



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

Grant Aid Code of Practice

(2020 / 2021)

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Introduction

This document sets out Fermanagh and Omagh District Council's Code of Practice and Guidance for the delivery of grant aid to groups.

This policy has been developed in line with the councils **Corporate Themes and Strategic Actions**. Specific Programme Objectives have been prepared for each grant stream and all applicants should consider how their project / event fit into these objectives. The Specific Programme Objectives are listed in the Guidance notes for each grant aid stream.

All Grant Aid Programmes will be advertised on the Council Website and in local newspapers.

Who can apply for Grant Aid?

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council invites applications from voluntary clubs, societies, community and sporting organisations.

To be eligible for grant aid, groups must clearly demonstrate that their project is delivered within the council area and to its residents. Project need must be identified from within the Community to benefit. The group must also demonstrate that it has an appropriate governance framework and structures in place.

<p>Groups will be required to provide (as part of the application)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 'Governing Document' for example a Constitution or a Governing body registration;• A list of committee members, including details of office bearers;• A copy of annual accounts or a statement of financial position; (most recent set of accounts no more than 2yrs old);• An equal opportunities policy/statement and a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Sheet.	<p>Eligible groups must also</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be non-party political• Be non-profit distributing, or taking• Meet needs and/or provide services within the District Council area• Project need must be identified from within the Community of benefit• Where possible work in partnership with others.• Membership organisations can apply however, must demonstrate that their beneficiaries do not pay an excess of £1,000 per year. (See Appendix 4 additional eligibility criteria)
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How to Apply

- Groups can apply for **one grant of each type** in any grant call by completing the relevant application form. Groups must complete a separate application for each grant stream applied for. If you apply online, you will only have to complete, Eligibility Section and Sections A & C, once. Section B must be completed for each grant aid stream applied for.
- Only applications which are fully completed on the relevant application form with appropriate enclosures attached will be considered. **For guidance on completing your application form please see Appendix 3.**
- Applications will not be considered for events/projects that have already taken place.

- Before submitting an application, groups are recommended to contact the relevant department to discuss the application. Officers will be in attendance at the Information Sessions located throughout the district - dates will be advertised in advance of each grant call. If you are unable to attend an information session, Council Officers are available by appointment to provide information. Please ensure you contact an officer well in advance of the closing date to avoid disappointment.
- It is important to remember your application will be assessed on the information provided. Please answer all questions and include all relevant information in your application. We recommend you use bullet points and headings where possible.

Grant Aid - for Older Peoples Groups

Grant Aid is available for older peoples groups through the South West Age Partnership (SWAP) (with the exception of Good Relations Grant Aid).

Older Peoples Groups must apply directly to the South West Age Partnership (SWAP) for Grant Aid. For further information or to apply for Grant Aid please contact:-

Allison Forbes; T: 028 8225 1824 or I: afortbes@southwestagepartnership.co.uk

What Grants Won't Cover

- Fundraising activities / Charitable donations
- Retrospective applications for grant aid/repayment of debts
- Fireworks
- Where project need is not identified from within the Community of benefit
- Schools, Sole traders, profit-taking organisations, statutory bodies or Education Authorities
- Events/projects which are profit making (No grant will be paid where the income exceeds expenditure).
- Projects which are party political or organised by a political party.
- Activities/Projects that promote a particular religion
- Any illegal activity
- Internal tutors / coaches (tutors/coaches must be external to the organisation. They must not be Members of the organisation / group)
- Individuals involved in the delivery of the project, that is, staff, volunteers or board members of the applicant organisation 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.
- Bank Charges (cannot make up and I&E account)
- Monetary prizes
- Projects / activities which are the responsibility of another agency.
- Miscellaneous costs - all costs must be identified.

Please note, the above list is not exhaustive and you should consult an officer if you have any queries.

Submitting Your Application

- Late Applications will not be considered.
- The form should be checked to ensure all sections are completed and requested information enclosed.
- Application forms can be submitted online, hand delivered, posted or emailed.
- It is recommended that groups retain a copy of the form for their own records and proof of submission.
- Submitting an application, does not guarantee you will receive funding.

