme for 10 years although the minimum requirement is 5 years.

There are no limits on the payments apart from where the total area of habitats to be managed exceeds 100 hectares of in-bye land, when all payment rates will be reduced from the full rate.

Who can apply?

RSS is a voluntary and discretionary scheme where all applications are subject to a selection process and may have to compete for funding.

If an application is accepted, in exchange for receiving payments, a successful applicant must manage specific areas of land in accordance with the requirements of that habitat and in addition follow General Environmental Conditions and the standard of Good Farming Practice which apply all over the land.

How do I apply?

Application forms along with an environmental audit of the holding to be submitted to the local Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs (SEERAD) office by 31st March annually.

Murdo MacKenzie – Higher Agricultural Officer

Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs (SEERAD), Ord Croft, Lairg, Sutherland IV27 4AZ

Tel: 01549 402167 Fax: 01549 402117 Email: murdo.mackenzie@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

SCOTTISH LAND FUND

AGRICULTURE/CROFTING/ HORTICULTURE



Description

The aim of the Scottish Land Fund is to contribute to sustainable development in rural Scotland by assisting communities to acquire, develop and manage local land or land assets. The Scottish Land Fund has been established by the New Opportunities Fund - a National Lottery distributor - and is administered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. The fund will make £10 million available to help communities to establish the feasibility, complete the purchase, and undertake the development and management of local land and land assets.

The objectives are:

- to improve opportunities and reduce disadvantage for both communities and individuals in rural areas
- to encourage community involvement and participation in land ownership and management
- to enhance the environmental diversity and quality of rural Scotland
- to facilitate positive use of the land reform legislation on the community right to buy
- to diversify the pattern of land ownership in rural Scotland.

Who can apply?

Both new and existing community organisations are eligible to apply. Organisations should be legally established and enshrine the principles of:

- objective of community benefit
- open membership
- equal opportunities
- democratic control
- prominent role for community representatives
- non-profit-distributing
- in event of dissolution, arrangements to transfer land and assets to an organisation with similar objectives.

A partnership or consortium can bid for funding under the Scottish Land Fund programme, if its constitution expressly states that the land is held for community benefit and the community representatives are the largest constituency on the Board. A consortium might include representatives from the local community, local authority, relevant agencies, conservation bodies and neighbouring landowners.

How do I apply?

The Scottish Land Fund is administered by Highlands and Islands Enterprise in partnership with Scottish Enterprise. Contact local office for details.

The Scottish Land Fund, Taigh Fearna, Auchtertyre, Balmacara, Kyle of Lochalsh IV40 8EG
Tel: 01520 722988 Fax: 01599 566724 Email: hie.general@hient.co.uk

SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE (SNH) GRANTS SCHEME

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Scottish Natural Heritage Grants Scheme provides assistance to organisations and individuals in order to conserve and enhance Scotland's natural heritage. Grants are available for a wide range of projects including:

- the conservation of species, habitats and landscapes
- the promotion of public enjoyment of the natural heritage
- to increase awareness and understanding of the natural heritage.

Depending on local circumstances and priorities, grant aid is usually offered up to 50%. Occasionally, higher rates are offered.

Who can apply?

Anyone can apply who can show that they have the right to undertake the proposed project and that they own or manage any land involved or have the agreement of the owner. Grants cannot be offered retrospectively.

How do I apply?

Proposals should be discussed with SNH staff and an application form then completed and submitted, with supporting information.

Lizzie Hardy – Area Administrator
Scottish Natural Heritage, Main Street, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6TG
Tel: 01408 633602 Fax: 01408 633071 Email: elizabeth.hardy@snh.gov.uk www.snh.org.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

Whatever your water needs, Scottish Water offers a range of advice on services to businesses:

- advice on water efficiency/free metering
- advice on new connections to services, and the likely costs when connected
- advice on payment methods to suit business
- advice/contribution of costs of extending public services (sewerage)

Who can apply?

Free metering contribution limited to £250 per property (2001/02)

How do I apply?

Contact our enquiry line on 0845 6018855

SHELL LIVEWIRE

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Shell Livewire scheme aims to help young people who are interested in starting their own business. The scheme provides quality information and advice to guide people through the initial stages of starting up, provides links to local business advice, and hosts a national competition for new business start-ups. This competition offers a prize of £10,000 for the best business idea.

Who can apply?

Applicants must be under 30. The scheme mainly applies to new business start-ups.

How do I apply?

