

Community Development Grant Aid Programme 2026-27

CATEGORY: Good Relations Grant

Information for Applicants

Good Relations Grant Aid Programme Guidance Notes 2026-27

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1.0 Introduction

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Equality Act states that Public Authorities should promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion and racial group. As part of this work the Council supports a Good Relations Grant Aid Programme with awards of up to £2,000 per application. All projects MUST contain a substantial good relations element in keeping with the government's 'Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy, which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. A breakdown of the key priorities and desired outcomes required by T: BUC are outlined fully in section 5.

These conditions should be read in conjunction with the Grant Funding [Policy](#).

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme/Overview of Fund

The aim of Good Relations (GR) is to improve day to day relationships by reducing all forms of prejudice, promoting equality and encouraging a society in which our own cultures and traditions as well as other people's cultures and traditions are understood, respected and accepted.

As Northern Ireland becomes a more culturally diverse society, we must work to ensure that people of all cultures feel comfortable living here. We must also work towards overcoming sectarianism and division, whilst addressing the legacy of our own conflict.

All communities must have the opportunity to access to the same skills, relationships and knowledge to enable them to become more integrated over time. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council is committed to providing these resources through its GR Grant Aid Programme.

The total amount of funding available within this category is outlined below:

| Category | Key notes / Purpose of application | Maximum award |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Good Relations Grant | Programme Costs | Up to £2,000 (Subject to Funding from TEO) |

1.2 General Principles

The fundamental principles of this grant guidance document are:

Funding Award is based on evidenced need and is subject to funding

The aim of grant funding is to provide financial support for projects and activities that add benefit to the Borough and contribute to improving the lives of local people and places. The following requirements MUST be met to be considered for funding:

- Have a clear purpose to the activity based on clearly evidenced need
- Be able to demonstrate how their project meets relevant funding criteria
- Can deliver high quality desired outcomes in a cost-effective manner
- The Applicant organisation can demonstrate that it is well run with the capacity to deliver the project as stated
- Reflect the statutory remit of the Council, aligned to the Corporate Plan and Community Plan
- Council reserves the right to request further information or clarification on any request for support and to share information on support with other funders
- To be eligible for funding you must have a child protection policy in place if your project involves, or may involve, children or young people under the age of 18 years or a vulnerable adult's policy if your project involves, or may involve vulnerable adults
- Groups seeking support from Council should have a minimum of £2M Public Liability and £10M Employers' Liability in place or be willing to obtain this cover
- The content of Good Relations projects, including items produced for display or use in the public domain including any exhibitions, booklets or public art will require prior approval by Council
- Projects should originate from organisations based within the Borough
- It is a stipulation of all successful grant applications that the Council, TBUC and The Executive Office's logos with the wording 'this project has received financial support from The Executive Office through Antrim and Newtownabbey's Good Relations Programme' appear on all publicity material during the duration of the grant and that the Council's support is acknowledged. If requested, applicants must attend press opportunities and participate in all media activities as requested by Council officers. **All printed materials and use of the logo must be agreed and approved by Council officers.**

Accessibility

Information on all grant funding programmes will be publicly available through the Council's website and proactively promoted across Mailing Lists, Social Media channels and Borough Life. This will include:

- Guidance on completion of relevant grant application
- Grant Management System embedded into Council public facing platform with digital accessibility options available
- Centralised Grant Funding information on Council webpage
- Guidance notes for all individual grant streams
- Point of contact clearly communicated for relevant queries
- Annual Grant Funding calendar made available

We will strive to ensure the process is user friendly, transparent, and fully inclusive.

Accountability

The Council will always adhere to the Grant Funding policy and guidance criteria outlined within each grant funding programme.

- A clear decision-making process will be utilised, with clear rationale and demonstrable evidence to support funding decisions
- Decision making process will be robust and transparent
- Funding decisions will be approved through Committee and Full Council with details made publicly available
- Unsuccessful applicants will be entitled to receive feedback on their application
- An accessible Appeals process will be communicated as part of each grant's call

1.3 Who can apply?

Only properly constituted community, voluntary & charitable groups can apply to the grant aid scheme and must be able to meet the following conditions. The group must:

- Be democratically accountable through regular public meetings
- Hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Be properly constituted and include a decision-making process and aims and activities that are acceptable to the Council
- Be managed by a publicly elected committee; the office bearing positions of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer must be held as a minimum
- Demonstrate a fair and equitable ethos through their established aims and objectives in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)
- Demonstrate that proposed activities are not a duplication of other activities.
- Produce an annual statement of independently verified or certified accounts, or a bank statement for new groups only.
- Agree to Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council's monitoring, evaluation, and training procedures if required.

