

Creating Opportunities (Crowdfunder)



Information and Guidance Note



Contents**Page**

Welcome to Creating Opportunities	3
Who Can Apply / Eligibility	4-5
Programme Objectives	5
What We Will / Will Not Fund	5-6
Funding Conditions	7
Funding Flowchart	8



Welcome To Creating Opportunities

Delivered in partnership with Crowdfunder UK - **Creating Opportunities** is a programme designed to enable **investment** in **new** and **additional projects** to connect communities, enabling more people to take part in sport and physical activity throughout Northern Ireland. A focus of the project is to create opportunities to 'level the playing field', so that accessibility and inclusion is felt and experienced by those who have been traditionally excluded from not only participating in sport but playing an active role in coaching, officiating, and leading as part of a board. The programme offers **up to 50% match-funding support to a maximum of £5,000** from Sport NI through the Crowdfunder platform.

Applicants will be required to set up a **Crowdfunding** campaign page to apply for funding and if the participation project matches the 'Creating Opportunities' outcomes, they can apply for "Extra funding" (through their Crowdfunder dashboard) for Sport NI to match-fund their campaign up to 50% to a maximum of £5,000.

Sport NI wants to ensure that funding is directed to clubs and organisations / associations who most need our support. To be eligible for Sport NI funding, applicants must meet not only the eligibility criteria but also the following:

- ✓ Applicants are required to demonstrate how the participation project they wish to deliver will contribute towards 'Levelling the Playing Field'. How does the project address those who have been traditionally excluded from not only participating in sport but playing an active role within the club. (Applicants must clearly demonstrate this within both their campaign page and also their application to Sport NI)
- ✓ Projects must be new and/or additional and not for delivery of normal day-to-day club activity, for instance is your project going to attract a new target group to the club or is your project focussing on the development of a new initiative or area of development i.e. a volunteer or coach development programme. Applicants must clearly demonstrate this within their campaign and application to Sport NI.
- ✓ Campaigns requesting from £4,000 to the maximum £5,000, must include a bespoke project video which outlines: Who the club is, What the project is about (how it will contribute to 'levelling the playing field'), What the project will deliver, Why you need funding and How you will spend the money raised.
- ✓ Organisations can only have one successful 'Creating Opportunities' application (within the 12-month period I.E. April - March).
- ✓ **All applications/campaigns must be submitted for review by 5pm on Thursday 29th January 2026** (unless the funds are exhausted before this date).
- ✓ **All projects must be completed, and Sport NI funding spent by 31st March 2026.**

Who Can Apply / Eligibility

To be **eligible** to apply you **must** be one of the following organisations:

- A **constituted sports club** which is affiliated to a governing body of sport which is recognised by Sport NI **OR** Sport Ireland.
 - [Sport NI recognised NGBs](#)
 - [Sport Ireland recognised NGBs](#)
- A **community/voluntary sector organisation** that delivers or enables sport and/or physical activity as your **primary** activity.
- A **charitable trust** that delivers or enables sport and/or physical activity as your **primary** activity.
- A **constituted Parent Teacher Association (PTA)** that delivers or enables new/additional extracurricular sport and/or physical activity including outdoor activity residential.

We want to hear from those that will make a difference within their community; that promotes sporting activity with a desire to connect communities, enabling more people to take part in sport and physical activity throughout Northern Ireland. Applications should be designed to deliver participation projects aimed at 'Levelling the Playing Field', which support increased sporting activity and membership as an outcome and must be targeting at least one of Sport NI's target groups: -

- **People with disabilities,**
- **Women & Girls,**
- **Children & young people** – especially those aged between 11-18 years,
- **Older People aged over 65,**
- **Ethnically Diverse Communities,**
- **LGBTQ+ community,**
- **People living in areas of greatest need** (based on NISRA NI Multiple Deprivation Measures – according to club/organisation postcode).
- **People living in rural areas** (based on NISRA NI Multiple Deprivation Measures - according to club/organisation postcode).

Projects should not go live until the application has been assessed by Sport NI, as match-funding is not guaranteed.

Applications are reviewed on a weekly basis and are assessed monthly, with a deadline of Thursday at 5pm each week for reviews. Applications received after this point (Thursday 5pm), will be reviewed the following week.

