

## **Lack of clarity in business support scheme led to applicant missing out**

An applicant for the Department for Economy's COVID Restrictions Business Support Scheme was unable to submit his application due to the lack of clarity around 'total income' referenced in the scheme's guidance. As a consequence, the complainant did not submit an application to the Scheme and was unable to do so as the Scheme had since closed.

He approached the Department stating that he wished to retrospectively apply on the basis that a definition was not included in any guidance or information while the Scheme was operational. The Department responded stating that they were not in a position to accept his late application.

Having brought his complaint to this Office, our Investigating Officer approached the Department and sought an alternative resolution which resulted in the Department confirming that they would:

1. Accept a retrospective application from the complainant to the Scheme; and
2. Offer an apology for the lack of clarity provided in respect to the 'total income' criteria relating to the Scheme.