



Community Sports Grants Programme Application Guidance Notes 2026

Closing date: Friday 2 October 2026

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Quick Guide for Applicants

Who Can Apply:

- Community groups
- Sports clubs
- Faith groups
- Charities
- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Other not-for-profit organisations that benefit Sandwell residents

Funding Available

- Standard grant - £500 - £5,000
- Enhanced grants – over £5,000 up to £10,000 for collaborative projects (enhanced applications will require additional supporting information)

What Can Be Funded: Projects that:

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity
- Support healthier lifestyles
- Develop volunteers and coaches
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Improve community cohesion
- Create opportunities within local communities.

Projects Must

- Benefit Sandwell residents
- Be delivered in Sandwell
- Support sport or physical activity
- Meet programme priorities

Essential Documents:

- Constitution
- Accounts / Income and Expenditure
- Liability Insurance
- Risk Assessment
- Business Plan (applications over £5,000 only)
- Sustainability Plan (applications over £5,000 only)

Key Dates:

- Application Deadline - Friday 2 October 2026
- Project delivery - Within 12 months of award.

Need Help: Email: admin_vsqt@sandwell.gov.uk – also refer to FAQ's section

1. Introduction

These guidance notes explain the purpose of the programme, eligibility requirements, funding priorities, application process and the information required to support an application. We strongly recommend that you read this document in full before completing your application.

We welcome applications from grassroots community organisations, sports clubs, voluntary groups, faith organisations and other not-for-profit organisations that have a strong understanding of the communities they serve and are committed to improving opportunities for residents through sport and physical activity.

The guidance has been designed to help organisations understand:

- Whether they are eligible to apply.
- What types of projects can be supported.
- What information is required as part of the application process.
- How applications will be assessed.
- The responsibilities of successful grant recipients.

Before submitting an application, please ensure that:

- Your organisation meets the eligibility requirements set out in these guidance notes.
- The proposed project aligns with the aims of the Grant Programme.
- All sections of the application form have been completed.
- All required supporting documents have been provided.

Incomplete applications or applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria may not be considered for funding.

All declarations and authorisations submitted as part of the application must be completed by individuals aged 18 years or over who are authorised to act on behalf of the organisation.

2. Programme Overview

Sport and physical activity play an important role in improving health, wellbeing, confidence and community connections. However, some residents may face barriers to accessing traditional leisure centres or organised sports activities and may benefit from opportunities delivered within trusted community settings. Community sports clubs, voluntary organisations and grassroots groups are often well placed to engage local residents, create inclusive environments and encourage long-term participation in sport and physical activity.

The programme is designed to support projects that use sport and physical activity as a tool to improve:

- Health and wellbeing
- Inclusion and accessibility
- Community cohesion
- Skills and volunteering opportunities
- Long-term participation in sport and physical activity

2.1 Why This Programme Matters

Sport England's Active Lives data shows that activity levels in Sandwell remain below national averages and that residents continue to experience significant health inequalities. The programme aims to support local organisations to use sport and physical activity to improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, strengthen communities and encourage more residents to lead active lives.

2.2 Programme Aims and Objectives

Aims - To encourage Sandwell's residents to actively engage in sporting activities, primarily within community settings to tackle health inequalities and improve wellbeing whilst also improving community cohesion.

Objectives - Support local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to:

- Create new opportunities for Sandwell residents to take part in sport within community settings.
- Support people to transition from healthy lifestyle activities into regular sporting participation.
- Increase the number of volunteers involved in delivering sport and physical activity opportunities.
- Create opportunities for volunteers to gain coaching qualifications and develop new skills.

2.3 Funding available

Funding type	Award available	Intended purpose
Standard application	£500 to £5,000	Small-scale and grassroots community sports projects
Enhanced application	over £5,000 and up to £10,000	Innovative or collaborative projects demonstrating exceptional community benefit and impact community sports projects

Enhanced funding is not automatic. Applicants requesting more than £5,000 must provide the additional supporting information set out in Section 10.

2.4 Who and what will be prioritised

Priority will be given to grassroots and voluntary and community sector organisations that have a strong understanding of the communities they serve, particularly those working with under-represented, disadvantaged or emerging communities.

Applications should demonstrate clear community benefit, including one or more of the following:

- Increasing participation in sport and physical activity.
- Removing barriers to participation.
- Developing local volunteers and community leaders.
- Creating opportunities for coach development.
- Strengthening community connections and cohesion.
- Supporting healthier and more active lifestyles.

2.5 Community-led sport

The programme is committed to supporting community-led approaches to sport and physical activity.

Projects should be developed with local communities and demonstrate how residents, participants, volunteers or community organisations have helped shape, influence or support the proposed activities. Applications should show how local knowledge, experience and community strengths have informed the project design.