Contact Local Adviser for details or see website at www.shell-livewire.org

Moira McRonald

Highland Opportunity Ltd, PO Box 5649, 81a Castle Street, Inverness IV3 5YA

Tel: 01463 702558 Fax: 01463 710848 Email: moiramcronald@highland-opportunity.com

The Manager, Shell Livewire, Hawthorn House, Forth Banks, Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 3SG

Tel: 0345 573 252 Fax: 0191 261 1910 Email: shell-livewire@projectne.co.uk

ALL SECTORS



Description

Skillseekers offers full-time training to school and college leavers under the age of 18 in Caithness and Sutherland. All 16, 17 (and some 18) year olds leaving full-time education to join the labour market will be eligible for a skillseekers card with a value of over £1,000. The skillseekers card can be used to contribute towards the cost of approved training needed to achieve a recognised qualification (normally to Scottish Vocational Qualification level II or above).

Who can apply?

The service is available to all 16 and 17 year olds (and some 18 year olds) leaving full-time education to join the labour market, who are working towards a relevant vocational qualification and who are resident in Caithness and Sutherland.

How do I apply?

Contact Careers Service, local employers or relevant training providers.

Lynne Johnstone – Skills Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805203 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: l.johnstone@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

SMALL FIRMS LOAN GUARANTEE SCHEME

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/CROFTING/FISHING/AQUACULTURE/ MANUFACTURING/ENGINEERING/FOOD PROCESSING/CONSTRUCTION



Description

The scheme aims to help small firms with a viable business proposal who have tried and failed to obtain a conventional loan either because of lack of security or business track record. By providing a government guarantee against default by borrowers, the scheme enables High Street banks and other financial bodies to lend between £5,000 and £250,000 to new, existing and established businesses.

Who can apply?

Eligible businesses are sole traders, partnerships, franchises, co-operatives and limited companies. There are restrictions on business activities – check before applying.

Loans can be used for most business purposes (developing a project, start-up trading, expansion, buying equipment or premises), though not for buying shares, buying out members of a partnership, or replacing existing facilities.

Turnover limits to qualify - up to £1.5million for all businesses, except manufacturing which is £5million.

How do I apply?

Applications should be made to one of the approved lenders. Most High Street banks take part in the scheme.

Contact:

Kate Barker

Small Firms Loan Guarantee Scheme, Level 2, St Mary's House, c/o Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ

Tel: 0114 259 7308/9 Fax: 0114 259 7316 Email: sflgs@sbs.gsi.gov.uk



Description

SMART aims to help small businesses improve their competitiveness by developing new, highly innovative and commercially viable products and processes to the benefit of the national economy. SMART is a competition and entries can be accepted from existing small companies or individuals planning to start a business. Support is made available for a technical and commercial feasibility study lasting between 6 and 18 months, at 75% of the first £60,000 of eligible costs with a maximum award of £45,000.

Winners who successfully complete their projects can receive further funding to develop a pre-production prototype under a SMART Stage 2 Award. Funding for this stage is available at 35% of eligible costs and the maximum grant under both stages cannot exceed £150,000.

Who can apply?

Criteria for eligibility includes:

- businesses or individuals intending to set up a business in Scotland with fewer than 50 employees
- the level of technological innovation and the technical challenges associated with the project
- the commercial prospects for the end product or process – both commercial potential and the proposed means of turning the project results into a commercially successful product or process
- managerial, technical and commercial expertise within or available to the business
- the business's financial health
- whether the financial support is essential for the project to proceed.

How do I apply?

Applications are accepted for the competitive stage of SMART at any time and judging takes place three times a year. Closing dates for each round of judging are the second Monday in January, May and September.

Dr Trudy Nicolson – SMART: SCOTLAND Programme Manager
 Scottish Executive, Business Growth & Innovation Division, Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Department,
 Meridian Court, 5 Cadogan Street, Glasgow G2 6AT
 Tel: 0141 242 5560 Fax: 0141 242 5589
 Email: trudy.nicolson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/ellld/who

ALL SECTORS

**Description**

SPUR aims to improve the competitiveness of established medium-sized companies by providing support for R&D (Research and Development) projects leading to the introduction of new products and processes, to the benefit of the national economy. Funding is available at 35% of eligible costs with a maximum award of £150,000. Total project costs must be at least £50,000 and projects must be of between 6 months and 3 years in duration.

Who can apply?

Criteria for eligibility includes:

- businesses/groups must be based in Scotland and have between 50 and 249 employees
- the level of technological innovation and the technical challenges associated with the project
- the commercial prospects for the end product or process – both commercial potential and the proposed means of turning the project results into a commercially successful product or process
- managerial, technical and commercial expertise within or available to the business
- the business's financial health
- whether the financial support is essential for the project to proceed.

How do I apply?

