

# Croft House Grant full guidance

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## Introduction

Crofting tenure requires crofters to live within 32 kilometres of their croft and provide their own housing – where there is not already adequate housing on the croft.

Due to the nature of crofting as a form of land tenure, and the predominance of self-build as a means to provide housing, it can be challenging for crofters to access conventional forms of housing finance.

Also, crofting areas are often located in the most remote areas of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. This remoteness, together with the challenges of terrain, climate and lack of access to utility services, leads to increased house building and improvement costs.

This Scottish Government-funded arrangement is designed to ease some of this burden and provide grants for crofters to improve and maintain the standards of crofter housing. In doing so it attracts and retains people within the crofting areas of Scotland and helps sustain crofting as a traditional means of land tenure.

Before you apply for this grant, please read this guidance in full.

## Level of grant

The tables below show the rates of assistance available for the construction of a new house and the rebuilding and improvement of an existing house.

The total amount of grant aid you can apply for in any ten year period is:

- High Priority Area: up to £38,000
- Standard Priority Area: up to £28,000

## Rebuilding and improvement

Rebuilding and improvement	Geographical area	
	High priority	Standard priority
	40% of costs up to a maximum grant of £38,000	40% of costs up to a maximum grant of £28,000

## New house

New house grant	Geographic area	
	High priority	Standard priority
	£38,000	£28,000

We will confirm the amount of grant applicable to the location of your croft when we acknowledge receipt of your completed application form. Please note that areas of priority will be reviewed on a regular basis (at least every three years).

A map setting out current priority areas is included in [Annex A](#).

Payments can be made in up to three instalments and you should not commit to starting any work until your application has been approved.

Please see the [starting work without prior approval](#) section of this guidance for more information on this.

## Who is eligible

The Croft House Grant (CHG) is open to:

- a tenant crofter
- an owner-occupier crofter
- a cottar (in the case of cottar applicants, references to “croft” and “crofter” in this guidance should be read as references to cottars and holdings occupied by cottars)

All of the above are defined in the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 (as amended), and includes Kyles Crofters.

To be eligible for grant assistance, you must be either ‘inadequately housed’ or have a need to live on the croft because the type of agricultural or non-agricultural activities undertaken or proposed require you to live on the croft. Inadequately housed is defined as (only one need apply):

- your present accommodation does not provide sufficient accommodation for you and your immediate family
- your present accommodation does not meet an adequate standard

- you currently live with parents
- you currently live in rented accommodation (including council housing)

The assisted house must become your only or principal home and you must intend to work the croft.

## Who is ineligible

You are not eligible for assistance if you:

- are the landlord of a vacant croft
- you do not intend to work the croft or do not provide proposals that commit you to working the croft within a reasonable timeframe
- you will receive or have already received a grant from another public source for the same work. If you have already received, or applied for, grant aid from any other public source to support your proposal, you should consult the RPID Tíree office to make sure there are no double funding issues
- your proposed new house or house improvements is not going to be used for domestic housing purposes only. Any part of a building funded under the scheme cannot be used for other non-residential purposes such as bed and breakfast, holiday home or work space used for running a business

## Other reasons for rejection

Assistance under CHG will also be refused if any of these conditions occur:

- you gave up ownership of an adequate house on the croft, or within working distance of the croft, within the last five years
- the proposed work is not eligible work (see the sections below on eligible work)
- croft house grant assistance was provided in the last 10 years (there are certain circumstances where we would allow this, such as house improvements done in stages through multiple applications, applicants should contact RPID Tíree for more info and see [starting work without prior approval](#) section of this guidance)
- the cost of the project is less than £8,000 (inclusive of VAT)
- you have already started the work before CHG funding is approved - see [starting work without prior approval](#) section of this guidance
- you already have a house on the croft (there may be certain circumstances where we would allow this, applicants should contact RPID Tíree for more info)

## Grant conditions

Conditions apply to the grant for a period of 10 years (or until the outstanding proportion of the grant is repaid if earlier than this period).

The following grant conditions will be registered in the Land Register or recorded in the Register of Sasines in the Notice of Grant Conditions:

- the house must be occupied by you or a member of your family as an only or principal home. If you stop occupying the house, it must be occupied by another crofter, owner-occupier crofter or cottar or a member of their family and this must be approved by the Scottish Ministers before any change in occupancy takes place\*
- the building must be maintained in a good state of repair
- the building must be insured against destruction or damage
- any proposed sale or lease of the house or croft, or any renunciation, assignation or sub-lease of the tenancy of the house or croft, must be notified to us in writing with the name and address of any proposed new tenant or owner. Our consent to this proposed transfer must be obtained before it takes place

\*Compliance with this condition will be determined by way of consideration of the facts and circumstances of each case. Applicants should seek guidance from RPID Tíree as appropriate.

Breach of any of these conditions within the grant period may result in a demand for repayment of the outstanding proportion of the grant with interest on that proportion of grant from the date on which payment of grant was made. The interest rate applied will be eight per cent above the Bank of England base rate, calculated on a daily basis.

The person liable for the repayment is the crofter at the time of the breach of condition (or cottar in the case of a house related to a cottar's holding), or other person to whom the interest in the house has been transferred or assigned, except in the circumstances below, where the following person is liable:

- where the house becomes vacant on death, the deceased's executor
- where there is no crofter at the time of the breach of condition because the lease of the croft has been terminated and the house has become un-let, the person who was last the tenant of the croft

The following further grant conditions also apply and will be set out in the grant contract you enter into with us:

- you must exhibit to us on demand the receipts for the premiums in respect of the renewals of insurance of the house that is required against destruction and damage
- in the event of your death during the grant period, your executor must notify us of the date of your death and the name and address of any proposed new tenant or owner
- you must allow any person authorised by us to enter and inspect the house to check whether the conditions are being complied with and you must, if requested, provide us with a certificate stating that the conditions are being complied with

If you breach any of these conditions this will amount to a default under the contract you have entered into with us for the grant. If you commit this or any other default under the contract, you may have to repay a proportion of the grant. You should refer to the grant contract for further detail.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement for the purpose of obtaining a grant under CHG. Also, if you knowingly provide inaccurate information or make an inaccurate statement that will amount to a default under the grant contract, you may be required to repay all the grant assistance provided.

