Terms and Conditions

Active National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People 2026

Incorporating Age & Opportunity active, The National Sport and Physical Activity Programme for Older People

BACKGROUND

Since 2001 Sport Ireland has provided funding to Age & Opportunity for our Active Programme to help increase the participation of older people in recreational sport and physical activity. This Active National Grant Scheme for Sport and Physical Activity for Older People is one element of the extensive Active Programme which has resulted from this funding.

OVERALL AIM

The Active National Grant Scheme aims to assist in the implementation of locally developed, well-planned initiatives designed to increase participation in recreational sport and physical activity by older people. In particular, the scheme is aimed at:

- Supporting the work of Age & Opportunity's Active Programme including the network of PALs (Physical Activity Leaders) and CarePALs, and the development of Go for Life Games and other initiatives,
- Assisting local clubs/organisations/care settings to enhance existing opportunities for their members in recreational sport and physical activity,
- Assisting local clubs/organisations/care settings to start new initiatives geared at involving older people in recreational sport and physical activity,
- Encouraging sports clubs to provide new initiatives within their clubs aimed at getting older people involved in their sport,
- Assisting those working in care settings (both nursing homes and day care settings) to introduce more initiatives to increase physical activity levels of those in their care.

WHO CAN APPLY

Grants are available to all eligible local clubs, groups, care settings and organisations that promote increased participation in recreational sport or physical activity for older people as a main element of their activities.

Umbrella bodies, or their agents, are not eligible for funding under this grant scheme. Please be advised that, in accordance with the communication issued in 2025, Local Sports Partnerships are no longer eligible to apply for grant funding under this scheme from 2026 onwards.

Sports Clubs please note: Funding for sports clubs will only be considered if the application specifically relates to older people (aged 50+ years), and they will be the overall beneficiaries of the grant.

We will be prioritising sports like Pickleball, Go for Life Games and adapted sports like Walking Football and Walking Hockey etc.

Funding for sports equipment will be prioritised for equipment specifically designed or adapted for older people.

KEY CRITERIA

Applications are encouraged from clubs/organisations/care settings that:

- Have the potential to increase levels and frequency of participation in recreational sport and physical activity among older people in their setting or local area,
- Can act as showcases or successful demonstration projects that can be replicated by other clubs/organisations/care settings in the future,
- Have the potential to develop into a sustainable, longer-term programme,
- Are developing initiatives in designated disadvantaged areas,
- Are developing initiatives for minority older populations or older groups with special needs,
- Have one or more active Physical Activity Leaders (PALs),
- Have a CarePAL in their setting,
- Are focused on an outdoor sport or physical activity initiative,

PALs Workshops

Applicants who have had previous successful applications processed should take advantage of PALs workshops. These are a series of workshops teaching older people how to lead their peers in sport and physical activity.

Contact the Active Programme team or your local contacts listed on pages 7-8 of the grant application form for further information.

AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funds permitting, grants will be between **€250** and **€700*** and may be allocated towards the cost of the eligible initiatives outlined below.

**Applications from Community Development Programmes (CDPs) and others that provide wider access to community groups may be allocated funding outside of these limits.*

WHAT WILL BE FUNDED?

1. **Physical Activity Programme -** For example:

a. A five-week programme to introduce older people to an activity such as Go for Life Games, aerobics, aquafit, tai chi etc. Costs of hall hire will only be considered if necessary for the five-week programme and forms part of the overall cost,

b. An initiative by a sports club to involve more older people – the purchase of specialised equipment, facility hire, or a qualified independent instructor might form part of the overall cost,

c. An initiative by a sports club that reaches out to older peoples' groups within the community like Active Retirement, ICA groups or Men's/Women's Sheds etc.

d. A series of yoga or dance classes delivered online to older people,

e. An outdoor activity like a cycling/walking programme,

f. Any initiative that involves more marginalised groups within the community e.g. Migrant or Traveller populations,

g. Any initiative within a care setting or nursing home that encourages residents to be more physically active.

2. **Purchase of Equipment / Resource Materials**
   For example: Go for Life Games equipment, pitch and putt set, badminton racquets.
3. **Participation Events**

For example: Organising regular Go for Life Games or a Sportsfest aimed at introducing older people to a range of recreational sports.

