



Youth Service Small Grants Programme

Application Guidance Notes 2025 – 2026



Small Grants Programme

Supporting the Growth and
Participation of Young People

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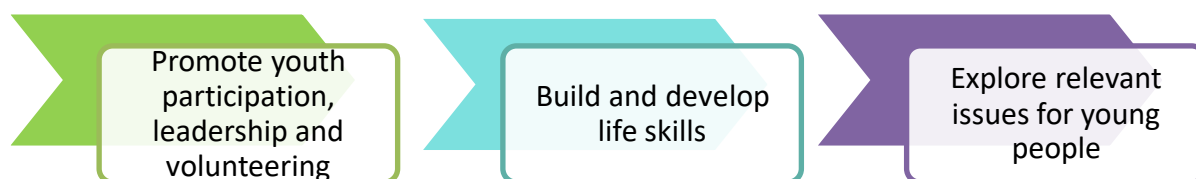
Introduction

The Small Grants Programme is a key action in the Department of Education's policy document, "Priorities for Youth - improving young people's lives through youth work" (2013).

The programme has been set up to allow a panel of young people to administer grants to other young people and aims to strengthen the participation of young people as decision-makers within the local and wider community.

Purpose of Small Grants Programme 2025-2026:

The Small Grants Programme for 2025-2026 is to enable young people to apply for funding to support other young people in their communities to:



*This must include at least one of the following topics: mental health awareness, social media & online safety, environment and sustainability, vaping, drugs & alcohol.

Projects should be applied for and planned by young people... for young people.

Application forms and Guidance Notes

Application forms and guidance notes can be obtained by emailing [Small Grants Team](#), by calling (028) 9047 6701 or via the [EA Small Grants Website](#)

Application packs can be emailed or posted to interested groups.

Who can apply?

The Small Grants Programme is open to groups of young people:

- Aged 4 – 25 years
- Who are part of an Education Authority Youth Service (EAYS) **registered and verified** group

For more information and support on registering with EAYS, please visit [Register with EA](#)

Applications should be made by a group of at least **3** young people.

It is best to include some evidence of how young people have been involved in the planning of the application where possible, such as photographs of group planning.

The contact person should be a member of the youth group applying for the grant. This will be the person we contact regarding the application (any contact will be prearranged with the youth leader). In a small number of cases we acknowledge that this may not be possible and another person, for example, a youth worker or volunteer, is needed to act as the contact person. If this is the case, please explain why in the space provided.

All ideas for the projects must come from the children and young people who will have control over any funding award. We encourage groups to include evidence of planning activities e.g. Photos of group work or planning sheets, along with the application form.

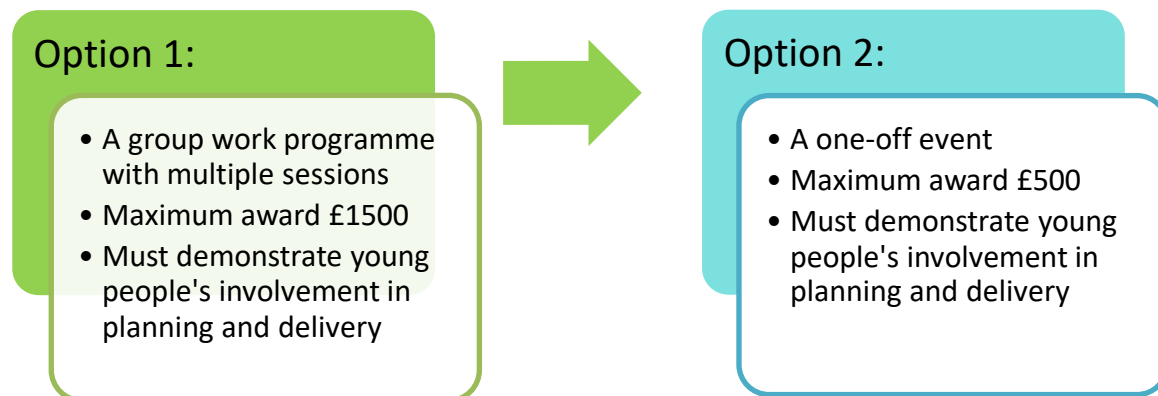
When can groups apply?

Small Grants Programme for 2025-2026 will be launched on 26 January 2026 and the closing date will be 23 February 2026.

Applications received on or before 23 February will be assessed and the outcome notified by 6 March 2026. Projects must be completed by the 31 December 2026.

How much can groups apply for?