What Happens Next

- Receipt of an application will be acknowledged within 7 working days. This will be sent by email where possible. Details of the timeline for the assessment process will be shared. Initial checks will be undertaken to ensure that the application is eligible for support from the Council. **See also Appendix 1 which details the application process.**
- If the application is considered eligible, it will be assessed against the published criteria for each relevant grant aid stream and a recommendation will be made taking account of resources and competing demands.
- All recommendations will be presented to an Elected Members' Grant Aid Panel and subsequently to a Council meeting.
- Please note - if you received a Letter of Offer in Round 1 of the same financial year, your project may be de-prioritised depending on available funding and the number of applications received.
- If successful, a Letter of Offer will be issued containing details of grant offered, specifically what the grant is for, outputs expected, deadlines for claiming the grant and any other requirements.
- No grant payment will be made prior to the return of the signed Letter of Acceptance.
- Grants will only be paid after the event has taken place. Claimants must submit a completed claim pack and associated documentation. Following the vouching process and satisfactory demonstration that outcomes and Letter of Offer conditions have been met, payment will be processed. **Please note cash payments cannot be claimed.** See also Appendix 5 which details Good Financial Practice and Verification Procedures.
- All grants will be monitored to ensure that the agreed conditions have been fulfilled.
- If unsuccessful, a letter will be issued outlining the reasons.

Unsuccessful applications

If your application is unsuccessful, or you are not satisfied with the recommendation, you can contact the Funding and Investment Unit to find out why your application was rejected.

If you are still not satisfied and wish to appeal a decision, the appeals process is as follows:

Appeals must be made in writing within 10 working days of date of written Council decision.

Should you decide to appeal the funding decision, you must identify your reasons for requesting an appeal. An appeal process does not entail a re-assessment of an application containing new or additional information.

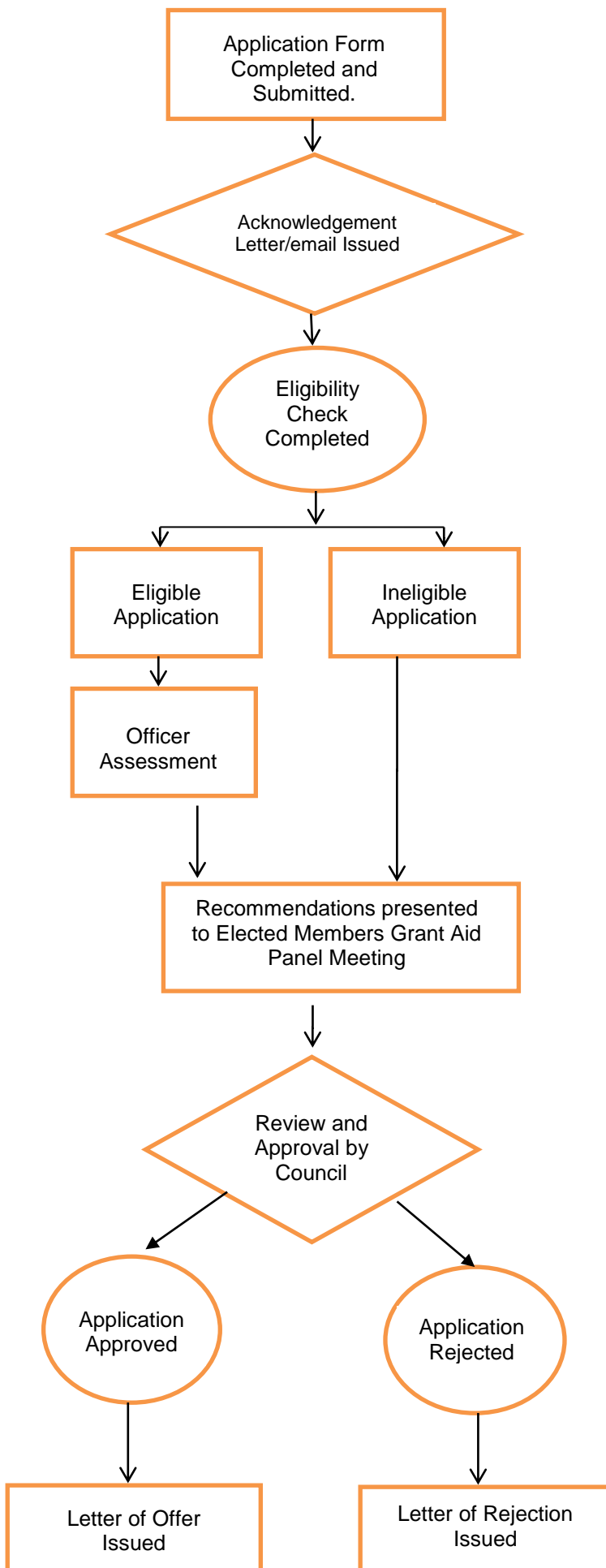
The appeal process provides applicants with the opportunity to seek reconsideration of a funding decision where evidence suggests that a procedural error has occurred during the assessment of an application.