You must also have a business plan for the croft which you agree with us and you must adhere to that plan.

If successful, it will be a condition of your grant award that you maintain the crofting activity achieved in year 5 of your business plan until the end of your (10 year) grant conditions.

A fee is payable for the preparation of legal documents. This will be deducted from the total amount of grant for the preparation and recording of the Notice of Payment of Grant document.

## Planning consent and building warrant

Applicants will be responsible for obtaining the local authority planning consent and building warrant.

It is not necessary to submit planning consent and building warrant with the application for funding. However, where required, these must be in place before scheme-funded improvements begin.

Where appropriate, applicants will be required to submit building warrants and completion certificates with their claims for payment.

Where planning consent and / or a building warrant is not required, applicants will be required to submit local authority waiver letters with their first claim for payment.

## New house

Specific references to the building standards are given in italics.

### **New houses – general**

New croft houses may be:

- a traditionally constructed house
- a timber-framed house

Other suitable types will be given individual consideration on a case-by-case basis.

New houses must be dwelling houses which are fully compliant with the Scottish Building Standards, available at the [Scottish Government website](#).

## New houses – location

An eligible croft house can be built on land adjoining or adjacent to the croft or on an apportionment associated with that croft provided the applicant can demonstrate that this would be a more feasible option than building on the croft and, in particular, if that meant that a house would not be built on better quality in-bye land.

Applicants wishing to build on a site adjoining or adjacent to the croft must be able to provide evidence of ownership of the site at the point of application.

Applicants wishing to build new houses on apportionments can only apply for CHG assistance once the apportionment has been approved by the Crofting Commission and a Final Order has been issued.

## New houses – size

Floor size specification was introduced following consultation feedback about a proposed limit on overall cost of a house.

Maximum eligible floor areas were introduced in response to specific concerns raised that the previous scheme was weighted to fund very large houses to the disadvantage of crofters with a lower income level.

Notwithstanding stakeholder concerns, current CHG floor area limits are significantly above National Standards and average floor areas contained in National Statistics for house sizes.

CHG floor areas limits are set at approximately 150% of UK minimum house size requirements.

The maximum eligible floor areas for various new house types are given in Table A below.

House type	Two bedroom single storey	Two bedroom two storey	Three bedroom single storey	Three bedroom two storey	Four bedroom single storey	Four bedroom two storey	Five bedroom single storey	Five bedroom two storey
Maximum eligible floor area (m <sup>2</sup> )	112	120	138	146	164	172	191	199

The following areas may be excluded when calculating eligible floor area:

- areas where head height is less than 1.8m (consistent with the definition of useable floor area in the Building Standards)
- area beneath the staircase
- areas occupied by doors and partitions
- areas occupied by chimney breasts
- small areas between the line of internal wall linings and doors or windows where reveals extend down to floor level
- un-developed loft space (provided the entire loft space is undeveloped and any rooms in that space would be entirely "room in roof")

The following rules also apply when calculating eligible floor area :

### (i) Integral garages

New house may include an integral garage provided it has an internal area no more than 20m<sup>2</sup>. This area is sufficient for a wheelchair user to access a car whilst in the garage, plus space for a work bench.

Houses with an integral garage with internal area more than 20m<sup>2</sup> will not be eligible for CHG funding.

This is because large integral garages are easily converted into large ground floor rooms after the house is completed, thereby circumventing the CHG floor area limits.

### (ii) Floor voids

Floor voids are where the floor at one storey does not extend over the storey below. Floor voids are often present at stair wells. Other examples include a ground floor living room in a two storey house with vaulted ceiling extending into the roof space.

Houses with floor voids may be eligible for CHG funding. However, large voids will reduce the allowable floor area elsewhere in the house.

The first 4m<sup>2</sup> of floor voids may be ignored in the floor area calculation. Floor voids over and above 4m<sup>2</sup> will be counted as floor area, except where the head height would be less than 1.8m where the void was floored.

This rule is necessary to remove an anomaly where a 2 storey 3 bedroom house, for example, having living room with a high vaulted ceiling could be eligible for CHG funding; but another house identical except for a 4th bedroom above the living room might not be ineligible.

### **(iii) External covered areas**

These are areas outside the house, but covered by the main roof structure. Examples are verandas and sheltered seating areas where the main roof extends beyond the gable wall.

Houses with external covered areas may be eligible for CHG funding.. However, large external covered areas will reduce the allowable floor area elsewhere in the house.

The first 4m<sup>2</sup> of external covered area may be ignored in the floor area calculation. External covered area over and above 4m<sup>2</sup> will be counted as floor area.

This rule is necessary because, where a roof is funded under CHG, it is expected that there will be useable internal space beneath.

This rule for external covered areas does not apply to a normal eaves overhang – these may be ignored.

### **Background to Maximum Eligible Floor Areas**

Maximum eligible floor areas have allowed for and include:

- typical areas for standard accommodation
- a storage and circulation space allowance
- an allowance for additional accommodation

The following rooms would be considered to be standard accommodation:

- 1 kitchen / dining room
- 1 utility room
- 1 porch vestibule
- 1 lounge
- a bathroom, a separate WC/shower room and a en-suite; (no more than three sanitary facilities)
- bedrooms (between two and five, other bedroom numbers will be considered depending on the individual circumstances)

Separate dining rooms, family rooms and a study / office would be considered additional accommodation.

New houses with other room configurations and open plan layouts may also still be eligible for CHG funding, provided the overall floor area does not exceed the maximum eligible floor areas given in table A. Plans which include the creation of separate living compartments within a house are not eligible. In addition all bedrooms in a new house must be accessed from an internal hallway.