We are particularly interested in projects that:

- Build upon existing community strengths and local assets.
- Encourage local participation and volunteering.
- Support people who face barriers to accessing sport and physical activity.
- Provide inclusive opportunities for under-represented groups.
- Create lasting benefits for local communities beyond the funding period.

3. Programme Outputs and Outcomes

Funded projects must contribute to one or more of the programme outputs and outcomes below.

3.1 Outputs

Outputs are the activities, opportunities and resources delivered through the project.

Projects may deliver one or more of the following:

- New opportunities for residents to participate in sport and physical activity within community settings.
- Sports and physical activity sessions delivered within local communities.

- Opportunities for residents to progress from healthy lifestyle activities into regular sporting participation.
- New volunteers recruited and engaged in community sports activities, including referees, officials and activity leaders.
- Volunteer training and development opportunities.
- Coaching qualifications and workforce development opportunities for volunteers.
- Partnership projects that bring organisations together to increase sporting participation and improve community outcomes.
- New sporting activities, programmes and opportunities delivered by voluntary and community organisations that would not otherwise take place without grant funding.

3.2 Example output measures

Examples of Output Measures

Applicants may be asked to report on:

- Number of participants engaged.
- Number of sessions delivered.
- Number of volunteers recruited.
- Number of volunteer hours contributed.
- Number of coaching qualifications gained.
- Number of community venues or facilities utilised.
- Number of partnership organisations involved.
- Number of promotional and engagement activities delivered.

3.3 Outcomes

Outcomes are the positive changes or benefits resulting from project delivery.

Projects should contribute towards one or more of the following seven outcomes:

i) Increased Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

- More residents regularly participating in sport and physical activity.
- Increased frequency of participation amongst existing participants.
- Improved confidence to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Increased progression from healthy lifestyle activities into regular sporting participation.
- Increased levels of sport and physical activity within local communities.

ii) Improved Health and Wellbeing

- Improved physical health and wellbeing.
- Improved mental health and wellbeing.
- Reduced social isolation through participation in community sport and physical activity.

- Improved confidence, motivation and overall quality of life.
- Increased opportunities for residents to lead healthier and more active lifestyles.

iii) Reducing Health Inequalities

- Increased participation in sport and physical activity amongst communities experiencing poorer health outcomes.
- Improved access to physical activity opportunities for residents facing social, economic or health-related barriers.
- Improved opportunities for under-represented communities to become more active.
- Contribution towards reducing health inequalities across Sandwell.

iv) Stronger Communities

- Improved community cohesion through shared participation in sport and physical activity.
- Increased community engagement, connection and belonging.
- Greater use of community spaces, neighbourhood assets and local facilities.
- Increased positive community activity within local neighbourhoods and community spaces.
- Increased community safety through positive participation, engagement and volunteering opportunities.
- Stronger relationships between residents, community organisations and local sports groups.
- Increased use of local parks, green spaces, sports facilities, PlayZones, cycle trails and community venues for sport and physical activity.

v) Increased Volunteering and Skills Development

- Increased levels of volunteering in community sport.
- Increased levels of volunteering in sporting activities such as event helpers, marshals, sports officials, referees and activity leaders.
- Improved skills, confidence and experience among volunteers.
- Increased opportunities for local people to gain new skills, qualifications and experience.
- Increased numbers of qualified community sports coaches active in Sandwell and coaching at community level.

vi) Reduced Barriers to Participation

- Improved access to sport and physical activity opportunities.
- Increased participation from under-represented communities.
- Reduced barriers associated with cost, confidence, accessibility or traditional leisure settings.

- Increased confidence to access wider sporting opportunities, including community sports clubs and formal leisure facilities where appropriate.
- Increased awareness of local sport and physical activity opportunities available within Sandwell.
- Reduced barriers to accessing traditional leisure centres and increased participation in community and Council-owned sports and leisure facilities where appropriate.

vii) Community Capacity and Sustainability

Projects should seek to strengthen the long-term capacity and resilience of community sports organisations through:

- Volunteer development.
- Coach development.
- Partnership working.
- Increased local leadership.
- Sustainable community networks.
- Improved organisational capacity and resilience.
- Increased ability of community organisations to continue delivering sport and physical activity opportunities beyond the funding period.
- Increased capacity of voluntary and community organisations to deliver new sporting activities and opportunities that may not otherwise take place.

3.4 Partnership projects

Where a project involves delivery partners, the application must explain:

- The role and responsibilities of each organisation.
- The contribution each partner will make.
- How the partnership will be managed.
- How partnership working will improve outcomes for Sandwell residents.

Priority may be given to projects that show how skills, assets and opportunities will continue beyond the grant period.

