

# Creating Opportunities (in partnership with Crowdfunder)



## Information and Guidance Note 2026-27



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## Welcome To Creating Opportunities

### What is the programme?

Creating Opportunities is made possible thanks to National Lottery funding and is delivered in partnership with Crowdfunder UK. It is designed to enable eligible organisations to launch **new and additional projects** that make sport and physical activity more inclusive and accessible across Northern Ireland.

Crowdfunding is a general funding method where a project is financed through people each contributing a variety of amounts. Crowdfunder UK is an online platform that helps individuals, community groups, charities, and businesses in the UK raise money by collecting small contributions from a variety of people, often in return for rewards or to support a cause.

Our aim is to **level the playing field** by supporting activities that help remove barriers to participating in sport — whether as participants, coaches, officials, or leaders.

Creating Opportunities looks to support projects seeking to engage at least one of the following:

- **People with disabilities**
- **Women & Girls**
- **Children & young people** (Especially aged 11-18 years)
- **Older People aged (65+)**
- **Ethnically Diverse Communities**
- **LGBTQIA+ community**
- **People living in areas of greatest need** (25% most deprived areas based on [NISRA NI Multiple Deprivation Measures](#) – according to club/organisation postcode).
- **People living in rural areas** (based on [NISRA Urban – Rural classification](#)).

### How to apply?

Eligible organisations need a Crowdfunding campaign page to apply for funding. If the planned project matches the Creating Opportunities outcomes, they can apply for “Extra funding” (through their Crowdfunder dashboard).

Apply for the Sport NI funding via the Crowdfunding Platform. Select “Extra Funding” and click on **Sport NI Project Creating Opportunities**.



Complete Sport NI application and click submit.

## Key Dates

Phase 3 applications will close at the end of **January 2027** (unless funds are exhausted before then). **The Crowdfunding campaign must be complete by the end of March 2027.** Organisations can only run one Creating Opportunities campaign during the year and projects must be completed and Sport NI funding spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027.

## Who can apply?

Funding through Creating Opportunities is available for the following types of organisations:

- **Constituted Sports Clubs**  
Affiliated to a governing body recognised by [Sport NI](#) or [Sport Ireland](#).
- **Community or Voluntary Organisations**  
Where sport and/or physical activity is the primary activity for delivery within the project.
- **Charitable Trusts**  
Focused on delivering or enabling sport and physical activity within the project.
- **Constituted Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)**  
Delivering extracurricular sport and physical activity.

## How much funding is available through Creating Opportunities?

Sport NI will provide **up to 65% (75% for organisations located in areas of greatest need or rural areas) match funding up to a maximum of £5,000** through the Crowdfunder platform. The minimum match funding a group can apply for is **£500**.

For examples of Sport NI match funding available and Crowdfunding required, see the tables below

<i>Total Project Costs</i>	<i>Sport NI</i>	<i>Crowd</i>
£10,000	£5,000	£5,000
£8,000	£5,000	£3,000
£6,667	£5,000	£1,667
£4,000	£3,000	£1,000
£2,000	£1,500	£500
£667	£500	£167



**Table 2: Sport NI Funding @65% contribution (£5k max award)**

<i>Total Project Costs</i>	<i>Sport NI</i>	<i>Crowd</i>
£10,000	£5,000	£5,000
£8,000	£5,000	£3,000
£7,692	£5,000	£2,692
£4,615	£3,000	£1,615
£2,308	£1,500	£808
£769	£500	£269

## Eligibility Criteria

The Creating Opportunities programme encourages clubs and organisations to be innovative and creative in delivering sport and physical activity. Creating Opportunities is not overly prescriptive, allowing maximum creativity to achieve the programme outcomes. Sport NI will support projects that are delivering new or additional activities (not routine operations) and those promoting innovation and inclusion in sport and physical activity.

The following elements are key **eligibility criteria** to Creating Opportunities match funding:

- The project must aim to 'level the playing field' by addressing under representation in sport.
- The project must be focused on increasing participation in sport and physical activity and must be new or additional.
- All applications must include at least two rewards on their Crowdfunder campaign page (see FAQs or contact Sport NI for more information on rewards).
- Projects must clearly demonstrate their eligible costs and timeframe for project delivery within the programme timeframe.
- Campaigns requesting between £4,000 and (the maximum of) £5,000 must include a bespoke project video outlining who the organisation is, what the project will deliver, how it will contribute to 'levelling the playing field' and how you will spend the money raised.

## Eligible Costs

Some **examples of eligible project costs** are shown below (this is not an exhaustive list and will be at the discretion of Sport NI):

- Outreach project engaging any of the priority groups within a local community setting.
- New coaching or volunteer development initiatives.
- Adapted or specialist equipment enabling participation for people with disabilities.
- A project designed to include, promote and develop increased levels of female participation within an organisation.
- Innovative projects that connect communities through sport.
- Reasonable, project-specific running costs essential for delivery, such as coaching, venue hire or facilitator costs.