Businesses can apply at any time for SPUR support by completing an initial Registration of Interest form. Following an initial assessment by the Scottish Executive, suitable projects will be invited to submit a full application.

Mr Jim Allen – SPUR Programme Manager

Scottish Executive, Business Growth & Innovation Division, Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Department
Meridian Court, 5 Cadogan Street, Glasgow G2 6AT

Tel: 0141 242 5571 Fax: 0141 242 5589 Email: jim.allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/elld/who

SPUR^{PLUS}

ALL SECTORS

**Description**

SPUR^{PLUS} aims to improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized businesses by providing support for R&D (Research and Development) projects leading to the development of world-beating new products or processes for markets which demand particularly expensive leading-edge technology. Funding is available at 35% of eligible costs with a maximum award of £450,000. Minimum project costs must normally be at least £1,000,000 and projects must be of between 6 months and 3 years in duration.

Who can apply?

Criteria for eligibility includes:

- businesses must be based in Scotland and have less than 250 employees
- the level of technological innovation and the technical challenges associated with the project
- the commercial prospects for the end product or process – both commercial potential and the proposed means of turning the project results into a commercially successful product or process
- managerial, technical and commercial expertise within or available to the business
- the business's financial health
- whether the financial support is essential for the project to proceed.

How do I apply?

Businesses can apply at any time for SPURPLUS support by completing an initial Registration of Interest form. Following an initial assessment by the Scottish Executive, suitable projects will be invited to submit a full application.

Mr Jim Allen – SPUR Programme Manager

Scottish Executive, Business Growth & Innovation Division, Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Department
Meridian Court, 5 Cadogan Street, Glasgow G2 6AT

Tel: 0141 242 5571 Fax: 0141 242 5589 Email: jim.allen@scotland.gsi.gov.uk www.scotland.gov.uk/elld/who

TOURISM/LEISURE/RETAIL



Description

One of the key sectors in Caithness and Sutherland is tourism and our locally-based Tourism Training Adviser is keen to work with businesses on an individual or collective basis, throughout the area.

We are particularly keen to encourage operators to identify specific skills and training issues and we can offer:

- training needs analysis
- practical training courses
- access to networking opportunities
- access to the national tourism training programmes, such as Scotland's Best Service, Natural Cook and Welcome Host.

We recognise that a wide range of businesses, from petrol stations to chip shops to high profile visitor attractions, as well as the hospitality sector, have the potential to benefit from and contribute to the success of the area's tourism. We are keen to hear from all and have been able to respond to such diverse training requests as Retail Display, Marketing, Food Service, Focus on Feedback, Brush up on Housekeeping and Green Tourism.

Your suggestions and enquiries are welcomed to ensure that this service responds to the needs of the industry.

Who can apply?

All businesses within the tourism sector are eligible, including those in the retail sector who serve the needs of tourists.

How do I apply?

Direct enquiries can be made by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter to:

Fiona Paton – Tourism Training Adviser
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN
Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: f.paton@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

TOURISM TRAINING – NATURAL COOKING OF SCOTLAND

TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

A one-day awareness workshop featuring leading chefs which aims to raise the profile of cooking in tourism, using fresh Scottish produce. The workshop includes:

- demonstrations of preparation and presentation which will excite customers
- information on producers and suppliers of ingredients
- a chance to network and share ideas and best practice.

Who can apply?

Tourism sector – anyone who serves food.

How do I apply?

Direct enquiries by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter to:

Fiona Paton – Tourism Training Adviser
Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN
Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: f.paton@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

TOURISM/LEISURE/RETAIL



Description

Scotland’s Best is a national service quality programme aimed at helping tourism businesses develop a service strategy to exceed customer expectations and to keep ahead of the competition.

The programme consists of :

- a two-day management seminar based on the philosophy that consistent service management practices can make a difference to the profitability and sustainable growth of your business
- a one-day seminar for front-line staff based on the belief that each one of us can and must make a difference to the customer’s experience
- a recognition programme for businesses who demonstrate their commitment to high quality service by
 - training a minimum of 70% of both staff and management in Scotland’s Best Service seminars
 - submitting a Service Promise and Service Excellence Action Plan, incorporating service standards
 - submitting evidence of having achieved a minimum scoring of 8/9 in the hospitality service category of the VisitScotland Quality Assurance scheme or evidence of membership and achievement of service excellence through a relevant quality assurance programme.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to all businesses in the tourism sector

How do I apply?