4. Grant Programme Summary

The Community Sports Grants Programme provides funding to voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver projects that use sport and physical activity to improve health, wellbeing, inclusion and community cohesion for Sandwell residents.

4.1 Funding available

Funding is available through Standard and Enhanced grant awards. Full details are provided in Section 2.3.

4.2 Purpose of the programme

The programme supports projects that use sport and physical activity as a tool to:

- Improve health and wellbeing.
- Increase participation in sport and physical activity.
- Strengthen community cohesion and inclusion.
- Develop volunteering opportunities.
- Build community sports capacity and skills.

4.3 Project location

All funded activities must be delivered within Sandwell and primarily benefit Sandwell residents.

4.4 Delivery period

Projects must normally commence within a reasonable period following approval and be fully delivered within 12 months of the grant award unless otherwise agreed by the Council.

4.5 Application deadline

Completed applications and all supporting documentation must be submitted by:
Friday 2 October 2026.

Important Information

- Applicants can only have one live Community Sports Grant in delivery at any one time. Subject to the availability of funding, consideration may be given to applications for small one-off items, equipment purchases or similar requests where these are clearly aligned to the aims of the programme and do not duplicate existing grant-funded activity.
- Applications must be complete and accompanied by all required supporting documentation.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Completion of an application does not guarantee funding. All applications will be assessed against programme priorities and available budget.

5. Programme Priorities

Applications should demonstrate how they contribute to one or more of the following priorities. These priorities will help the Council assess how projects contribute to the overall aims of the programme.

5.1 Community participation

Projects should increase opportunities for residents to participate in sport and physical activity within community settings.

This may include:

- Creating new opportunities to take part in sport.
- Increasing participation levels within local communities.
- Encouraging regular involvement in physical activity.
- Supporting people to progress from healthy lifestyle activities into regular sporting participation.

5.2 Community cohesion and community safety

Projects should contribute towards stronger, safer and more connected communities through sport and physical activity.

This may include:

- Bringing people together through shared activities.
- Reducing social isolation.
- Encouraging positive community engagement.
- Increasing the use of community spaces and facilities.

5.3 Volunteering and skills development

Projects should support the development of sport / physical activity volunteers and community capacity.

This may include:

- Recruiting new volunteers.
- Developing volunteer skills and confidence.
- Increasing opportunities for volunteering in community sport.
- Supporting volunteers to become event helpers, marshals, sports officials or referees.

5.4 Coaching and workforce development

Projects should contribute towards increasing the number of qualified coaches and sports leaders active within Sandwell communities.

This may include:

- Coach education and qualifications.
- Development of community sports leaders.
- Mentoring and progression opportunities.
- Building a sustainable local coaching workforce.

5.5 Additional priority considerations

The Council will particularly welcome applications that demonstrate where applicable:

- Strong community involvement and co-production.
- Local investment and community-led delivery.
- Collaborative working between organisations.
- Development opportunities for volunteers and coaches.
- Sustainable approaches to participation and community engagement.
- Clear progression routes from healthy lifestyle activities into regular sporting participation.
- Long-term benefits for residents and communities.

6. Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility

The programme aims to ensure that sport and physical activity opportunities are accessible, inclusive and welcoming to all members of the community.

6.1 Reducing barriers to participation

Applicants should demonstrate how their project will identify and reduce barriers that may prevent people from taking part in sport and physical activity.

Projects should be open and accessible to all sections of the community and should consider how to engage groups that may be under-represented in sport and physical activity.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Disabled people.
- Women and girls.
- Ethnic minority communities.
- Older people.
- Low-income households.
- People experiencing social isolation.
- Communities with historically lower participation rates in sport and physical activity.

6.2 Accessible and inclusive delivery

Funded activities should be designed, wherever reasonably practicable, to be accessible and inclusive.

Applicants should consider:

- Venue accessibility.
- Communication and information needs.
- Cultural and faith considerations.
- Affordability.
- Timing of activities.
- Transport and travel barriers.
- Appropriate support for participants with additional needs.

Applications that clearly demonstrate how they will create inclusive opportunities and remove barriers to participation may be viewed more favourably during assessment.

7. Environmental Sustainability

The Council encourages organisations to consider environmentally sustainable approaches when designing and delivering funded activities.

Where appropriate, applicants should consider:

- Reducing waste and unnecessary resource use.
- Encouraging active and sustainable travel.
- Making efficient use of community facilities and existing assets.
- Reusing equipment and materials where appropriate.
- Minimising the environmental impact of activities and events.

