# Belfast businesses reject £4,000 council aid as inadequate after race riots



The aftermath of last summer's brutal riots in Belfast has left deep scars on local communities, particularly among business owners whose livelihoods were destroyed amid the chaos. Two business proprietors who lost everything during the anti-immigration violence have voiced their outrage at the £4,000 financial assistance offer from Belfast City Council, deeming it “deeply insulting.” The funds, they argue, are a mere fraction of what is required to rebuild their shattered enterprises.

Belfast City Council, in response to the violent demonstrations that occurred last August, characterised the destruction and intimidation as a consequence of far-right extremism. In a special meeting convened to address the needs of those affected, the council members expressed their solidarity with minority ethnic communities and reiterated their condemnation of the events. A framework for financial assistance was proposed, acknowledging the severity of the situation and the immediate need for support to devastated local businesses.

Despite the council's intentions to assist, many business owners feel abandoned. Reports suggest that numerous affected establishments have received no support from the council, government, or insurance companies. Mohammed Bashir, the owner of Sham Supermarket, which was set ablaze during the riots, shared his frustration: “We have received nothing from the council, the government, or our insurance company.” This sentiment resonates with others who have been left to navigate the difficult path of recovery on their own.

In contrast to the council's limited financial offer, community support has surged, with a GoFundMe campaign initiated by Stephen Montgomery amassing over £105,000 to aid affected businesses. Montgomery expressed gratitude for the overwhelming public response, emphasising the critical role these funds will play in helping owners rebuild after such devastating losses. The grassroots movement illustrates a community rallying together in the wake of violence, showcasing solidarity that stands in stark contrast to the perceived neglect by authorities.

While the city's council grapples with how best to assist the impacted businesses, ongoing dialogues are critical. There are calls for a more substantial package that truly reflects the gravity of the losses suffered. The community’s resilience stands as a testament to their strength, but the inadequacy of official aid raises pressing questions about the mechanisms in place for addressing such crises. As the businesses begin to recover, the long-term impacts of the riots on Belfast’s reputation and its immigrant communities remain a concern for many residents.

The landscape of Belfast continues to be shaped by these events, with voices from both affected business owners and community leaders calling for a dedicated effort to ensure a safer, more inclusive city for all its residents.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/food-drink-hospitality/deeply-insulting-belfast-traders-who-lost-businesses-in-racist-rioting-tell-of-shock-at-being-offered-4k-from-council/a1428445468.html), [[4]](https://www.localgov.co.uk/Council-to-support-businesses-after-racist-attacks/60903)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/council-to-provide-financial-support-to-business-damaged-by-racist-violence/a533423728.html), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9v8887jxn4o)
* Paragraph 3 – [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/02/25/belfast-race-riots-we-have-received-nothing-from-the-council-the-government-or-our-insurance-company/), [[5]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/more-than-100000-raised-for-belfast-businesses-targeted-by-rioters-HLR7KWKHEBA2BOQLCF7IPRDLPI/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.irishcentral.com/news/gofundme-belfast-businesses), [[5]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/more-than-100000-raised-for-belfast-businesses-targeted-by-rioters-HLR7KWKHEBA2BOQLCF7IPRDLPI/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/02/25/belfast-race-riots-we-have-received-nothing-from-the-council-the-government-or-our-insurance-company/), [[7]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9v8887jxn4o)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://m.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/food-drink-hospitality/deeply-insulting-belfast-traders-who-lost-businesses-in-racist-rioting-tell-of-shock-at-being-offered-4k-from-council/a1428445468.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/council-to-provide-financial-support-to-business-damaged-by-racist-violence/a533423728.html> - Belfast City Council has announced plans to offer financial assistance to businesses affected by anti-immigration protests that led to violence and property damage in the city. The council condemned the 'violent destruction and racist intimidation' caused by far-right agitators and expressed solidarity with minority ethnic communities. A special meeting was convened to discuss the establishment of a financial support programme for impacted business owners.
3. <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/gofundme-belfast-businesses> - A GoFundMe campaign has been launched to support businesses in Belfast that were damaged during recent anti-immigration protests. The fundraiser, initially set up for the Sahara Shisha Cafe, has expanded to include other affected businesses. Organiser Stephen Montgomery expressed gratitude for the overwhelming public response, which has seen donations surpass £105,000, providing crucial assistance to those impacted by the violence.
4. <https://www.localgov.co.uk/Council-to-support-businesses-after-racist-attacks/60903> - Following recent racist attacks in Belfast, the city council has agreed to provide financial support to affected business owners. Councillors condemned the 'violent destruction and racist intimidation' caused by far-right agitators and expressed solidarity with minority ethnic communities. A report will be submitted to establish a programme of financial assistance for those impacted by the attacks.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/more-than-100000-raised-for-belfast-businesses-targeted-by-rioters-HLR7KWKHEBA2BOQLCF7IPRDLPI/> - A fundraiser for businesses targeted by rioters in Belfast has raised over £100,000. The campaign, initiated by Stephen Montgomery, aims to support businesses affected by recent violence. Montgomery expressed being 'overwhelmed' by the response, noting that the funds will help businesses rebuild and recover from the damage sustained during the riots.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/02/25/belfast-race-riots-we-have-received-nothing-from-the-council-the-government-or-our-insurance-company/> - Business owners in Belfast whose establishments were destroyed or damaged during the August riots report receiving no assistance from the council, government, or insurance companies. Despite public donations, many feel abandoned by authorities. The Sham Supermarket, for instance, was burned down, and owner Mohammed Bashir expressed frustration over the lack of support, highlighting the challenges in rebuilding their livelihoods.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9v8887jxn4o> - Following recent protests in Belfast, some business owners have seen their livelihoods destroyed in a single night of violence. The Alliance leader condemned the unrest, stating it caused 'irreparable' damage to the city's reputation. A special Belfast City Council meeting was held, during which councillors passed a motion to provide financial support to businesses damaged during the disorder.