Projects **must** take place between 1 April 2026 and 31 March 2027, any activity outside these timescales will not be eligible for funding.

1.4 What can be funded?

| Title | Good Relations Grant Aid Programme |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Eligible Expenditure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room/venue hire • Facilitation costs/coaching/training/tutor etc. • Training / capacity buildings costs • Hospitality on a study visit or workshop or conference • Advertising/publicity/newsletters/website development, maintenance and hosting (relating specifically to the programme) • Transport hire • Hire of entertainment |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of materials and essential small items of equipment relevant to the project • Hire of infrastructural items (PA/electronic equipment/staging) • Transport of equipment/items relating specifically to project • Trips/entrance fees • Best practice visits • Travel relating specifically to project /programme delivery should have a significant and substantial project activity and impact within the Borough • While one-off activities such as day trips are generally discouraged, exceptions may be considered where the activity is a culmination of substantial and significant work delivered within the Borough. For example, a youth group seeking support for a educational trip or residential following an extensive local programme could be viewed more favourably than standalone excursions or day trip • Seminars/ training days |
|--|---|

1.5 What cannot be funded?

- Projects operating primarily for the benefit of people outside the Borough Council area
- Events based outside of the Borough unless a significant and substantial project and impact occurs within the Borough
- Applications for specific projects which are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation
- Retrospective expenditure without prior approval
- Applications received after the closing date specified in the public advertisement
- Unrelated professional fees (solicitors, etc.)
- Bank charges, loans, deficits or fines
- Rent
- Alcohol
- Salary costs
- Group members or volunteers cannot benefit financially from this award
- Purchase of clothing, flags and bunting without prior approval.

1.6 Exclusions

Council will not normally fund the following:

- Applicants based outside of the Borough
- Applications for specific projects that are clearly the responsibility of another statutory organisation
- Retrospective expenditure
- Rent or hire of group's own facility
- Applications received after the closing date
- Unrelated professional fees. e.g. solicitor, surveyors, architects
- Bank charges, loans, deficits, or fines
- Costs that are already covered by other sources of funding
- Charity or fundraising events
- Costs that are not clearly linked to the project
- Applications that provide no significant benefit to the Council area
- Applications for projects that duplicate what already exists
- Projects that are not in line with Council policies e.g. Corporate Plan, Community plan or Good Relations Plan.
- Individuals involved in the delivery of the project, i.e. staff, volunteers, or board members of the Applicant organisation. This means they cannot benefit personally from the award of this grant. This means that they cannot be paid for the provision of goods or services from the grant.
- Organisations that have previously received a grant from Council that was not managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Offer will not receive future funding.
- Alcohol or refreshments
- Thematic activity such as arts, culture, sport etc. Unless the activity has clear good relations outcomes and can positively demonstrate that it addresses at least one of the key T:BUC priorities and outcomes listed in section 4.

2.0 How to answer questions?

2.1 Information about your organisation

This section of the application form gathers information about your organisation, including contact details and insight on the purpose and work of your organisation, which will enable the assessment process to check eligibility.

2.2 Project Proposal

This section of the application form gathers information about your project proposal what you want to do and why. This is the part of the form where you must clearly and sufficiently demonstrate how and why there is a need for your project, what beneficial outcomes will be created and how these meet the needs of the Council's Corporate Plan.

This section allows you to detail why you think this project approach will work for the proportionate impact you plan to make. The assessment process will focus on the quality, impact, and investment effectiveness of each proposal.

You might reference, for example, evidence of your approach working before, or how your proposal is an innovative way to reach more people or make a greater impact on a smaller number of participants.

2.3 Project Delivery

This section of the application form is where you detail how you are going to deliver the project. It includes timescales and your budget (how grant funding will be used and on what).

You will be asked to think about how you will manage any potential risks to delivery, how you will match fund the project and how you might capture the impact of your projects.

Interested applicants should book a place at one of the following **MANDATORY** in person/online Grant Information Sessions where we will take groups through the funding and assessment criteria as well as the new application forms and online process.