Please note where an application is incomplete or does not meet the eligibility criteria, therefore deemed ineligible; an appeal will not be considered.

An Elected Members' Grant Aid Appeals Panel meeting will be convened to consider your appeal.

The outcome will be presented to a meeting of the Regeneration and Community Committee. The decision taken by the Council is final.

The administration of Council Grant Aid within Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is managed within the Regeneration and Planning Department.



Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Community & Corporate Plans Shared Themes

The Council through its Grant Aid Scheme aims to achieve the objectives outlined within its Corporate and Community Plans.

- **People and Communities**
Aim: To improve the wellbeing of all of our citizens and develop thriving rural and urban communities.
- **Economy, Infrastructure and Skills**
Aim: To improve employment opportunities for all by supporting the development and growth of a more sustainable local economy and better connected area.
- **Environment**
Aim: To promote positive action on climate changes, sustainable management and enhancement of the natural, built and cultural environment

These objectives are numbered 1- 8 in the diagram below.



Filling in the Application Form

The application form has following sections; all must be completed for your application to be eligible.

Section A: About the Group

Section B: About the Project

Section C: Training Needs

Promoting Equality & Good Relations

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Groups may be required to submit additional documentation to support the application. You should submit all the information required by the closing date for your application to be eligible.

Eligibility Check

Council Officers will determine if the application is eligible to proceed to assessment. This entails checking if you have fully completed and signed your application, submitted all necessary documentation and have answered each question to comply with the eligibility criteria.

Pass	Fully completed Application Form, submission of associated documentation and fully compliant with eligibility criteria.
Fail	Incomplete Application and/or failure to provide associated documentation and/or not compliant with eligibility criteria.

The Council will also check that the project aligns to one or more of the Council's Corporate Objectives as set out in Appendix 2.

Section A: About the Group

This section gathers information about the organisation / applicant and all relevant questions must be completed.

Section B: About the Project

This section gathers information about your project. Your application will be scored against the Programme Specific Criteria as set out in the Grant Aid Guidelines.

Section C: Training Needs

This section gathers information about additional support towards training which your group may be interested in.

Promoting Equality & Good Relations.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council must promote Equality & Good Relations. Please complete, sign and date the Policy Statement at **Section C** of the Application Form.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council must promote equal opportunities. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council must also promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. All of the information you provide in this questionnaire will be treated as anonymous. We do not consider it in the assessment of your application.

The Assessment Process

If the application is considered eligible, it will be assessed against the programme specific criteria and a recommendation will be made taking account of resources and competing demands.

Each eligible application will be assessed and forwarded for moderation. A Grant Aid Panel Report will be compiled and recommendations considered by the Elected Member Grant Aid Panel; this Panel will then make recommendations to a meeting of the Council. A list of ineligible projects will also be reported.

The following process will be used to assess applications:

Applications will be checked against the eligibility criteria and if successful will be forwarded for assessment as detailed in the table below:

Eligible Criteria / Checklist	
<p>Fully completed application form to include all associated attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group is constituted • Group has a Committee and has provided a list of the Group's Committee Members' • The project, activity or event has not commenced and is within the relevant financial year. • Group is non-profit distributing or taking • Group and/or beneficiaries are from the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council area • Group has supplied annual accounts or an annual financial position • Group has the relevant children/young people or vulnerable adults policies in place (if applicable) including Access NI checks • Project is not party political or organised by a political party • Project is not the responsibility of another statutory agency • Group will have the relevant insurances in place to cover the project and will indemnify the Council against any proceedings arising from the project • Membership organisations can apply however, must demonstrate that their beneficiaries do not pay an excess of £1,000 per year. • Group is committed to promoting Good Relations, Equal Opportunities and Section 75 legislation. (Signed Policy statement and Equal Opportunities form provided within the application form) <p>The application will be reviewed to ensure it meets the Council's Corporate Objectives / Community Plan - See Appendix 2 (This will be assessed by Council Officers from details provided in your application about the project / activity)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PASS / FAIL* (Application will only progress to the next stage of assessment if it passes the eligibility check)</p>	
Programme Specific Criteria	Weighting
Assessment will be against the programme specific criteria listed under the grant stream you are applying to in Grant Aid Guidance Notes.	100%

Your response will be assessed against each criterion using the following scoring system:

Score	Description
5	An excellent fit with the priority; all objectives/targets addressed to a very high standard
4	A very good fit with the priority; multiple objectives/targets addressed to high standard.
3	A good fit with the priority; some objectives/targets addressed to a good standard
2	An average fit with the priority; adequate in terms of addressing objectives/targets
1	A poor fit with the priority; inadequate objectives/targets addressed
0	No response

Verification Requirements and Good Financial Practice

When a group is successful in an application for grant aid, the support is offered on condition that the group meets the objectives and produces the pattern of expenditure within the approved time limits set out in the Letter of Offer.