8. Eligibility Requirements

8.1 Who can apply

Your organisation is eligible to apply if it meets the criteria set out in the council's definition of the Voluntary and Community Sector. See definition [here](#)

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Sandwell is made up of collections of individuals who come together to work for the public good. It includes a very diverse range of not-for-profit organisations. To be eligible for this grant you will need to be one of the following types of organisations:

- Voluntary organisations
- Community groups
- Tenants and residents' groups
- Faith organisations and groups
- Housing Associations
- Most co-operatives and social enterprises (provided all profits are retained for the benefit of the members or community served)
- Most sports clubs and organisations
- Grant making trusts

Your organisation must have one or more of the following structures/forms:

- Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee
- Community Interest Companies limited by share (schedule 2 including an asset lock of 100%)
- Not for profit trade associations
- Charitable trusts
- Companies limited by guarantee
- Constituted groups (groups with a governing document which are not incorporated as companies)

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Community Benefit Society with charitable status

Your organisation must:

- Be a voluntary, community, faith or social enterprise organisations operating on a non-profit basis.
- Have a constitution and bank account in the organisation's name
- Be based in Sandwell or deliver activities that benefit Sandwell residents

Applications will be rejected if these criteria are not met.

8.2 Responsibility for the grant

An organisation cannot apply on behalf of another organisation.

The organisation applying for the grant must be the one that will receive and be responsible for the funding.

For partnership projects, the lead applicant must receive and account for the funding and remain responsible for complying with the grant agreement.

9. Developing A Strong Application

The programme supports both small-scale activities and more developed, innovative or collaborative projects. Expectations will be proportionate to the amount requested and the scale of delivery.

9.1 What We Would Like to See in Your Application

A strong application will clearly explain:

- Why your project is needed.
- How local people and communities will benefit.
- How the project will help more people take part in sport or physical activity.
- How the project supports one or more of the programme priorities.
- How the project contributes to at least one of the Council's strategic themes.
- What activities you will deliver and what you hope to achieve.
- How the project will benefit Sandwell residents.
- That your project can be delivered within the proposed timescale.
- How the funding will be spent and why the costs are reasonable.
- Why your organisation is well placed to deliver the project.
- How local people have helped shape or influence the project, where appropriate.
- How you will make the project accessible and encourage participation from those who may face barriers to taking part.
- How you will know if the project has been successful.
- How the project will create a lasting benefit for participants, your organisation or the wider community, where possible.

- How any partners will support the delivery of the project, where applicable.
- Any additional funding, resources or volunteer support that will help the project succeed, where available.

9.2 Evidence of need

We will consider whether there is a clear need for the proposed project and whether applicants can demonstrate an understanding of the community they serve.

A strong application should clearly explain:

- What need or issue the project is addressing.
- Why the activity is needed in the local area.
- Who will benefit from the project.
- How local people have influenced the project design.

Evidence can be formal or informal and does not need to be complicated.

Examples of Evidence of Need

- Membership waiting list for junior football sessions.
- Increased demand for women's or girls' activities.
- Feedback from parents requesting additional sessions.
- Residents reporting a lack of affordable activities.
- Requests from older residents for low-impact physical activities.
- Community consultation at local events or meetings.
- Feedback from existing service users.
- Survey results.
- Referrals from community organisations, schools or health partners.

Good applications use evidence to demonstrate that the project has been developed in response to a genuine community need.

Evidence expected for Applications under £5,000

For smaller community projects, we recognise that evidence may be informal and based on local knowledge and experience.

We will consider:

- Whether there is a clearly identified need for the project.
- Evidence of local demand or interest in the proposed activity.
- Feedback from participants, members, volunteers, residents or local partners.
- The organisation's understanding of the community it serves.
- How the project responds to local issues, gaps in provision or barriers to participation.

Examples of acceptable evidence may include:

- Requests from existing members or participants.
- Waiting lists.
- Feedback from parents, residents or volunteers.
- Local knowledge and experience.
- Information gathered through conversations, meetings or community events.
- Learning from previous projects or activities.

Evidence expected for Applications over £5,000

For larger or collaborative projects, we would expect a stronger level of evidence to demonstrate need and demand.

In addition to the considerations above, we may also assess:

- Community consultation or engagement activities undertaken.
- The quality and relevance of supporting evidence provided.
- How local residents, participants or stakeholders have influenced project development.
- Evidence of wider demand, unmet need or gaps in provision.
- Partnership involvement and supporting evidence from partner organisations.

Note: We do not expect small community organisations to undertake formal surveys or extensive consultation exercises. What is most important is that applicants can explain:

- Why the project is needed.
- Who will benefit.
- How they know there is demand for the activity.
- How the project responds to the needs of the local community.

Examples of Evidence You Can Use

For many small community organisations, evidence does not need to be complicated.

Examples may include:

- Waiting lists.
- Feedback from participants.
- Requests from parents or residents.
- Attendance records.
- Feedback from volunteers.
- Surveys or questionnaires.
- Community meetings.
- Learning from previous projects.
- Partner referrals.
- Local knowledge and experience.