3.0 How we assess and score your application?

A panel will evaluate eligible applications against the category criteria. Applicants will be notified via email detailing the outcome of the application.

Each application will be considered on its own merits. To deliver the programme's aim and general principles, Applicants will need to demonstrate how their project meets the appropriate criteria. It is important to remember that the application will be assessed **ONLY** on the information provided in the application form. Any information that you do not include or that is contained in other parts of the application form will not be considered. Therefore, you **MUST** demonstrate how you meet the essential criteria as set out in these guidelines in the application.

3.1 Eligibility assessment

Applications received by Council will be logged and undergo eligibility checks. If eligibility information is missing at this point, you will be contacted and given 10 days to submit the missing information. Failure to provide all necessary eligibility information and complete forms as required will mean your application will not go forward for assessment in the current funding call.

If you are not sure whether you or your organisation and project meet the eligibility criteria, or you need more guidance on the application form, please contact the leisure grants team. You can find contact details at the end of these guidance notes.

3.2 Assessment and scoring

If your application has met all the eligibility criteria the panel will a set criteria to score your application.

Assessment of applications will be made using a system that measures and scores each of the criteria listed above out of a total of five points. Weighting will not apply

The scoring is as follows:

| Criteria | SCORE |
|--|--------------|
| Demonstrate the need for this project: tell us why the project is needed | 5 |
| TBUC theme identified, demonstration of link between theme and proposed project, good relations outcomes and outputs demonstrated | 5 |
| Opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of good relations, and longer-term impact of the project | 5 |
| Finance and costings Value for money, cost per head/participant | 5 |
| How will the project be promoted in the target area to ensure social inclusion? | 5 |

A pass threshold of 60% needs to be achieved to deem the application successful.

3.3 What happens if an application is successful?

- 3.3.1 In the event of a successful application a Letter of Offer will be issued together with procurement guidance and details of the claim process.
- 3.3.2 The Letter of Offer must be signed and returned within 10 days with the Grant recipient to provide details of a designated bank account for all transactions relevant to the funding.
- 3.3.3 The Grant shall be used only for the purposes of the Project as defined by the Applicant in the application form or variations, which the Council has agreed to fund.
- 3.3.4 The Council reserves the right to withhold any or all of the payments and/or require the Grant Recipient to repay part or all of the Grant if Council deems there to be a substantial or material change in the nature, scale or timing of the Project, or if the Grant is used for purposes other than those specified in the application or agreed variations.
- 3.3.5 Grant payments will be made paid 50% up front and 50% following submission and approval of completed Project Grant Claims. Claim forms must be supported by original receipts and supporting bank statements Payment will be dependent upon fully acceptable documentation being in place to support the claim.

- 3.3.6 Council will release funds after verification of satisfactory receipts and evidence of payment (i.e. bank statements) (invoices will not be accepted). Claims must be for the items specified in the Letter of Offer. Items paid for in cash will not be reimbursed.
- 3.3.7 Payment will only be released to a group bank account and that account is the same as the details on the application and supporting documentation.
- 3.3.8 The Council reserves the right to terminate or suspend authorisation of Grant Payments and/or to withhold any or all the financial assistance should the Project not be delivered in line with this offer of Grant Aid.
- 3.3.9 To meet Council's audit requirements, when making a claim, applicants should retain copies of receipts and evidence of payments made in the form of Bank statements/credit cards.

3.4 Monitoring and reporting

If your project receives grant support, you will be in receipt of public funding, and this must be accountable. Monitoring and reporting are an essential requirement for you in delivering your project.

We will also ask all organisations for auditing purposes, to check how the grant was spent and that the terms and conditions of the funding were met. You will be contacted by your local Council Lead, and you will be asked to provide invoices and bank statements for all the items you are claiming through the grant.

If your project does not meet its targets and outcomes, we can review and reduce the amount of funding awarded.

If any information in the application, monitoring or supporting information is found to be untrue or misleading, we will withdraw any grant. If we have already paid part of a grant to your organisation, you must repay it. This will have implications for any future applications or requests for funding. We may also review grants made to your organisation in the past.