Applicants will be required to submit plans showing proposed floor layouts and room sizes with their application for CHG funding. Plans must provide sufficient detail for a floor area calculation by RPID.

### **Standard of drawings required for a floor area assessments**

- applications for new houses must include a floor plan, for each storey of the entire building
- small format drawings (A4 and A3) can be submitted electronically, or as hard copies
- large format drawings (A2, A1 and A0) must be as hard copies
- house plans must be drawn to scales, ideally 1:100 or 1:50. 1:100 is the smallest scale which will be accepted
- all room types must be shown, and adequately dimensioned. The number of bedrooms must be known to establish the appropriate CHG Floor Area Limit
- areas with head height less than 1.8m may be excluded from the internal floor area. These areas should be indicated on the floor plans, and where these areas are at the coombes a cross-section should be provided

CHG funded houses must not exceed the floor area limit given in the grant approval, unless prior approval has been given by the RPID Tiree office.

Unapproved increases in floor area may render the house ineligible for CHG funding.

### **New houses – number of apartments**

#### **Minimum number of rooms other than kitchens, utility rooms, bathrooms and WCs:**

Eligible croft houses should normally have at least four apartments (three bedrooms and one living area) in addition to the kitchen and bathroom. However we would be happy to consider a smaller house depending on an individual's circumstances.

### **New houses – facilities**

#### **Kitchen, utility rooms bathrooms and WCs:**

Generally, the facilities which are eligible are those required to comply with *Building Standard 3.11 - Facilities in Dwellings* and *3.12 – Sanitary Facilities*, subject to the floor area limits given in Table A.

### **New houses – ineligible work**

Ineligible works include, but are not limited to:

- conservatories
- detached garages
- mobile homes
- temporary structures
- second or holiday homes

## **House improvements**

Major house improvements include one or more of the following:

- complete refurbishment works
- works which significantly change the internal layout of a house
- works which increase the internal area of a house

Generally, major house improvements are subject to the same limits on the internal floor area as new houses.

Minor house improvements are lower value works to upgrade one or more specific part of an existing house and generally the floor area will not be relevant.

### **Eligible work – general**

Eligible work will bring a house up to an acceptable standard for habitation, and provide satisfactory accommodation for the resident crofter and his or her family.

As a general principle, the works which are eligible are those required to improve an existing building to provide a functional dwelling house, or part of a dwelling, which complies with the Scottish Building Standards. These are available at the [Scottish Government website](#).

Improvement of houses or parts of houses which have become dilapidated due to neglect or lack of maintenance are not eligible for CHG funding, except in cases where the croft tenancy, or owner in the case of owner-occupier crofts, has changed, or the crofter's interest in the house has been assigned or transferred to someone else, and the dilapidated house has new occupants.

Eligible work is further defined in the minor and major improvements sections.

### **Works to improve energy efficiency**

The Scottish Government recognises the importance of works to improve the energy efficiency of houses, and it is expected that these measures shall be included in new houses and major improvements, in accordance with the *Building Standard 6.0 - Energy*.

However, other sources of funding are available to support works solely intended to improve the energy efficiency of houses, and therefore this type of work is not eligible for CHG funding.

Applicants intending to carry out this type of work should refer to the [Energy Saving Trust website](#).



## Structural integrity of the original building

RPID Buildings Officers shall not be responsible for assessing the structural integrity of houses to be improved. In cases where there are any concerns, the applicant may be required to provide a structural engineer's report, which confirms that the original building is suitable for the proposed improvement work.

## Competitive quotations

Applicants shall obtain at least two competitive quotations for proposed improvement work. These quotes must be submitted with the application for CHG funding.

Quotations shall be "like for like", and where appropriate based on specifications prepared by a suitably qualified building professional.

Three competitive quotations must be provided where one of the quotations has been provided by a contractor connected to the applicant.

Crofters, who are actively trading as a business directly related to the eligible work, can submit a quotation alongside two further competitive quotations.

For example, if a crofter has a roofing business (s)he will be permitted to submit a quotation for work relating to a replacement roof covering.

Applicants wishing to submit quotes for their own work will need to provide copies of Employer's and Public Liability Insurances for their business.

## Minimum value

The minimum value of CHG funded improvement works (including the crofter's and CHG contribution) is £8,000 including VAT.

Applications for CHG funding for works valued at less than £8,000 including VAT will be rejected.

## Major improvements

Major improvements may include:

1. works to bring existing houses which are below a tolerable standard to an acceptable condition for habitation
2. works to extend houses which are in good condition, but too small for the crofter and his or her family

Major improvements may also convert other buildings not currently used as houses.

## Major house improvements – size

The limits on floor area for new houses also apply to major house improvements. Please refer to [New Houses – size](#) . All applications for major house improvements which alter the floor area of the existing house must be accompanied by detailed floor plans as specified in the standard of drawings section below. Major house improvements showing plans which include the creation of separate living compartments within a house are not eligible. In addition all bedrooms in a house subject to major improvements must be accessed from an internal hallway.

Generally the maximum eligible floor area of improved houses will be as per Table A. RPID may exercise some flexibility in cases where proposed floor areas exceed the floor area limits, due to the layout of the original building.

## Standard of drawings required for a floor area assessments

- applications for extended or refurbished houses must include a floor plan, for each storey of the entire building
- small format drawings (A4 and A3) can be submitted electronically, or as hard copies
- large format drawings (A2, A1 and A0) must be as hard copies
- house plans must be drawn to scales, ideally 1:100 or 1:50. 1:100 is the smallest scale which will be accepted
- all room types must be shown, and adequately dimensioned. The number of bedrooms must be known to establish the appropriate CHG Floor Area Limit



- areas with head height less than 1.8m may be excluded from the internal floor area. These areas should be indicated on the floor plans, and where these areas are at the coombes a cross-section should be provided

CHG funded houses must not exceed the floor area given in the grant approval, unless prior approval has been given by the RPID Tiree office. Unapproved increases in floor area may render the house ineligible for CHG funding.