WHAT WILL NOT BE FUNDED?

1. **Non-sporting or non-physical activities** – e.g. day trips
2. **Audio-visual equipment** – e.g. DVD or CD players, televisions
3. **Exercise machines** – e.g. treadmills, rowing machines, stationary bicycles
4. **Clothing or Footwear** – of any kind
5. **Ongoing Commitments** – e.g. membership fees for gyms or sports clubs, cost of hire of facilities or employment of professional instructors on an ongoing basis
6. **Club Insurance / Taxes or Rates**
7. **Foreign Travel / Visits**
8. **Feasibility Studies**
9. **Competitions** (or costs associated with competing)
10. **Capital Costs -** e.g. building materials, lighting, seating, the development or refurbishment of facilities.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Please note that the total funding available for this grant scheme is limited. In the event that the number of applications meeting the grant criteria exceeds the available funding, priority will be given to stronger applications or if necessary, random selection may be utilised.
This assessment will be based on the clarity of objectives, potential impact, sustainability of the initiative, and alignment with the aims of the Active National Grant Scheme.

CONDITIONS

- Applicant clubs/organisations/care settings must have public liability insurance in place covering the activities they wish to promote.
- Applicants must declare if their group/organisation applied for or received any other funding for 2026 for this project or other activities aimed at older adults.
- Applicants must state if the group/club is receiving funding from other sources for the same programme.
- Older adults (those aged 50+) must represent at least 20% of the adult club membership.
- The grant application must provide a clear and detailed description of how the grant will be utilised. The Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme Oversight Committee will not seek additional information from applicants if a detailed description of how the grant will be used is not apparent and the application will automatically be deemed unsuccessful.
- Applicant clubs/organisations/care settings are asked to provide evidence of current banking facilities including account name, and accurate BIC and IBAN numbers. A photocopy of the top of a bank statement showing these details must be submitted with the application. Note since 2022, post office accounts are no longer acceptable.
  If bank account queries are not resolved by end of the year, any unspent funds will be returned to the grant fund
- Applicant local clubs must have a democratically elected executive.
- Applicant clubs/organisations/care settings shall ensure that sufficient information about the club/organisation/care setting is provided in the application form to assess its suitability for funding.
- Applicants should plan for inclusive participation, demonstrating how they will reach older people who are less active, socially isolated, or from diverse backgrounds.

- Age & Opportunity may use the name of the applicant club/organisation/care setting and details of the usage and outcomes of the grant in its own publicity and successful applicants shall co-operate, if requested, in efforts to publicise the grant scheme.
- The decision of the Age & Opportunity Active National Grant Scheme Oversight Committee in all matters relating to grant allocations is final.
- Successful applicants can only use the grant for the purposes specified on their application form.
- Applications for grants from successful applicants under the 2025 Active National Grant Scheme must complete the evaluation section of the application form, if the grant has been spent. If the grant has been unspent in 2025, this will result in disqualification from applying in 2026.
- Successful applicants must acknowledge Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland in any communication, promotion or publicity materials generated in relation to activities funded by this grant.
- Age & Opportunity reserves the right to amend the terms and conditions of the grant scheme as necessary, with updates communicated to applicants.
- Successful applicants may be asked to forward photos and a case study on what the grant was used for.
- Please be advised that, in accordance with the communication issued in 2025, Local Sports Partnerships are no longer eligible to apply for grant funding under this scheme from 2026 onwards.

GROUP LIMITATION

For applicants that are part of a larger organisation with multiple smaller branches, only a maximum of two groups per province will be eligible for funding. This policy ensures equitable distribution of resources across various communities and encourages collaboration among branches.

DISCLAIMER

Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland will not accept liability for damage or injury which might arise in the use of any funds made available. The consequences of any incorrectly supplied or inaccurate information are the responsibility of the club or organisation applying.

CLOSING DATE

Completed Application Forms must be submitted to Age & Opportunity either by post or online through the link provided on the website, **before 12 noon on Friday 27th February 2026.**
Grant allocations will be announced at the end of April 2026.
LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES

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