Examples of How You Can Measure Success

Examples may include:

- Attendance registers.
- Sign-in sheets.
- Participant feedback forms.
- Volunteer feedback.
- Short surveys.
- Case studies.
- Photographs (with appropriate consent).
- Coaching qualifications gained.
- Activity completion records.

9.3 Community involvement

Where possible, develop the project with local people.

We want to see how residents, participants, volunteers, committee members or partner organisations have influenced the project. This will demonstrate meaningful community involvement as it will show the project is responding to local needs and priorities

Examples

- Existing club members helped identify the need for additional coaching sessions.
- Young people helped design activities.
- Residents attended consultation meetings.
- Volunteers shaped the delivery timetable.
- Partner organisations helped identify gaps in provision.

9.4 Delivery readiness

Applicants should demonstrate that delivery can begin within a reasonable period after approval.

Evidence of readiness may include:

- Suitable venues or facilities have been identified.
- Appropriate coaches, staff and/or volunteers are available.
- Delivery partnerships are in place where required.
- Activities have been planned and scheduled.
- Necessary permissions and insurance arrangements are in place.
- Appropriate risk assessments have been completed.
- Safeguarding arrangements are in place where required.

Applicants must not incur or commit expenditure before receiving formal approval and a grant agreement.

9.5 Delivery capacity and capability

Applicants should explain why the organisation is capable of delivering the project.

Relevant evidence can include:

- Previous delivery of sports or community activities.
- Successful completion of grant-funded projects.
- Experienced coaches, volunteers, staff.
- Existing partnerships and community networks.
- Positive participant feedback.
- Relevant qualifications and safeguarding arrangements.

New organisations should describe the relevant experience of their coaches, staff and/or volunteers.

9.6 Value for money

Applicants should demonstrate that costs are reasonable, realistic and proportionate to the proposed activities.

We will consider:

- Whether costs are necessary for delivery.
- Whether costs represent good value.
- Whether expenditure is clearly explained.
- Any in-kind contributions being provided.

Examples

Strong Example

- £1,500 coaching costs to deliver 30 sessions to 60 participants.
- £300 volunteer training costs.
- £200 venue hire.

Weaker Example

- Large equipment purchases with limited explanation.
- High management costs with little activity delivery.
- Unexplained lump sums.
- Costs that are not clearly linked to the outputs or outcomes.

Where possible, applicants should use recent quotations or price estimates to support their budget. Additional requirements for purchases exceeding £500 are explained in Section 14.

9.7 Measuring success

Applicants should explain how they will demonstrate that the project has achieved its intended outcomes.

Monitoring arrangements should be proportionate to the size of the project. We do not expect small grassroots groups to use complex monitoring systems.

Examples of Output Measures

Outputs are the activities delivered and numbers achieved.

Examples include:

- Number of participants attending.
- Number of sessions delivered.
- Number of volunteers recruited.
- Number of volunteer hours contributed.
- Number of coaching qualifications achieved.
- Number of community events delivered.

Examples of Outcome Measures

Outcomes are the changes or benefits experienced by participants.

Examples include:

- Increased confidence to participate in sport.
- Improved physical activity levels.
- Increased social connections.
- New volunteering opportunities.
- Improved skills and confidence among volunteers.
- Progression into regular sporting activity.

Simple Ways for Grassroots Organisations to Measure Success

The following approaches are usually sufficient:

- Attendance registers.
- Sign-in sheets.
- Short participant surveys.
- Feedback forms.
- Volunteer testimonials.
- Participant case studies.
- Photographs (with appropriate consent).
- Coach observations.
- Before-and-after questionnaires.

For example:

"At the start and end of the project we will ask participants how often they take part in physical activity and whether their confidence has increased. We will record attendance levels throughout the programme and collect feedback from participants."

This type of simple monitoring can provide strong evidence of project impact.

9.8 Sustainability and long-term impact

Applicants should explain how the project's benefits may continue after the grant ends.

This may include:

- Volunteers continuing to deliver sessions.
- Coaches retaining qualifications and supporting future activities.
- Equipment remaining available for community use.
- Participants progressing to ongoing activities.
- New partnerships strengthening local provision.
- Identified future funding or income-generation opportunities.
- Increased organisational capacity and resilience.

Not every project must continue in exactly the same form. The emphasis is on the lasting benefit created by the investment.

10. Required Supporting Documents (where applicable)

To enable a full assessment of your application, you must submit all required supporting documents where applicable alongside your application form. Failure to provide the required documentation may result in your application being rejected or delayed.