### **Major house improvements – number of apartments**

Generally, requirements for new houses also apply to major house improvements. Please refer to [New Houses – number of apartments](#) .

### **Major house improvements – eligible works**

All cases will be assessed by a Scottish Government RPID Buildings Officer, and will be inspected to determine the eligibility of the proposed improvement work.

Improvements to the original building may include, but are not limited to:

- replacement of roof covering
- replacement of gutters and down pipes
- provision of, or modification and repairs to chimneys and flues
- repairs to cracks in walls (providing the movement has ceased, and the cracks are historic – in these cases a structural engineer's report may be required)
- provision of chemical damp proof courses (DPCs)
- provision of, or replacement of external rendering, where this is required to maintain water tightness
- replacement of decayed or undersized structural elements such as lintels
- repairs to timber roof and floor structure where water ingress or infestation has led to decay
- provision of, or modification to external walls, and internal partitions as required to create a functional dwelling house
- provision of thermal and sound insulation to external wall linings, internal partitions, floors, and roof spaces
- provision of, or replacement of floors, solums and under-floor ventilation
- lowering external ground levels and provision of external drainage where required to divert surface water from the building
- provision of ramps and other means of access
- replacement of doors and windows
- application of chemical treatment of woodworm and other infestation

Replacement of specific building elements will be eligible where these have reached the end of their useful life (e.g. a roof covering which cannot be economically repaired), or are no longer fit for purpose (e.g. a first floor structure which is undersized, when assessed under current codes of practice for structural design).

Eligible works to extensions are those required to comply with the Scottish Building Standards, subject to the floor area limits given in Table A. Decorative work is eligible only when it is clearly incidental to CHG funded works, (e.g. first time painting of new walls ceilings and partitions, or plastering and repainting in an existing hallway at the opening to a new bathroom).

### **Major house improvements - central heating, hot water and utility connections**

Central heating and hot water systems are eligible for CHG funding where this is an integral part of major improvement work.

Eligibility under CHG extends to conventional central heating boilers and wet heating systems. Electric heating (storage heaters or underfloor) systems are also eligible. Stoves which are connected to the wet heating systems are also eligible. Other funding schemes are available for renewable heat sources, and therefore these types of appliance are not eligible for CHG funding.

Applicants intending to install these types of appliance should refer to the [Home Energy Scotland Funding](#)

In these cases, it is only the heat source which is ineligible; the wet heating systems (radiators and pipework) remain eligible.

Works to connect houses to the water supply, public / private sewerage, and other public utilities are eligible for CHG funding.

### **Major house improvements – ineligible works**

Generally, works to provide rooms or facilities not considered essential in a croft house, or items which are of a higher standard than deemed necessary in a croft house are not eligible for funding under CHG.

These ineligible works include, but are not limited to:

- conservatories
- large patios and decked areas
- detached garages
- access tracks

Replacement of limited life and consumable items such as fitted kitchens, bathroom suites, carpets and white goods are not eligible for CHG funding.

### **Minor house improvements**

Minor improvements are generally lower value works to upgrade one or more specific part of an existing house which is, or until recently has been occupied.

### **Minor house improvements – eligible works**

Generally, eligible minor improvement works are those required to maintain the weather tight building envelope, or provide the other minor improvements listed below:

- first time provision of modern fitted kitchens (not replacement, (not replacement, only where the existing facilities have been judged to be below tolerable standard, by the RPID buildings officer)
- first time provision of bathrooms, or replacement of new bathroom suites (where the existing facilities have been judged to be below tolerable standard, by the RPID buildings officer)
- first time provision of storm porches with floor area not exceeding four square metres
- first time provision of a central heating system, or replacement of elements of the system which have come unsafe or un-serviceable (where supported by a report by a competent person)
- rewiring where the existing wiring has become unsafe or un-serviceable (where supported by a report by a competent person)
- replacement of a roof covering and roof drainage which has reached the end of its useful life and cannot be economically repaired
- replacement of external doors and windows which have reached the end of their useful life and cannot be economically repaired

### **Ineligible Items for claims**

The following items are considered ineligible when submitting a claim:

- Professional fees – such as design costs, consultation, etc
- Local Authority fees – such as Building Warrant and Planning Permission
- Consumables – such as fuel, work wear, etc
- Tools

### **Minor house improvements – special circumstances**

Minor improvements may also include works to provide improved access and other facilities required where there are older occupants, or those with special requirements, including:

- provision of external access ramps
- provision of accessible bathroom fittings

In these cases, where applications to other potential funding sources have been unsuccessful, eligibility will be judged on a case by case basis by the RPID Tiree office.

## **How to apply**

Before sending in an application form you need a business reference number (BRN). You must [register with RPID](#) to get a BRN.

You can download an application form here:

[Croft House Grant application form: new house - August 2021 \(PDF, Size: 4.9 MB\)](#)

[Croft House Grant application form: house improvements - August 2021 \(PDF, Size: 4.9 MB\)](#)

Paper copies are available from any of our area offices.

There is no facility to mandate an agent to submit an application under CHG. Applicants may use an agent to help them complete the application form but it must be signed and submitted by the applicant themselves.

If you need further guidance with completing our forms or have any additional support needs e.g. dyslexia or a visual impairment, please contact the CHG team at:

**The Business Centre**

**Crossapol**

**Isle of Tiree**

**PA77 6UP**

**Tel: 0300 244 9999**

**Email: [CHGS@gov.scot](mailto:CHGS@gov.scot)**

For new houses you will need to provide an estimated build cost on the application.

We do not require contractor's estimates with applications for new houses.

**Application Form and Supporting Documentation**

An application will only be considered for grant when it is fully completed with all questions answered. The application must also be accompanied by all necessary supporting documentation as detailed below.