Groups are required to maintain an adequate record of all transactions relating to the project.

Where procurement of services is required this should take place in line with Council procurement limits. For further information please contact Funding and Investment Unit, email: grants@fermanaghomagh.com , telephone: 0300 303 1777.

All claims must be submitted on completion of the event or project and by the **Claimed For By Date** outlined in the Letter of Offer.

All financial records must be retained for a period of 7 years, after the end of the financial year in which the Council has made payment of the grant.

Any financial accounts and records and/or equipment/materials purchased shall be made available to the Council and its Internal Audit function, at the Council's discretion. The same right of access will, if required, be made available to Local Government Audit.

The Council at its sole discretion has the right to carry out a verification visit at any time of the project.

Publicity

The grant must be acknowledged by including the text below along with the Council Logo in all publicity associated with the project; for example, Press Releases, Websites, Advertisements, Flyers, Posters, etc. Other funding logo's may also be required depending on the grant stream. (Details of publicity requirements will be provided to all successful applicants with their Letter of Offer). **Failure to include logo's as required may result in a financial penalty.**

'This event is supported by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council'

Making a Claim

The following information will be required in order to process a claim (Please note, depending on level of funding awarded, not all documentation listed below may be requested);

- the claim form;
- a detailed income and expenditure account relating to the funded activity, signed by two office bearers;
- original invoices, bank statements, (An e-banking statement certified by two office bearers may be accepted for this purpose, depending on the value) and other relevant documentation as requested by the Council.

Please note that CASH transactions will be considered as ineligible expenditure.

Please also note that items that are considered ineligible will be discounted from your Income and Expenditure account in order to calculate your deficit award.

Withholding and Clawback of Grant

The Council shall be under no obligation to make any payment of financial assistance to a group and clawback all or part of any grant paid on the project, if at any time the group is in breach of any of its obligations or specific conditions relating to the grant, as specified in the Letter of Offer in the following circumstance;

- There is a material change in the nature, implementation, scale, costs or timing of the funded activity such that it no longer complies with the description set out in the letter of offer and any amendments that may have been agreed subsequently; or
- There is unsatisfactory progress towards completing the funded activity; defined as a failure to meet the aims or objectives; or
- Any of the information provided in the forecasts at application stage or in supporting or subsequent correspondence is found to be substantially incorrect or incomplete; or
- The applicant receives grants from other funders or any other public authority towards costs funded by the Council, unless the grant was explicitly taken into account at application and assessment stage; or
- In the opinion of the Council, the programme has been abandoned or ceased or is not being pursued in a satisfactory manner. For example, in the case that an incorporated body passes a resolution that it should be wound up, is ordered by the High Court to be wound up, has an administrator appointed by order of the Court, has an administrative receiver appointed, or being a company is struck from the register at Companies House.

Clawback of grants is enforceable for up to a period of 7 years.

What is Good Financial Practice?

The Council recognise that good accounting and financial management systems don't need to be complicated; however, they do need to meet the needs of your organisation. The system needs to be appropriate to the size of the group's annual income and needs to be understood by all of the committee or board. In addition, your systems must comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements. Some very basic principles of good financial practice are included in the table below.

Groups should use this table as a form of self assessment to ensure that their practice meets with these minimum requirements.

Minimum Requirement	Yes	No
The group has a proper bank account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be in the exact name of the group • Requires at least two signatures on cheques/withdrawals 		
All income received is recorded whether cash, grants or fundraising income and the record includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date payment received • Lodgement number • Receipt number • Who was it received from • Amount received • Description – grant, donation etc. 		
Receipts are issued to anyone who gives the group money, stating; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name of your organisation • The receipt number • The date • The name of the person supplying the money • A description of what the money was for 		
All expenditure is recorded. This may include; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoice records – paid and unpaid • A cheque journal • A petty cash record • A postage book 		
The treasurer reports to the committee regularly (at least quarterly) on the groups finances and the report includes; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly bank reconciliation record • An outline of planned expenditure • A cash flow forecast (if appropriate) • Any outstanding liabilities 		

If you find that your group is not meeting some of these basic requirements please contact the Community Services Department who can assist your group with the introduction of new procedures.