Direct enquiries should be made by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter to:

Fiona Paton – Tourism Training Adviser

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: f.paton@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

TOURISM TRAINING – WELCOME HOST

TOURISM/LEISURE/RETAIL



Description

Welcome Host is a one-day training programme available to all who work within the tourism industry. Presented in a flexible format to groups of different sizes and from different sectors within the industry. It can be delivered in-house.

The programme covers:

- getting to know the customer and his needs
- tourism in perspective
- making an impression
- communication skills
- handling complaints
- providing tourism information.

Who can apply?

All those within the tourism sector are eligible.

How do I apply?

Direct enquiries should be made by telephone, fax, e-mail or letter to:

Fiona Paton – Tourism Training Adviser

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Station Road, Golspie, Sutherland KW10 6SN

Tel: 01408 633872 Fax: 01408 633873 Email: f.paton@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

TRAINING FOR WORK

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Training For Work programme is designed for those who are 25 years or over and have been unemployed for 6 months or more. It provides full-time training resulting in a nationally-recognised vocational qualification, usually at level II standard. Normally the programme lasts for approximately 6 months. Participants will continue to receive benefits plus £10 per week. Agreed travelling expenses in excess of £4 per week will be funded by Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise. (The participant will pay the first £4 per week).

Who can apply?

The programme is available to adults aged 25 years or over and who have been registered unemployed for 6 months or more. They must be resident in Caithness or Sutherland and work towards an agreed qualification.

How do I apply?

Contact the Employment Service who will refer to a relevant training provider.

Lynne Johnstone – Skills Development Manager

Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise, Tollemache House, High Street, Thurso, Caithness KW14 8AZ

Tel: 01847 805203 Fax: 01847 893383 Email: l.johnstone@hient.co.uk www.case-lec.co.uk

VACANCY FILLING SERVICES

ALL SECTORS



Description

Vacancy Filling Services are a complete recruitment service for all employers. We can assist with:

- advertising vacancies small and large
- matching and screening applicants
- issuing and screening application forms
- drawing up shortlists.

Who can apply?

All businesses are eligible.

How do I apply?

Apply by telephone in the first instance to the Jobcentre.

Sue Whitelegge – Business Manager

Wick Jobcentre, Government Buildings, Girnigoe Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 4HJ

Tel: 01955 673200 Fax: 01955 673250

Email: susan.whitelegge@employment.gov.uk www.employmentservice.gov.uk

WOODLAND GRANTS SCHEME

AGRICULTURE/HORTICULTURE/CROFTING/ FORESTRY/WOODLANDS/TOURISM/LEISURE



Description

The Woodland Grant Scheme provides funding for planting and managing areas of woodland. The Forestry Commission pays grants for establishing and looking after woodlands because of the benefits which well managed woodlands give to society.

Its aims are to increase the production of wood, improve the landscape, provide new habitats for wildlife and offer opportunities for recreation and sport, and encourage good management of forests. Planting grants are available to encourage the creation of new woodlands. Rates are paid per hectare and rates are higher for broadleaved and native Scots pine woodlands. Community woodlands can apply for a supplement. Established woods can apply for woodland improvement grant which will pay up to 50% of the cost of the work. Speak to the Forestry Commission Office in Dingwall for the most up-to-date information and rates of grant.

Who can apply?

The applicant must be the owner or tenant of the land or forest. Tenants must get permission from the landowner. Areas of forest should be wider than 15m and greater than 0.25 hectares.

How do I apply?

Speak to the Forestry Commission in Dingwall, get the application form and apply in writing.

Willie Beattie – Woodland Officer

The Forestry Commission, Highland Conservancy, Fodderty Way, Dingwall, Ross-shire IV15 9XB

Tel: 01349 862144 Fax: 01349 866624 Email: willie.beattie@forestry.gsi.gov.uk www.forestry.gov.uk

WORK TRIALS

ALL SECTORS



Description

The Work Trials service offers help with recruitment - up to three weeks' free trial of a new employee at no cost to the employer.

Who can apply?

All businesses are eligible.

How do I apply?

Apply by telephone in the first instance to the Jobcentre.

Sue Whitelegge – Business Manager

Wick Jobcentre, Government Buildings, Girnigoe Street, Wick, Caithness KW1 4HJ

Tel: 01955 673200 Fax: 01955 673250

Email: susan.whitelegge@employment.gov.uk www.employmentservice.gov.uk

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The Sutherland Partnership is an area based organisation whose aim is to secure the economic and social well-being of Sutherland by tackling the problems of rural disadvantage. It is formally registered with the Scottish Office as a Local Rural Partnership and comprises the key public, private, community and voluntary sector partners within Sutherland. The Sutherland Partnership is a Company Limited by Guarantee, Company No. 186690.