If key information or documentation is missing from the application then the application cannot be processed and it will be returned to the applicant. We will detail what the deficiencies are in the application in case the applicant may wish to resubmit to a future assessment tranche.

Details of the documentation we expect to see with applications and which applicants we would expect to see this information from are described below;

- Copy of proof of address (a bank statement or utility bill, driving licence) – All applicants
- Copy of details of assignation/succession from Crofting Commission/landlord etc – All applicants
- Copies of P60, tax return, pension statements, (three years) for both the applicant and their partner (if applicable). If a P60 is not available then written confirmation of salary minus tax and NI contributions from the applicant's employer or previous employers is acceptable. If the applicant is declaring foreign income then a letter from their employer confirming their foreign income is acceptable – All applicants
- Agricultural evidence (i.e. five-year plan), including details of stocking and cropping activity – All applicants indicating agricultural activity on their application
- Business evidence (i.e. business plans, current business details) – All applicants indicating non-agricultural business activity on their application
- Copy of detailed house plans. – All applicants with the exception of those applying for minor improvements only. See Standard of drawings required for a floor area assessments section for more info
- Map showing location of house/site contained in application – All applicants
- Copy of any mortgage statements for current fixed assets. For any properties sold in last five years a copy of a solicitors letter confirming the sale price and associated mortgage redemption certificates – All applicants with current or previous property assets sold in the last five years
- Copy of the title deeds for house/site – All applicants who have decrofted and purchased their house/site
- At least two competitive quotes for proposed work (three if one of the quotes is from someone connected to the applicant) – All applications for house improvements
- Evidence of crofting activity (livestock records, invoices for livestock, seeds, contractors etc) – All applicants who have crofting activity at time of application

Providing the application form is fully complete and includes all the supporting documentation required, we will acknowledge receipt of the form, confirm the amount of grant appropriate to the location of your croft, and start processing the application for inclusion in the next quarterly assessment tranche.

## Closing dates for applications

- 1 June, 2022
- 1 September, 2022
- 1 December, 2022
- 1 March, 2023
- 1 June, 2023

## Selection criteria

Croft House Grant includes a selection mechanism (scoring criteria) which is designed to prioritise funding.

The application process is split into tranches with application deadlines approximately every three months. Applications are assessed to ensure they meet the basic eligibility criteria of the scheme and, if they do scored in accordance with the scoring criteria.

The details of these eligible applications and their scores are then collated and the Scottish Government sets a scoring threshold for each tranche. Every application which has received a score equal to or above the scoring threshold will then be given an offer of grant.

The scoring mechanism covers 5 different criteria as detailed below;

- what is the applicant's current accommodation arrangements (Current Accommodation)
- how long has the applicant had their croft and what have they done with it. (Assignment Re-let Details, Date of Assignment)
- the combined net household income (Net Income Details to Justify Assistance)
- whether the applicant has any asset value from a property sold or retained that could fund the new house or improvements (Any Property On or Off the Croft that could be or has been Sold to Fund the New build)
- what is the applicants current or proposed crofting activity for their permanently held croft land (Current and Proposed Crofting Activity)

### **Current accommodation (points)**

The applicant is:

- adequately housed within working distance of the croft or; (0)
- adequately housed but not within working distance of the croft or; (10)
- not adequately housed (20)

There are no set distances used which determine if an applicant is adequately housed within working distance of the croft or not.

This is assessed on a case by case basis taking into account the distance, type of roads etc separating the applicants current home and the croft, and their proposed activity on the croft.

An applicant who is not adequately housed is someone who currently lives in a caravan or another type of semi-permanent or mobile accommodation.

Applicants who are living with parents are also considered as inadequately housed. In addition an applicant who currently resides in any type of rented accommodation (private, housing association or local authority) is also considered as inadequately housed.

### **Assignment Re-let Details, Date of Assignment**

The applicant has:

- had their croft for less than 3 years and not worked it or; (0)
- had their croft for less than 5 years (between 3 and 5 years) and not worked it or; (-5)
- had their croft for over 5 years and not worked it or; (-10)
- the croft and it is being worked by the applicant. (10)

To qualify as working the croft, an applicant must be working the croft themselves by keeping their own animals and carrying out their own cropping activities for at least 6 months prior to submitting their first application or since taking occupancy of the croft (whichever is less).

In addition improvement works such as fencing or drainage in preparation for keeping animals or growing crops can also qualify as working the croft, provided this work has been completed and the costs of the work have been incurred by the applicant.

Applicants must provide verifiable evidence in the form of receipted invoices, cropping records or livestock records with their application to confirm these activities have been undertaken.

An applicant whose croft is being grazed by another crofter's livestock or another crofter is carrying out cropping activities such as silage making is not deemed as working their croft for CHG purposes.

### **Net Income Details to Justify Assistance**

The applicant has a:

- combined net household income of £24,000 and under (20)
- combined net household income of £24,001 - £29,999 (10)
- combined net household income of £30,000 - £44,000 (0)
- combined net household income of over £44,000 - £63,000 (-30)
- combined net household income of over £63,000 (-40)

This scoring criteria is a key part of the process to identify applicants who are most in need of the funding. To allow the application to be assessed correctly we require the applicant to confirm what their combined net household income is after deductions for income tax and national insurance.

Applicants must submit proof of income from employment for themselves and their partner, if that partner is to reside in the croft house. The proof of income details must cover the three year period immediately preceding the application to allow us to work out an average income for each new house occupant.

Acceptable proof of income from employment is a P60 for the last three years for the applicant (and their partner, if they will reside in the croft house).

If the applicant (or their partner) have been in their current role for less than one year or cannot obtain P60s for previous years, written confirmation of salary minus tax and NI contributions from their employer or previous employers is acceptable.

Other types of acceptable proof of income are pension statements for retired applicants (and their partner, if they will reside in the croft house). Again these should cover a three year period.