10.1 Required documents**Latest Annual Accounts / Management Accounts / Income & Expenditure Summary**

Applicants must provide their most recent financial information covering, as a minimum, the last 12 months of income and expenditure. If your organisation has been operating for less than 12 months, please provide financial information covering the period from when the organisation was established to the date of application. This information helps us understand the financial position of your organisation and is required to:

- Demonstrate financial stability.
- Confirm the organisation can manage public funding appropriately.
- Assess financial risk.
- Provide assurance that the organisation has the capacity to deliver the proposed project.

Constitution, Governing Document or Terms of Reference (Mandatory)

Applicants must provide a copy of their governing document to demonstrate:

- Legal status and organisational structure.
- Governance arrangements.
- Decision-making processes.
- That the organisation operates on a not-for-profit basis.

Public Liability Insurance Certificate

Applicants must provide evidence of appropriate insurance cover, including Public Liability Insurance where relevant. This is required if delivering activities from a venue.

This helps ensure:

- Appropriate risk management arrangements are in place.
- Protection for participants, volunteers and the organisation.
- Compliance with project delivery requirements.

Project Risk Assessment

Applicants must provide a risk assessment relevant to the proposed activities. This is required if delivering activities.

This should demonstrate that the organisation has identified and planned for:

- Health and safety risks.
- Delivery risks.
- Participant safety.
- Venue and operational risks.

The assessment should include any control measures that will be implemented to ensure safe delivery.

Safeguarding

Where projects involve children, young people or vulnerable adults, organisations should have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. Relevant staff and volunteers should hold appropriate DBS checks and safeguarding training where required. Please refer to the FAQ's section below for more information.

The Council may request copies of safeguarding policies or related documentation during the application, assessment or monitoring process.

10.2 Additional documents for requests over £5,000

Business Plan

Applications seeking more than £5,000 must provide a business plan demonstrating:

- Project objectives.
- Delivery approach.
- Organisational capacity.
- Financial planning.
- Expected outputs and outcomes.
- Project management and governance.
- Monitoring arrangements.

Sustainability Plan

Applicants should explain:

- How activities or benefits will continue beyond the grant period.
- Future funding opportunities.
- Volunteer and coach development plans.
- Long-term use of facilities, equipment or assets funded through the grant.

10.3 Partnership evidence

For partnership projects, letters of support or partnership agreements are strongly encouraged. They should specify:

- Each partner's role.
- Delivery responsibilities.
- Financial or in-kind contributions.
- Governance and accountability arrangements.

11. Council Priorities and Strategic Themes

Organisations in receipt of grant funding from the Council are expected to deliver projects that contribute towards at least one strategic theme as stated in the Council Plan 2024-27.

Council Plan 2024-27

The Council Plan 2024-27 reflects the things that people have told us are important to them and it contains clear goals that we will work towards. Based on feedback from our stakeholders this plan centres around four strategic themes. These are:

1. Growing up in Sandwell

2. Living in Sandwell
3. Healthy in Sandwell
4. Thriving Economy in Sandwell

All underpinned by One Council One Team.

This Plan detail how we will deliver on these strategic themes and how we will measure our success. The full version provides further information and can be found [here](#)

12. How Applications Will Be Assessed

All eligible applications will be assessed against the aims of the Programme and the information provided within the application form and supporting documents.

Applications will be assessed against the following:

- Evidence of need for the project
- Community benefit
- Value for money
- Capacity and capability to deliver
- Sustainability
- Expected impact and outcomes
- Alignment with programme priorities
- Contribution to Council strategic themes

Assessment will be proportionate to the amount requested and the project's scale and risk.

12.1 Community benefit

We will consider:

- The benefits the project will create for local people.
- How participation in sport and physical activity will be increased.
- The contribution the project will make towards improving health, wellbeing, inclusion and community cohesion.
- How the project will engage and benefit local communities, particularly those who may face barriers to participating in sport and physical activity.
- How the project will build local capacity through the development of volunteers, coaches, community leaders or community-led activities.
- The extent to which the project creates opportunities for local people to become more involved in their community, develop new skills, build confidence or strengthen social connections.

- Whether the project will leave a lasting benefit for the community beyond the funding period, for example through trained volunteers, qualified coaches, equipment, partnerships or ongoing activities.

12.2 Evidence of need

We will assess the extent to which applicants have demonstrated a clear need for the proposed project and an understanding of the communities they serve.

Evidence will be assessed proportionately based on the amount of funding requested and the scale of the project. Refer to Section 9.2 for guidance and examples of evidence that can be used to demonstrate need.

12.3 Alignment with programme priorities

We will consider how the project contributes towards the grant programme priorities, including:

- Participation.
- Volunteering.
- Coach development.
- Inclusion.
- Progression into regular sporting activity.

12.4 Capacity and capability

We will assess an organisation's ability to successfully deliver the proposed project. The level of assessment will be proportionate to the amount of funding requested and the scale of the project.