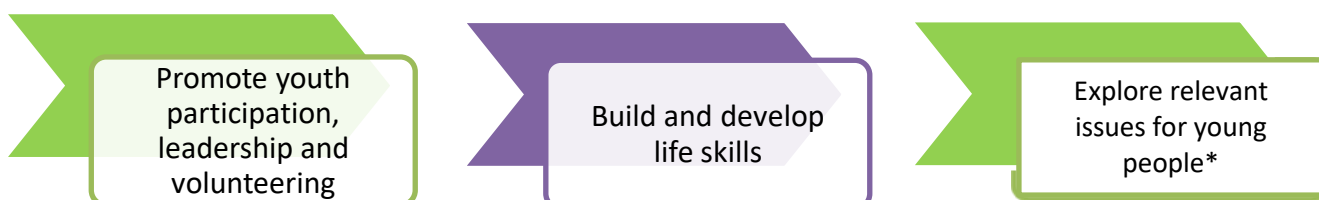
The Youth Service Small Grants Programme has two options:



Groups can only apply for one option of SGP funding, for either amount. So, you may apply for up to the max grant of £1,500 or the smaller one-off event grant for up to £500 if this suits your programme aims.

What can be funded?

Applications must show how the planned programme and expenditure will deliver the purpose and themes of the Small Grants Programme 2025-2026 - **Supporting the Growth and Participation of Young People.**



*This must include at least one of the following topics: mental health awareness, social media & online safety, environment and sustainability, vaping, drugs & alcohol.

Some projects can take place on one day (however all programmes must detail the planning and preparation sessions leading up to event and evaluation after), some may last only a few weeks and others may take a few months - it will depend on what you want to do. All projects must be completed by 31st December 2026.

The funding for the Small Grants Programme is limited, and it is projected that not every application can be funded. Projects should also be planned to deliver value for money.

Organisations can submit more than one application as long as they are working with different groups/projects.

Within the budget section of the application form, please use the categories we have laid out and fill the form in appropriately (the maximum amount of money will be shown within the headings).

Item/Activity	Restrictions to funding
Funding per participant	Maximum of £80 per head
Activities	No funding cap Only activities within Northern Ireland can be funded.
Materials/Resources	Maximum of £400
Equipment	Maximum of £400 <i>Groups are encouraged to rent equipment where possible rather than purchase, unless groups can demonstrate the long term, sustainable benefits of the purchase. *</i>
Specialist facilitators	Maximum of £25 per hour <i>This can be no more than 20% of the total cost of the project unless groups can demonstrate why it is not possible for them to deliver activities without specialists. *</i>
Catering	£4.00 per person for events/activities under 5 hours. £8 per person for event/activities over 5 hours
Transport	Only travel/transport costs within Northern Ireland can be funded. Cross border visits may be considered if relevant to the purpose of the programme.*
Hire of venue	No funding cap

Youth groups must use the bank account registered with EA for funding.

*Approval subject to panel discretion.

What cannot be funded?

Item/Activity	What the funding cannot cover
Sports equipment	Full sports kits etc cannot not be funded. However, items that are needed to deliver team building activities will be considered for funding.
Clothing e.g. Hoodies, t-shirts, full sports kits etc	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
Fees for academic training or qualifications	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
Projects benefiting people living outside Northern Ireland.	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
External Contractors – e.g. for refurbishment or equipment installation	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
Replacement equipment costs; TV's. Laptops, iPads, etc	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
ICT/Audio Visual equipment	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
Redecoration costs	<u>Cannot</u> be funded through SGP
Programmes promoting a single political or religious agenda	Whilst we welcome applications from children and young people with a religious belief or political opinion, we do not fund activities promoting these.

Application Form Guidance

The following notes should be read in conjunction with each point on the application form.

Please note typed applications are preferable to written ones, when possible.

Registration Details

Only groups registered with EA Youth Service are eligible for funding. Newly registered groups must have already received a verification visit.

For more information and support on registering with EAYS, please visit [Register with EA](#)

1. Contact Details

In this section of the form you should provide the details of the contact person for the project.

The contact person should be a member of the group of young people who are applying for the grant. This will be the person we contact regarding the application. (any contact will be prearranged with the youth leader).

Address: provide the address details of the Youth organisation, rather than the applicant's personal address.

2. Youth Organisation Details

Youth Organisations must be an Education Authority Youth Service registered and verified group.

The role of the youth organisation is to support the group awarded a grant, particularly with keeping safe and ensuring that the young people enjoy and benefit from the experience offered to them.

It can also include support with organising activities, resolving difficulties, keeping records, managing the grant & maintaining the group's enthusiasm for the project.

The youth organisation could also help the group to recognise the benefits from the project for themselves, their peer group, family, youth group, school, local community or wider society.

The youth organisation will act as the host for the grant awarded to the group of young people. To be sure that children and young people have access to and can control any grant that may be offered for their project, the group should agree with the youth organisation how this will happen.