All applicants who are required to submit an HMRC Tax Return because they receive their income from being, for example, self-employed or a partner in a business must submit a copy of the full tax return for the previous three years.

### **Any Property on or off the croft that could be or has been sold to fund the new build or improvement works**

The applicant has:

- had no previous property; (10)
- sold or retained a property showing an asset value of under £50,000; (0)
- sold or retained a property showing an asset value of between £50,000 and £100,000; (-10)
- sold or retained a property showing an asset value of between £100,000 and £150,000; (-20)
- sold or retained a property showing an asset value of between £150,000 and £200,000; (-30)
- sold or retained a property showing an asset value of over £200,000; (-40)

Another key part of being able to prioritise funding under the scheme is to determine if an applicant has any previous or current property assets that could be used to fund their new house or house improvements.

We will subtract the value of any property sold or retained from any outstanding mortgages against the property to calculate a figure which will fall into one of the categories above.

If the applicant has any retained properties they should estimate their value minus any outstanding mortgage. If their application is successful we will require a surveyors report confirming the retained properties value before a grant award is issued.

### **Current and Proposed Crofting Activity**

The applicant has or is proposing:

- low levels of crofting activity; (10)
- moderate levels of crofting activity; (20)
- high levels of crofting activity. (30)

This scoring criteria is aimed at rewarding those applicants who are currently or are proposing to maximise the use of their permanently held croft land and any permanently held common grazing shares. This assessment is solely based on the milestones identified in the five year plan.

Crofting activity comes in many different forms which includes both agricultural activity and non-agricultural activity such as tourism, forestry and horticulture. All of these activities are recognised under CHG.

In terms of agricultural activity, a low level of activity would be where an applicant is not fully utilising their inbye croft land.

Moderate would be where the applicant is proposing to fully utilise inbye croft land and high would be where the applicant is proposing to use all land available to them including common grazing shares.

Non-agricultural activities are assessed on a case by case basis.

## **Approval and contract**

If your application is approved, you will be sent an offer of contract which you must sign and return to us if you wish to accept the offer with the conditions set out in the contract.

Once we receive this signed offer of grant letter back we will then issue a commencement of work letter. The five year business plan will commence on the date we received the signed offer of grant letter. This date will also be the start of the 36 month period the applicant has to build and submit the claim(s) for the project.

You should not start any work before you receive this letter as you may breach the scheme prior approval rules. More detail can be found on this at the [Starting work without prior approval](#) section of this guidance.

The contract will state the amount of grant available to you. The conditions of this contract apply for a period of 10 years for all projects. The landlord of the croft will also be notified that an offer of grant for the proposed work has been made.

## **Variations to the approved cost of the project**

In certain circumstances, applicants with approval for house improvements may find that additional costs over and above the original approved cost will have to be incurred once work has started.

This may be because an unknown issue such as dry rot or other issues with an older building have been discovered after work has started.

In these circumstances the applicant should immediately contact RPID Tیره and supply them with a quotation within 7 days for this additional work.

A RPID Buildings Officer will then make an assessment as to whether the approved cost of the project can be increased to take account of this additional work.

If the Buildings Officer is in agreement with the increased costs, the applicant will be informed in writing of the revised approval cost.

## **Starting work without prior approval**

### **Starting Work On Your House**



The Croft House Grant is a prior approval scheme therefore applicants are advised not to start any work before approval is given. This allows applicants to maximise any grant award and safeguard against any potential loss of grant.

If you have already started work, the costs associated with this work are not eligible for grant payments. If you submit an application which includes work which has already been started it will be rejected. However you may be eligible for any remaining works still to be started provided they meet the scheme rules (eligible works and other house eligibility details are in the New House and House Improvements sections of this guidance).

### **Activities permitted before CHG approval**

Activities permitted before CHG approval are those which may be undertaken, without affecting the eligibility of the house build or improvement.

These activities may be permitted before CHG approval, but will not receive any grant funding.

Activities which go beyond activities permitted before CHG approval may cause the entire house build or improvement to be ineligible under the CHG scheme

### **Design and Planning Activities**

The following are activities permitted before CHG approval:

- purchase of house site of building to be improved
- preliminary design
- detailed design
- applications for planning consent and Building Warrant
- applications for connections to public utilities

### **Construction and Other Works**

The following are activities permitted before CHG approval:

- fencing on the house plot
- surface water drainage around the house plot, inside or outside of the boundary
- shelter planting, on the house plot
- construction of an access road to and on the house plot
- construction of a hard standing on the house plot
- installation of connections to public utilities

Certain emergency works may be permitted on a building to be improved, for example roof repairs to maintain the building in a wind and watertight condition. These emergency works must be agreed by RPID Tیره in advance.

In order to ease the cash flow for major home improvements, applicants are now able to submit more than one scheme application. When submitting the first application, applicants will be required to submit evidence (e.g. photos) of the original state of their house, showing all areas that will require work – not just the area that is covered in the first application. Each application must state clearly what eligible work(s) will be undertaken and confirm that the work has not already started.

Although multiple applications are now permitted, please note that the total grant amount received in any 10 year period cannot exceed the maximum limit set for your priority area.

## **Claims and payments procedure**

You can download a claim form here:

[CHG - House Improvement Applicants Claim Form \(PDF, Size: 179.7 kB\)](#)

[CHG - New House Applicants Claim Form \(PDF, Size: 178.7 kB\)](#)

Paper copies are available from any of our area offices. There is no facility to mandate an agent to submit a claim under CHG. Applicants may use an agent to help them complete the claim form but it must be signed and submitted by the applicant themselves.



Claims for new houses and house improvement can be paid in up to three instalments or alternatively you can submit one final claim once your project is completed.

Conditions relating to payment and amounts of these instalments will vary between projects and will have been confirmed in your CHG offer of grant letter.

The maximum build time for new houses and house improvements is 36 months. You should contact the RPID Tiree office should you not be able to meet these timescales.