Compliance with Procedures and Relevant Legislation

Suspected Fraud

Applicants are advised that any materially misleading statements, (whether deliberate or accidental), given at any stage during the application process or award period could render the application invalid and the applicant liable to return any money already paid out on the project in question. All cases of suspected fraud will be referred to respective funder and the PSNI. This includes the falsification of information, inappropriate use of funds and misinformation at the application stage.

Bribery Act Legislation

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to carrying out business fairly, honestly and openly and has a zero tolerance towards bribery.

The Council expects full compliance with the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010 from Councillors, Employees, Agents, Partners, Suppliers and Groups applying for, or in receipt, of grant aid. Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining effective procedures and controls to prevent any occurrence of fraud and corruption. Any suspected cases of fraud or corruption will be fully investigated.

Such investigations may result in disciplinary and/or legal proceedings and changes to policies, systems and procedures. Strict confidentiality will be maintained during any investigation.

Child Protection / Vulnerable Adults

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council require all groups and organisations with access to children and/or vulnerable adults to have adequate policies and procedures in place and be Access NI checked and approved.

Data Protection and Freedom of Information Issues

Under the General Data Protection Regulation, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has a legal duty to protect any information we collect about you. The information which you provide to us in your application and any subsequent supporting documentation such as a claim, will be used for the purposes of assessing the application or processing a claim. Information may also be shared with internal Council Departments such as Community, Health and Leisure and Finance. Only where external funding is provided, will the Council share the information provided in your application form, your claim pack and any other documentation supplied in relation to your application. Please see application for the name of the external funding body which we will share the information with. Please note not all grant streams are externally funded.

Summary details of information relevant to your application will be made available through a report to a Council meeting. Such reports are available for public viewing. Details of your grant request may also be included on the Government Funded Database which is also available for the public to access.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is required by law to protect the public funds it administers. It may share information provided to it with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds, in order to prevent and detect fraud. For further information please click here:-<https://www.fermanaghomagh.com/your-council/policies/national-fraud-initiative-nfi/>.

Equality Considerations

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council will work to ensure that it does not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of gender, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, responsibility for dependents, sexuality, age, economic status, social background, religious or political belief and marital status. Organisations seeking grant aid must be open to a full range of local opinion, be inclusive and non-party political. Government's Policy Appraisal for Fair Treatment (PAFT) guidelines and Targeting Social Needs (TSN) initiative are at the heart of our approach to grant decision making for community activity. When thinking about submitting an application for grant aid, groups should consider whether any aspects of the project could have a negative impact on people that have been excluded from activity in the past. For example, this might include people with disabilities, people from different age groups, and people with different religious, political or ethnic backgrounds.

Groups will also be required to sign the 'Promoting Equality and Good Relations' Statement within the application at Section C.

Insurances, Risk Assessment, Licenses and Permissions

All applicants must ensure that all the necessary Public & Employers liability insurances, risk assessments, license requirements and any PSNI and NI Ambulance Service permissions and notifications are in place prior to an project / activity / event taking place. Failure to comply with the necessary requirements may result in non-payment of grant.

NI Charity Commission

It is compulsory for all charities in Northern Ireland to apply for registration. **This is irrespective of size, annual income or whether the organisation is registered with HMRC for charitable tax purposes. Some organisations that meet the definition may not previously have thought of themselves as charities.** An organisation must apply for registration as a charity in Northern Ireland if:

- it has exclusively charitable purposes;
- it is governed by the law of Northern Ireland; and
- it has control and direction over its governance and resources.

There are no exceptions or exemptions to applying for charity registration. This is important for public trust and confidence and to ensure that all charities are effectively regulated. To register your group with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, please log on to www.charitycommissionni.org.uk.

State Aid

State aid is a European Commission (EC) term which refers to forms of public assistance, given to any organisation engaged in economic activity (an undertaking), on a discretionary basis, which has the potential to distort competition and affect trade between Member States of the European Union.

The State Aid rules are set by the EC; the EC governs Member States compliance with these rules and many aid measures must be notified to the Commission for approval. The De-Minimis Regulation allows small amounts of aid - less than €200,000 over three fiscal years - to be given to an undertaking for a wide range of purposes. The total amount of public support for any activity or project must be recorded.