Programme Objectives

The objectives we want your project to achieve through this investment are:

- ✓ Support **new** and **additional** initiatives to connect communities, enabling more people to take part in sport and physical activity throughout Northern Ireland.
- ✓ Enable people to **work together** to provide **new and additional solutions** to get people active and returning to activity through sport or engaged in its delivery.
- ✓ Engage people known to be **most under-represented** (Sport NI target groups).
- ✓ Support the sporting sector to **build resilience** and plan for the future by embracing new ways of working or engaging new audiences.
- ✓ Assist the sporting sector to **grow club membership** and demonstrate an **ability to manage projects**.

What we will / will Not Fund

As "Creating Opportunities" is all about being innovative and creative in how you deliver your sport or diversify your offer as a club or organisation, we are not being overly prescriptive in what we will fund. We are allowing clubs and organisations/associations the opportunity to be as creative as possible to help deliver the outcomes of the programme.

We can also consider reasonable running costs associated with the delivery of your Creating Opportunities project. Projects must be new and/or an additional activity.

Below is what we will **NOT** invest in:

- Participation Projects not related to 'Levelling the Playing Field'.
- Capital elements not related to your participation project
- Capital elements that cost more than £10K (Projects requesting a Capital element of £10k MUST have no additional delivery costs. I.E. applicants can deliver their participation project in-house and funding would be split with the maximum £5,000 funding coming from Sport NI and £5,000 coming from the Crowd).
- Capital elements that require statutory approvals (such as planning permission).
- Capital elements that require the appointment of design teams.
- Capital elements that fail to level the playing field.
- Activities that replace a statutory function e.g. curriculum time sport delivery (after-school is eligible).
- Existing activities already in place e.g. current training sessions, etc.
- Retrospective costs.
- General organisation running costs (excluding project-specific running costs), office equipment, furniture, maintenance, kits
- Salary costs, loan repayments and endowments.
- Entertainment costs, food and beverages, marketing materials
- Secondary, further or higher education e.g. A Levels, Degrees, etc.
- VAT that can be recovered from HM Revenue and Customs.
- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs.
- Donations/fundraising events or activities.

- Costs incurred before successful Letter of Offer issued.
- Insurance, contingency allowance, affiliation, entry fees or membership fees.
- Accommodation/hotels, team-building activities and travel outside NI
- Strategic planning/development e.g. consultancy fees.
- Access NI registration fees.
- Livestock.
- Closed or Always-On campaigns (on Crowdfunder).
- Campaigns only offering Rewards in the form of membership fees, subscriptions, and prize draws.
- Campaigns not offering a minimum of 2 Community-Based Rewards
- Campaigns that are already 'Live'.
- Projects that do not clearly outline eligible budget spend items in either their campaign page or application form.
- Projects that do not clearly outline eligible timeframe of expenditure and delivery in either their campaign page or application form.

It's important to note that Sport NI will review applications **AND** your crowdfunding campaign page, make sure this is completed before sending through your application. Once you're confident you have a strong campaign page and have been matched to our funding, you can apply. Below is **how** you request a funding pledge from Sport NI.

Note: Campaign pages MUST be completed prior to applying to Sport NI, otherwise your application may be Declined

1. Make sure you're logged in!
2. Click on your project dashboard.
3. Click on the 'Extra Funding' tab on your dashboard.
4. Scroll down to **Sport NI: Creating Opportunities** and apply for funding.

Funding Conditions

Once your application has been approved for funding you **must not** change any elements of your campaign page. **Otherwise, any offer of funding will be rescinded.**

To receive a pledge, you will need to do two things:

- 1. raise at least 25% of your initial target, and**
- 2. raise this from a minimum of 25 qualifying (unique) supporters.**

If either of these funding conditions are not met, the pledge will be withheld until both have been met.

Providing these two funding conditions are met:



- Applicant will be provided with an offer which will be valid for 2 weeks after the date of notification. If the applicant does not launch a crowdfunding campaign within 2 weeks of notification, the offer will be rescinded.
- The applicant must raise the remaining 25% from the crowd to achieve 100% of your funding target and receive Sport NI funds.
- If an applicant does not achieve the funding target within the 6-week period (**4 weeks if applying in January**), Sport NI reserves the right to withdraw its support. If an applicant is within 10% of their target and has reasonable justification for extension, Sport NI may increase the time by a further 2 weeks.
- If the project fails to reach 100% of the target, the Sport NI funding pledge will be cancelled. The project owner will be encouraged to review what went wrong and, if appropriate, to attempt to crowdfund again.

Help and Advice

If you need help or have any questions regarding the programme please contact: [**creatingopportunities@sportni.net**](mailto:creatingopportunities@sportni.net)

Funding Flowchart