Cost must be incurred by you and you must provide invoices which verify the costs of the work you have incurred and are claiming payment on for all claims as follows:

### **Evidence of costs incurred**

For new houses - evidence of costs incurred will be to the value of the total grant award (£28,000 or £38,000 in Standard and High Priority Areas, respectively). *i.e. if the total grant award is £38,000 then any claims submitted (instalment or final) will need to include receipts/proof of payment up to at least £38,000.*

For improved houses - evidence of costs incurred will be to the total cost of the project. *i.e. if the total project cost is £45,000 (grant amount is 40% of total cost i.e. £18,000) any claims submitted (instalment or final) will need to include receipts/proof of payment up to £45,000.*

### **VAT**

Costs that can be claimed for new houses will exclude VAT. Invoices may include VAT, but this can be reclaimed from HMRC, and therefore cannot be included in the amount claimed. Nor can the VAT element be included as evidence of costs incurred.

Costs that can be claimed for improved houses may include VAT, provided VAT was included in the total cost of the project stated in the grant award. The claimant must sign the declaration on the CHG claim form stating that they will repay the VAT element claimed if this is subsequently refunded by HMRC.

### **Invoice Requirements**

All invoices must be paid in full before grant is claimed. Each item of expenditure included must be accompanied by an invoice as detailed below.

Acceptable invoice should show the following:

- supplier's name and address
- applicant's/claimant's name and address
- detailed statement of services involved or goods supplied
- date of supplying the goods or services
- total amount due for payment by the customer
- where appropriate, the net amount actually paid by the customer, giving details of any discount
- credit or hire charges, which fully explain any difference between the amount due and amount paid

Additional evidence will be required for all claims. Acceptable additional evidence of payment could be cleared cheque, or bank or credit card statement confirming the invoice details.

A print out from an online bank account is acceptable but only where the applicant's/claimant's name and address are included.

Where appropriate, the Scottish Government reserves the right to seek additional information as it deems necessary in support of an application or claim for grant aid.

Costs incurred by the applicant through cash payments are not eligible to claim for grant payments under this scheme

### **Claims stages and grant payable - new houses**

#### **Minimum value**

The minimum costs to have been incurred before the First Claim, and between subsequent grant claims is £7,500 or £10,000 in Standard and High Priority Areas, respectively.

## First Claim

To assist funding of the build and to allow some claimants some flexibility, the first claim may include:

- (i) the value of materials have been delivered to the house site
- (ii) the cost of works carried out
- (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii) The grant which can be paid at first claim will be 100% of eligible costs, to a maximum of £13,000 or £18,000 in Standard and High Priority Areas, respectively

We would also require the following supporting documentation with the first claim:

- evidence of milestones achieved in relation to the business plan submitted with your application and detailed in the CHG offer of grant letter (livestock records, invoices)
- if applicable, copies of correspondence from the Local Authority confirming no planning consent is required for works (we will confirm planning consent from e-planning system)
- copy of Building Warrant (and any approved amendments) and stamped drawings or local authority waiver letter. If the stamped drawing is larger than A3 then two copies must be provided
- invoices plus supporting payment documents

## Wind and watertight

A definition of wind and watertight is provided below and applies to both new houses and major house improvements:

- external load bearing walls erected with all connections to structural elements complete
- all internal racking panels or diaphragm walls installed
- roof structure and roof covering complete
- all external cladding (block or timber) complete
- all external doors and windows installed and fixed

## Second claim

The Second claim will only be made when the house is wind and watertight. The grant which can be paid at second claim will be 100 per cent of eligible costs, to a maximum of £20,500 or £28,000 in standard and high priority areas, respectively less the value of grant paid at first claim.

## Third and/or final claim

The third and/or final claim may be made when the house is complete, provided:

- (i) a Building Warrant Completion Certificate has been obtained
- (ii) the claimant has taken up permanent occupancy in the new house

The grant which can be paid at final claim will be 100 per cent of eligible costs, to a maximum of £28,000 or £38,000 in standard and high priority areas, respectively less the total value of grant paid at previous claims.

We would also require the following supporting documentation with the final claim (if you have not already provided this with a previous claim):

- evidence of milestones achieved in relation to the business plan submitted with your application and detailed in the CHG offer of grant letter (livestock records, invoices)
- if applicable, copies of correspondence from the Local Authority confirming no planning consent is required for works (we will confirm planning consent from e-planning system)
- copy of Building Warrant (and any approved amendments) and stamped drawings or local authority waiver letter. If the stamped drawing is larger than A3 then two copies must be provided
- copy of the Local Authority Completion Certificate
- invoices plus supporting payment documents
- Council Tax statement (confirming your occupancy)\*

\*It is possible to seek a written exemption from the permanent occupancy condition, but only in exceptional circumstances which have been agreed by RPID Tíre in advance. Any agreed exemption to this condition will have to include the period in which the applicant intends to take up permanent residency of their CHG funded house.

Where it is practicable and appropriate to do so, RPID will seek to recover all of the grant paid, should the grantee not adhere to the agreed conditions.

## **Claims stages and grant payable - improved houses**

### **Minimum value**

In standard priority areas, the minimum cost to have been incurred before the first claim, and between subsequent grant claims is £7,500.

In high priority areas, the minimum cost to have been incurred before the first claim and between subsequent grant claims is £10,000 or the total cost of the project, whichever is lower.