Applications under £5,000

For smaller community-led projects, we recognise that organisations may be volunteer-led and operate with limited capacity.

We will consider:

- Your understanding of the community you serve.
- Relevant experience of delivering sports, physical activity or community projects.
- The skills and experience of volunteers, coaches, committee members or project leads.
- Whether the proposed activities are realistic and achievable.
- Whether you have identified suitable facilities, volunteers or resources to deliver the project.
- Your readiness to begin delivery within the proposed timescale.

Applications over £5,000

For larger, innovative or collaborative projects, we will expect a greater level of organisational capacity and planning.

In addition to the considerations above, we may assess:

- Organisational track record and previous project delivery.
- Staffing, coaching and volunteer capacity.
- Partnership arrangements and delivery responsibilities.
- Project management arrangements.
- Financial management capability.
- Delivery plans and organisational readiness.
- Experience of managing grant funding and reporting requirements.

12.5 Value for money

We will assess whether the project provides good value for money relative to the level of funding requested and the benefits expected to be achieved.

Applicants should refer to Section 9.6 for guidance and practical examples.

12.6 Sustainability

We will assess the extent to which applicants have considered how the benefits of the project may continue beyond the funding period.

The level of expectation will be proportionate to the grant requested and nature of the project.

Applicants should refer to Section 9.8 for further guidance.

12.7 Measuring success and impact

We will assess whether the application includes proportionate and realistic arrangements for measuring the success of the project.

Applicants should demonstrate how outputs, outcomes and participant experiences will be monitored and evidenced. Further guidance and examples can be found in Section 9.7.

12.8 Funding decisions

Following assessment against the published criteria and available budget. Funding decisions will take account of both the quality of the application and the overall aims of the programme.

Applications under £5,000

Assessment will focus on:

- The need for the project.
- The benefits for local residents.
- The proposed activities and how they will be delivered.
- The people and communities that will benefit.
- Whether the funding request is reasonable and proportionate.
- The organisation's ability to deliver the project.
- Alignment with the programme priorities.

Applications over £5,000

In addition to the above, assessment may also consider:

- Strategic impact and wider community benefit.
- Partnership arrangements.
- Sustainability and legacy.
- Organisational capacity and governance.
- Value for money.
- Geographic spread of funded projects across Sandwell where appropriate.
- The extent to which the project contributes to Council priorities and programme outcomes.

The decision of the Assessment and Scoring Panel is final, and there is no right of appeal.

13. Eligible Costs - What Can Be Funded

Funding may be used to support reasonable and proportionate costs that are directly linked to the delivery of the proposed project. All expenditure should clearly contribute to the aims and objectives of the programme.

13.1 Delivery costs

Examples of eligible delivery costs include:

- Coaching and sessional worker fees.
- Venue hire.
- Sports equipment and resources.

- Shared sports kit.
- Marketing and publicity.
- Participant training and development.
- Relevant project administration and management costs.
- Community engagement activities.

13.2 Volunteer and capacity building costs

The programme recognises the important role that volunteers and coaches play in developing and sustaining local sporting opportunities.

Applications may therefore include costs associated with building local capacity and supporting volunteer development, where these costs contribute directly to increasing sports participation, strengthening community provision, or improving project sustainability.

Eligible costs may include:

- Volunteer expenses.
- Volunteer recruitment costs.
- Volunteer training and development.
- Coach development and mentoring.
- Coaching qualifications and accreditation.
- Sports leadership qualifications.
- First aid training relating to project delivery.
- Safeguarding training relating to project delivery.

Examples

- Coaching Football qualification for volunteer coaches.
- First Aid training for club volunteers.
- Volunteer expenses to support delivery of sessions.
- Run Leader qualification for volunteers.
- Coach education workshops.
- Volunteer development programme.
- Safeguarding and participant welfare training.

Applications that demonstrate how volunteer and coach development will contribute to the long-term sustainability of the organisation and create lasting benefit for local residents are encouraged.

14. Ineligible Costs - What Cannot Be Funded

The programme is intended to support activities that deliver clear benefits for residents through sport and physical activity. To ensure public funding is used appropriately, certain types of expenditure are not eligible for funding.

Applications that include significant ineligible expenditure may be rejected or may be required to revise their budget before assessment.

14.1 Ineligible activities

The funding cannot be used for:

- Projects that do not provide a clear benefit to residents or communities.
- Activities that promote political views, campaigns or lobbying activity.
- Activities that primarily promote religious beliefs or religious worship.
- Fundraising activities for your organisation or any other organisation.

Faith organisations may apply for inclusive community sports activities, provided the funded activity is not primarily religious and meets all other requirements.

14.2 Retrospective or pre-approved expenditure

The programme cannot fund costs that have already been incurred or committed before formal approval has been received.