3. Project Details

- 3a.** You must tick whether you are applying for Option 1 – Group programme (Max award of £1,500) or Option 2 – One-off event (Max award of £500)
- 3b.** You must give the Project name
- 3c.** You must confirm the number of children/young people making the application
- Please note a minimum of 3 young people must make the application.
- 3d.** You must provide the number of young people against each age range who are directly involved in making the application.
- 3e.** You must confirm how many young people will be taking part in the overall project?
- 3f.** You must provide the number of young people against each age range who are taking part in the overall project
- 3g.** You must detail the intended project start and end date.
All projects should end by 31st December 2026.

4. Question 1: Project Impact

Describe the benefits of your project, using the below questions as a guide.

- 4a.** You must tell us why you believe the project is needed.
- 4b.** You must describe how you expect the project will address local issues.
- 4c.** Describe the benefits of your project, using the below questions as a guide
What difference do you expect the project to make, e.g.,
- Will it increase partnership working and diversity?
 - How does your project promote diversity? – Are you working with diverse young people? Do your activities help diverse young people to feel more included?
 - How does your project promote working with others? – Are you working with any other organisations or partners in your area? Does your project help young people to make connections outside their own centre?
- 4d.** Additional scoring will be given to groups that demonstrate how the project will increase diversity and partnership working.

5. Question 2: Project Outline

This is where you outline in more detail how you will accomplish your goals and giving a breakdown of dates for each area achieved to be delivered.

6. Question 3: Project Rationale

6a. Describe your project in detail, using the below questions as a guide.

- What is the overall aim of your project?
- How does the project fit in with the themes and purpose of Small Grants Programme?
- Why do you think your project is needed?

6b. Additional scoring is given to projects that demonstrate longevity of the project to continue after the project or clearly articulates the potential of having a lasting impact on the community.

7. Question 4: Value for Money

This is where you state how your project represents good value for money.

This could include the following, if relevant:

- Effective use of preparation/administration time
- Ratio of staff and volunteers to young people
- Rationale for employment of specialist staff
- In kind contributions, for e.g. venue, volunteers, resources
- Funding from other sources

8. Question 5: Project Costs

8a. When planning your project, you should be sure to cost ALL the parts of it as accurately as possible. Think about everything you have said in your project description and consider if any of it will involve a cost, no matter how small. We have given some examples below.

Within the budget section in the application form, please breakdown the costs and use the category headings that we have given you. For example: Instead of writing 'materials - £400', please list the materials you are planning on buying for this project. This will provide the panel with more information and hopefully allow them to approve your application.

If you are planning to go on visits or outings you should: -

- Find out if there are any entry fees to be paid (check if there is a group rate or discount)
- Work out how much, if anything, you will ask members of your group to pay toward the activity or visit
- Make sure that the venue you are going to has all the necessary services and facilities to meet the needs of your group
- Make sure all arrangements meet organisational and health and safety guidelines

If you will need transport you should: -

- Work out how often you will need it and how many people will be involved in each journey
- Decide on the various destinations/venues which might be used
- Decide if everyone will be picked up at the one point
- Then contact a hire company or organisation, and ask them to price the journeys for you

If you are hiring a venue or premises to hold meetings etc. you should: -

- Check the cost per meeting (some places charge by the hour or per session);
- Work out how many times you might need the venue for meetings, etc
- Check if deposits are required or if any other costs are involved e.g. for hire of equipment

If you are looking for specialist tutors to help you deliver part of your project, you should work out how often you will need them and make sure that the price they are quoting includes: -

- Either a price per hour or per session (find out how long a session is)
- Their travel to and from your meeting place (ask if any other costs apply)
- Any materials, e.g. pens, paper, markers, folders, etc. you might need

Please include the price per hour/session, in the budget section of the application form.

- 8b.** If you require more money than we can award, it is important that this additional money is secured before the project starts. If not, our award panel may consider this a high risk to the potential success of your project, especially if it is a significant amount - it may cause a delay, or no grant being offered.

9. Declaration

The contact person and a representative from the youth organisation should sign the form to confirm all supplied information is accurate and correct.

Group visits

The young people on the Small Grants panel would like to visit projects between June - December 2026 to see the funding in action and showcase your project's achievements. If you would like a visit from the panel, please email [Small Grants Team](#).

Help and Support

There is an application support video with guidance on the new scheme and how to apply on the [EA Small Grants Website](#)

If you want to know more about the Youth Service Small Grants Programme, need help to develop a project idea or support to make an application, then contact us on:

- **phone:** (028) 9047 6701
- **email:** [Small Grants Team](#)
- **post:** Youth Service Small Grants Programme, Education Authority, Grahamsbridge Road, Dundonald, Belfast, BT16 2HS

Join the Small Grants Panel

We are always looking for new panel members to assist with designing the funding scheme and assessing applications. Panel members should be between 15-20 years old and living in Northern Ireland. Becoming a panel member will not prevent you from applying for Small Grants funding, however panel members are not involved in assessing applications from their own organisations.

To express interest in joining the Small Grants Panel, please complete the form below:

[SGP Panel Expression of Interest](#)



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