

Leisure Grant Aid Programme 2026-27

CATEGORY: Fitness Suite Gold Card

Information for Applicants

Fitness Suite Gold Card Guidance Notes 2026-27

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1.0 Introduction

Successful applications to this scheme will be entitled to 12 months MORE Membership allowing Fitness Suite, Pool, and Health Suite use at Council Leisure centres within the Borough.

These conditions should be read in conjunction with the Grant Funding Policy.

1.1 Purpose of Grant Programme/Overview of Fund

The Fitness Suite Gold Card Scheme is available to support Elite and aspiring high performers who can demonstrate that they are competing (or have the potential to compete) at the highest level in their sport.

1.2 General Principles

The fundamental principles of this grant guidance document are:

Funding Award is based on evidenced need

- This is a competitive programme and grant awards will be determined based on merit. Applicants must demonstrate how they meet the eligibility criteria for each grant
- All applications must be completed in full, with supporting documentation uploaded in the relevant section. Applications that are not complete, do not provide a detailed project budget, or do not have supporting documentation will not be considered. Applicants will be contacted and asked to submit any missing information
- Individuals must be residents and Sports Clubs must be based within the Borough
- Retrospective applications will not be considered i.e. the application must be submitted before the event, activity or project takes place
- Applications will only be accepted online, via the Grant Management System

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 Grants 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 grants call

1.3 Who can apply?

Individuals must be a resident of the Borough;

Applicants must be over the age of 12 years.

Applications will only be considered from individuals competing at the following levels:

- International (individual or as part of a team) at elite level*.
- National (individual or as part of a team) at elite level*.
- Provincial*
- Veterans/ Masters

*Elite level: Northern Ireland, Ireland, Great Britain, United Kingdom or if the particular sport is administered and organised only on a County/Provincial /Ulster basis (e.g. Rugby and Badminton) then this will also be considered.

Self-entry competitors are not deemed eligible except for those sports which are administered exclusively (at elite level) in this way e.g. Golf.

Normally a maximum of 5 applicants from any one club may only apply each financial year.

Applicants must provide a selection letter for competing at national or international level. Failure to submit this information will deem the application ineligible.

Applicant sports must be recognised by Sport NI, Irish or a UK Governing body. For further information please visit the Sport NI [Webpage](#)

1.4 What can be funded?

12 months MORE Membership allowing fitness suite, pool and health suite use at council Leisure centres within the Borough.

2.0 How to answer the questions

2.1 Information about you

This section of the application form gathers information about you, including contact details and insight into your achievements, which will enable the assessment process to check eligibility.

2.2 Benefits of funding

This section of the application form gathers information about the benefits of receiving this support and why there is a need.

The assessment process will focus on the quality of your achievements, impact, and effectiveness.

3.0 How we assess and score your application

3.1 Eligibility assessment

All applications must be completed in full, with supporting documentation uploaded in the relevant section. Applications that are not complete, do not provide a detailed project budget, or do not have supported documentation will not be considered. Applicants will be contacted and asked to submit any missing information.

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

3.2 Assessment and scoring

All applications will be assessed using the pass/fail method. Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria will be recommended for funding.

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.

3.3.2 If the Grant is successful:

- a. the Applicant must adhere to the rules and procedures of the facility in which they are training
- b. The membership is only to be used by the applicant.
- c. The Applicant must receive an induction and complete the relevant paperwork at each site they wish to use.

3.3.3 Fitness suite gold card applicants may also apply for additional monetary support:

Athletes: through the 'Grants to Athletes' category.

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.

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 awarded to your organisation in the past.

3.5 Marketing and Promotion

The Grant Recipient shall acknowledge the contribution made by the Council in all relevant publicity materials including brochures, leaflets, newspaper articles etc. The Council shall be entitled to publish details of the assistance referred to in this letter at such times and in such manner as is necessary without further agreement from the Grant Recipient. It is important to note that logos should be of a reasonable size and retain their original perspective. 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 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 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 underage of 18 years the parent/guardian will also be notified.

4. Application process

| Call Number | Opens | Closes | Council Approval/notification of outcome |
|---|---------------|----------------|---|
| 1 | 1 April 26 | 31 May 26 | July 26 |
| 2 | 1 June 26 | 31 July 26 | September 26 |
| 3 | 1 August 26 | 31 October 26 | December 26 |
| 4 | 1 November 26 | 31 December 26 | February 27 |
| 5 <i>(Subject to available budget)</i> | 1 January 27 | 28 February 27 | April 27 |

For example, if an Applicant applies anytime during call 2 (1st June – 31st July) all applications will be scored during the month of August and prepared for decision at Committee during the month of September.

Please note that this is a competitive programme and funding calls and awards will be subject to available budget.

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.