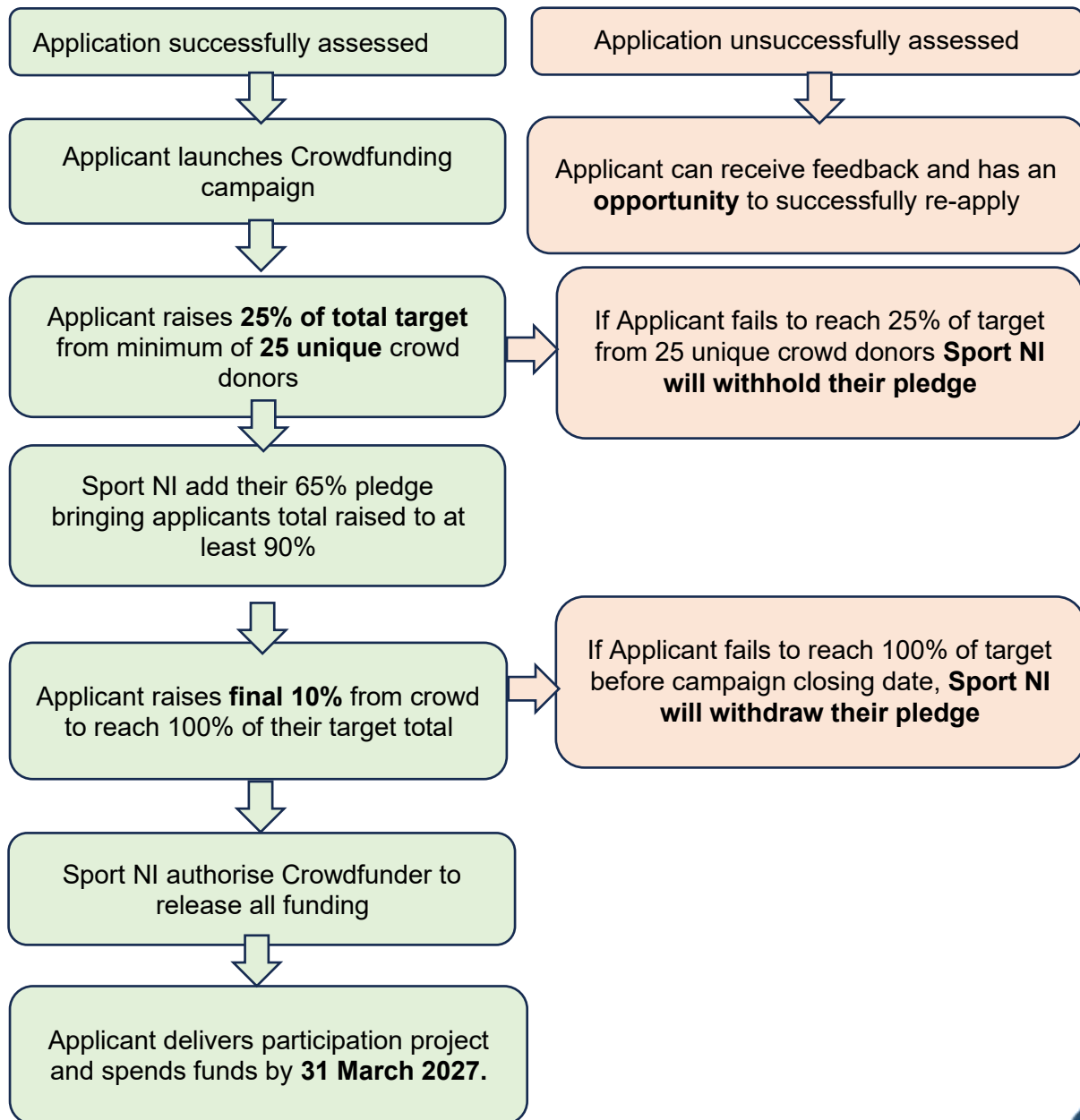
## Funding cannot be used for:

- Routine club activities or existing programmes.
- Capital projects over £10,000, not relating to a specific participation project or requiring statutory approvals.
- Salaries, loan repayments, or general running costs.
- Entertainment, food, or beverages.
- Education courses (e.g., A Levels, degrees).
- VAT recoverable from HMRC.
- Activities promoting religious or political beliefs.
- Retrospective costs or costs incurred before the Letter of Offer
- Insurance, affiliation, entry fees, or membership fees.
- Accommodation or travel outside Northern Ireland.
- Strategic planning or consultancy fees.
- Team or individual kits.
- Any other costs deemed unreasonable by Sport NI

**Important:** We cannot fund costs that are routine, retrospective, unrelated to new participation, or outside the scope of this programme.



## What happens next? – If you are successful / unsuccessful



## Help and Advice

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

If you would like any further details on Creating Opportunities, including useful case studies from Phase 1 and 2 of the programme, visit our webpage:  
<https://www.sportni.net/funding/creating-opportunities/>

### Key contact numbers:

Kyle Robinson – 07779871194

Conleth Donnelly – 07967240549