### **First claim**

To assist funding of the build and to allow some claimants some flexibility, the first claim may include:

- (i) the value of materials that have been delivered to the house site
- (ii) the cost of works carried out
- (iii) a combination of (i) and (ii)

The value of grant which can be paid at first claim will be limited to the lower of :

- 40 per cent of costs incurred on eligible expenditure
- 50 per cent of the total grant award

We would also require the following supporting documentation with the first claim:

- evidence of milestones achieved in relation to the business plan submitted with your application and detailed in the CHG offer of grant letter (livestock records, invoices)
- if applicable, copies of correspondence from the Local Authority confirming no planning consent is required for works (we will confirm planning consent from e-planning system)
- copy of Building Warrant (and any approved amendments) and stamped drawings or local authority waiver letter. If the stamped drawing is larger than A3 then two copies must be provided
- invoices plus supporting payment documents

### **Second claim**

Where permitted, the second claim may be made at the stage given in the grant award letter, or when major improvements are wind and watertight.

The value of grant which can be paid at second claim will be limited to the lower of :

- 40 per cent of costs incurred on eligible expenditure, less the value of grant paid at first claim
- 75 per cent of the total grant award, less the value of grant paid at first claim

### **Third claim and/or final claim**

The third and/or final claim may be made when the house is complete, provided:

- (i) a Building Warrant Completion Certificate has been obtained
- (ii) the claimant has taken up permanent occupancy in the new house

The value of grant which can be paid at the third and/or final claim stage will be limited to the lower of :

- 40 per cent of costs incurred on eligible expenditure, less the total value of grant paid at previous claims
- 100 per cent of the total grant award, less the total value of grant paid at previous claims

We would also require the following supporting documentation with the final claim (if you have not already provided this with a previous claim):

- evidence of milestones achieved in relation to the business plan submitted with your application and detailed in the CHG offer of grant letter (livestock records, invoices)
- if applicable, copies of correspondence from the Local Authority confirming no planning consent is required for works (we will confirm planning consent from e-planning system)
- copy of Building Warrant (and any approved amendments) and stamped drawings or local authority waiver letter. If the stamped drawing is larger than A3 then two copies must be provided

- copy of the Local Authority Completion Certificate
- invoices plus supporting payment documents
- Council Tax statement (confirming your occupancy)\*

\*It is possible to seek a written exemption from the permanent occupancy condition, but only in exceptional circumstances which have been agreed by RPID Tíree in advance. Any agreed exemption to this condition will have to include the period in which the applicant intends to take up permanent residency of their CHG funded house.

Where it is practicable and appropriate to do so, RPID will seek to recover all of the grant paid, should the grantee not adhere to the agreed conditions.

If you do not have a blank claim form these can be requested by contacting the RPID Tíree office. All completed claims for payment should be submitted to the RPID Tíree office.

Successful applicants will receive three blank claim forms once they return their signed offer of grant letter.

## Verification and control

You will be asked to provide evidence of progress with your agreed croft business plan when submitting claims for payment.

You may also be asked to provide evidence of progress with your agreed croft business plan during the period covered by the grant conditions once your house is complete. This may include a visit to your croft.

Your claims will also be subject to our inspections procedures. This means that you may be visited to confirm the expenditure made.

If you have applied for a rebuilding and improvement grant, or where you advise your existing accommodation is inadequate, we will arrange to inspect your existing property before making a decision on your application.

## Legal base

This guidance accompanies the Croft House Grant (Scotland) Regulations 2016 which have applied since 1 April 2016.

The Scottish Ministers made these Regulations using the powers conferred by section 42(6) of the Crofters (Scotland) Act 1993 (as read with sections 42(4), 44 and 45(1)(ca) of that Act) and all other powers enabling them to do so.

Applications made on or after 1 April, 2016 will be governed by these Regulations and this guidance.

These Regulations replace the Croft House Grant (Scotland) Regulations 2006. However, applications made and grants awarded under the 2006 Regulations will continue to be governed by those Regulations and the guidance that accompanied them.

## How we use your information

We take our responsibilities for the way we store, secure and use your personal information seriously, and always seek to respect your privacy and to meet our legal obligations. These obligations include the General Data Protection Regulation, the UK Data Protection Act, and other regulations and legislation relating to privacy and communications.

To see details on how we use your information and who we share your information with, please see our privacy policy located at: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/publicsite/futures/privacy-policy/> or available in paper form from your area office.

Our Privacy Policy explains the purposes for which we use personal data and the legal basis for that use. It explains our responsibilities for collecting data and what happens if you fail to provide data we need or provide incorrect data. We set out the categories of data we collect and how we acquire it, especially in those cases where it may come from another party.

The Privacy Policy also sets out our approach to sharing data and gives information about the organisations with whom we share data and why we do so. Finally, we advise you of your various rights and how to exercise them.

If you are providing information to us on behalf of someone else (for example, as an agent representing a Scheme applicant), you are advised to draw this section of the Guidance and the Privacy Policy to the attention of any individual whose data is being processed. This is in order to help you fulfil your obligations under data protection legislation towards your clients or those whom you represent.

## Refusals

If you wish to have an explanation of how the decision to refuse your application was made, please contact RPID Tiree at the address below quoting your application details. We will provide a fuller explanation which hopefully will resolve your concerns.

If after this you are still not satisfied with our decision and feel that we have not processed your application correctly you should write to the Head of CHG Branch at the address below:

Head of CHG Branch  
Croft House Grant  
The Business Centre  
Crossapol  
Isle of Tiree

PA77 6UP

Tel No: 0300 244 9999

Email: [CHGS@gov.scot](mailto:CHGS@gov.scot)

## Complaints

If you want to make a complaint, you must follow the Scottish Government procedure [outlined here](#).

## Contact us

If you need to talk to one of our area office staff, you can find details of your nearest [RPID office here](#).

## Annex A



[Map of priority areas \(PDF, Size: 1.9 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/MAP-CHG-080316.pdf>

## Annex C



[CHG priority postcodes \(PDF, Size: 2.5 MB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Copy-of-High-Standard-Priority-Area-postcodes.pdf>

## Recent changes

Section	Change
<a href="#">New house</a>	We have updated the guidance on maximum eligible floor areas
<a href="#">House improvements</a>	We have updated the guidance on competitive quotations
<a href="#">Closing dates for applications</a>	We've updated the closing dates for 2018

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