3.5 Marketing and promotion

It is a stipulation of all successful grant applications that the Council, TBUC and The Executive Office's logos with the wording 'this project has received financial support from The Executive Office through Antrim and Newtownabbey's Good Relations Programme' appear on all publicity material during the duration of the grant and that the Council's support is acknowledged. If requested, applicants must attend press opportunities and participate in all media activities as requested by Council officers.

All promotional materials should be approved **in advance** by the Council's Public Relations and Marketing team. Please email all proofs to marketing@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk or media@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

If you have any queries, please contact the Council PR and Marketing team on Tel: 0300 123 4568

3.6 Breach of Letter of Offer and Claw-Back arrangements

If the Grant Purpose ceases to be carried out during the relevant Grant Period as a result of any act, omission or default on the part of the grant Applicant organisation, including any breach of the terms and conditions contained within the Letter of Offer, the Council will invoke clawback procedures to demand that the Applicant repays in part or full the Grant Funding awarded.

The Applicant will be considered in breach of their funding offer if the following apply – please note this list is not exhaustive: -

- They provide misleading or inaccurate information, by accident or deliberate during the application process
- Members of the organisation funded, including volunteers and staff at any time during the project act dishonestly or negligently causing directly or indirectly any detriment to the activity or bring into disrepute the reputation of the Council by association through funding award(s)
- The organisation funded is in receipt of duplicate funding from any other source for any element of the activity
- The organisation does not take positive steps to ensure equality of opportunity in its employment practices, delivery of and access to services
- The organisation by their own actions makes their facilities and/or activities less inviting to any sections of the community
- There is a change of purpose, benefit, ownership, or recipient, either during the project or within a reasonable period after its completion

Any reported or identified breaches or potential breaches that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the Council will result in the grant award in part or in full being clawed back by the Council.

If funding is withdrawn or clawback procedures invoked the Applicant organisation will have no legal redress to have funding reinstated. The decision of Council in this case will be final.

Additionally

1. Organisations:

- Must send in the monitoring and evaluation forms within the agreed timescales.
- No aspect of the activity being funded should be party political in intention, use or presentation; or likely to be perceived as discriminatory on grounds of religion, colour, race, gender, or disability.

3.7 What happens if an application is ineligible/unsuccessful?

If your application is ineligible/unsuccessful for funding, you will be notified via email. Feedback will be available on request.

3.8 Appeals procedure

An appeals procedure will be available to unsuccessful applicants. For further information please contact the officers detailed at the end of this document.

3.9 Fraud and Corruption

The Council is committed to the prevention and detection of fraud and the promotion of an anti-fraud culture.

The Council operates a zero-tolerance attitude to fraud and corruption, whether from internal or external sources. The Council requires staff and individuals/organisations that it deals with, to act with honesty and integrity, to safeguard the public resources and to report all suspicions of fraud and corruption.

Every case of alleged or suspected fraud will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and where appropriate, referred to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The Council will also seek to recover any loss suffered because of fraud and if appropriate, will take civil, and/or disciplinary action.

The following relevant policies can be located on the Council website:

Anti- Bribery Policy - April 2023

Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy - April 2023

Financial Regulations – April 2024

Fraud Response Plan - March 2023

Raising Concerns Policy – November 2023

The Council reserves the right to disallow any other current, pending or future grant applications and claims submitted by an organisation or an individual member of the organisation in respect of the financial year and to apply a moratorium on Council funding to any organisation or individual member of an organisation where fraudulent activity is identified within the current financial year and for at least 2 forthcoming financial years. This will also extend to individuals in receipt or applying for a bursary.

The Council will inform in writing the Chairperson of the organisation, or the individual in case of bursary, where fraud is suspected or has been identified. In the case of a bursary where the recipient is under age of 18 years the parent/guardian will also be notified.

4.0 Application process

| Opens | Closes | Assessment | Notification of Outcome |
|----------------|------------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 5 January 2026 | 26 February 2026 | March 2026 | April 2026 |

Applicants should note that this is a competitive process, and awards are subject to the availability of external funding and may be subject to change.

Grant Information Sessions

Interested applicants should book a place at one the in person/online Grant Information Sessions where officers will take groups through the grant funding available as well as the new application forms and online process. For further information please visit Council's Grants and Funding webpage:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/residents/grants-funding/>

Contact details:

For further information, please contact: Good Relations E: goodrelations@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk or The Funding Unit E: fundingunit@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk

T: 0300 123 4568

5.0 Together Building a United Community (TBUC) Priorities

The table below outlines the T:BUC Priorities and project Level Outcomes for Council's Good Relations Grant Aid. You must select **at least one** Key Priority from the table below. You will be required to demonstrate how this T:BUC Key Priority has been achieved through the collection of evidence alongside Outcomes Based Accountability questionnaires provide by the Good Relations Team.

If demand is greater than the available budget, priority may be given to applicants who deliver on more than one Key Priority.

Collection

- You need to collect evidence relating to the Key Priority from participants at the beginning and the end of the programme through baseline and exit questionnaires provided. Collecting information at these two points allows you to determine the difference the programme has made over the course of delivery. For events an Events Questionnaire is also available to measure the impact of the event.
- Questionnaires will be provided alongside the grant Letter of Offer, report card and claim form.
- The table below gives an overview of the TBUC Key Priorities, and their targeted outcomes.

TBUC Key Priorities

| Key Priority | T:BUC Outcome | Project Level Outcome |
|---|---|---|
| 1: OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE | 1.1: Improved attitudes between young people from different backgrounds. | An increase in the number of participants who are more favourable towards people from the Catholic community. |
| | | An increase in the number of participants who are more favourable towards people from the Protestant Community. |
| | | An increase in the number of participants who are more favourable towards people from an ethnic minority background. |
| | 1.2: Young people engaged in bringing the community together. | An increase in the percentage of young people who regularly socialise or play sport with people from a different religious community. |
| 2: OUR SHARED COMMUNITY | 2.1: Increased use of shared space and services (e.g. leisure centres, shopping centres, education, and housing). | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel comfortable socialising in a shared space or space they would not traditionally visit. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel comfortable attending a sporting event regularly that is associated with another community background. |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | An increase in percentage of people who consider the area they live as welcoming to all communities. |
| | 2.2: Shared Space is accessible to all. | An increase in the percentage who think that leisure centres, parks, libraries and shopping centre in their area are shared and open to both Protestant and Catholics. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who would prefer to live in a mixed religion neighbourhood. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who would prefer to work in a mixed religion workplace. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who would prefer to send their children to a school with children of mixed religion. |
| 3: OUR SAFE COMMUNITY | 3.1: Reduce the prevalence of hate crime and intimidation. | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel safe going to events held in for example, an Orange Hall, a GAA club, a Protestant secondary school, a Catholic secondary school. |
| | | A decrease in the number of participants who felt intimidated by republican/loyalist murals, kerb paintings or flags in the last year. |
| | 3.2: A community where places and spaces are safe for all. | An increase in the percentage of participants who see town centres as safe and welcoming places for people from all walks of life. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who would like to see peace walls come down now or in the near future. |
| 4: OUR CULTURAL EXPRESSION | 4.1: Increased sense of community belonging (widens contribution beyond community background). | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland as a whole. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel they have an influence when it comes to the local decisions made in their neighbourhood. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of participants who feel they have an influence when it comes to any of the local decisions made in Northern Ireland. |
| | 4.2: Cultural diversity is celebrated. | An increase in the percentage who think that the culture and traditions of the Catholic Community add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland. |
| | An increase in the percentage who think that the culture and traditions of the Protestant | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | Community add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland. |
| | | An increase in the percentage who think that the culture and traditions of the Minority Ethnic Community add to the richness and diversity of Northern Ireland. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of Protestants who think that their cultural identity is respected by society. |
| | | An increase in the percentage of Catholics who think that their cultural identity is respected by society. |

Appendix 1

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council are entitled to disclose your details to other government agencies and departments and bodies engaged in distributing funds (subject to the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, known as General Data Protection Regulations GDPR from May 2018).

To process your grant application, applicants are advised that:

- Council use the information you give us on the application form during assessment and for the life of any grant we award you to administer and analyse grants and for our own research.
- Council may give copies of this information to individuals and organisations we consult when assessing applications, when monitoring grants and evaluating the way our funding programmes work and the effect they have. These organisations may include accountants, external evaluators and other organisations or groups involved in delivering the project.
- Council may also share information with other departments, organisations providing match funding and other organisations and individuals with a legitimate interest in applications and grants, or for the prevention or detection of fraud.
- Council might use the data you provide for our own research. We recognise the need to maintain the confidentiality of vulnerable groups and their details will not be made public in any way, except as required by law.