This includes:

- Retrospective funding requests.
- Deposits already paid.
- Equipment already purchased.
- Venue bookings already committed to.
- Coaching or staffing costs already incurred.

Applicants should not commit to expenditure until they have received a formal Grant Agreement or Grant Offer Letter from the Council.

14.3 Direct financial benefit to individuals

Funding cannot be used to provide direct financial benefit to individuals.

Examples include:

- Personal sports kit or clothing for individual use.
- Individual membership fees.
- Personal equipment that remains the property of an individual.
- Personal expenses not directly related to approved project delivery.

Please note: Shared equipment that supports wider community participation may be eligible for funding where it can be clearly justified within the project.

14.4 Transport

Transport costs are not eligible for funding through this programme.

Examples include:

- Coach hire.
- Minibus hire.
- Fuel costs.
- Taxi costs.
- Participant transport.

Applicants should consider alternative ways of delivering activities within local communities to reduce transport barriers.

14.5 Contingencies and unallocated budgets

Funding cannot be used for:

- Contingency budgets.
- Unallocated reserves.
- General provisions for unexpected costs.
- Undefined or unexplained expenditure.

All costs included within the application budget must be clearly identified, justified and linked to project delivery.

14.6 Staffing

The programme is not intended to fund the creation of permanent or new staff posts.

Funding may be considered for:

- Sessional workers.
- Coaching fees.
- Additional hours for existing staff where directly linked to project delivery.

Applications seeking funding for a new post must provide a clear and robust sustainability plan demonstrating how the role will be funded beyond the grant period.

15. Financial Management and Value for Money

Organisations receiving funding are expected to manage grant funding responsibly and ensure that all expenditure contributes directly to the delivery of the approved project.

Applicants should demonstrate that funding will be used effectively, represents good value for money and delivers maximum benefit for residents.

15.1 Expenditure requirements

All expenditure must:

- Be clearly linked to the approved project activities.
- Support the delivery of the agreed outputs and outcomes.
- Be incurred during the approved project period.
- Represent reasonable and proportionate costs.
- Deliver a clear benefit to project participants and the wider community.

15.2 Obtaining value for money

Applicants are expected to make reasonable efforts to ensure that goods, services and equipment are obtained at a fair and appropriate cost.

For purchases exceeding £500, organisations should, where possible, obtain quotations, estimates or pricing information to demonstrate that proposed costs represent good value for money.

Organisations should consider:

- Cost.
- Quality.
- Suitability.
- Reliability.
- Ability to meet project requirements.

The lowest price will not always be the most appropriate option, however, organisations should be able to explain how spending decisions have been made.

15.3 Financial records

Successful applicants should maintain clear financial records throughout the project.

Examples of records include:

- Invoices.
- Receipts.
- Payment records.
- Booking confirmations.
- Training certificates.
- Evidence of equipment purchases.

These records will be requested as part of monitoring, evaluation or audit activity.

15.4 Conflicts of interest

Organisations should act openly and transparently when spending grant funding. Any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest should be declared to the Council as soon as they arise.

Where expenditure involves individuals connected to the organisation, applicants should be able to demonstrate that:

- Appropriate consideration has been given to value for money.
- The arrangement is in the best interests of the project.
- The decision has been made transparently and appropriately.

15.5 Changes to an approved budget

Grant funding must be used for the purposes outlined. If significant changes to activities or expenditure are required during project delivery, organisations should contact the Council and seek approval before making the change.

16. Marketing and Publicity

Funded organisations are responsible for promoting their activities and ensuring that information about opportunities is accessible to the communities they wish to engage.

All promotional materials produced using grant funding must acknowledge the support of Sandwell Council and include any required programme branding and logos provided as part of the grant agreement.

16.1 Reaching target audience and promoting community participation

Applicants should explain how they will raise awareness of their project and encourage participation from residents.

Consideration should be given to ensuring opportunities are accessible, inclusive and reach those who may face barriers to participation in sport and physical activity.

Applicants should also consider how they will:

- Reach under-represented communities.
- Engage people who may not normally participate in organised sport or physical activity.
- Encourage participation from new participants as well as existing members.
- Promote activities in a way that reflects the needs of the intended audience.

16.2 Community networks

Applicants are encouraged to make use of existing local networks and trusted community organisations to promote opportunities.

Examples can include:

- Community centres.
- Schools and colleges.

- Faith organisations.
- Housing associations.
- Community groups.
- Social prescribing and health networks.
- Local voluntary and community organisations.

16.3 Communication methods

Applicants are encouraged to use a range of communication methods appropriate to the communities they wish to reach.

These can include:

- Social media platforms.
- Community websites and newsletters.
- Posters and leaflets.
- Word-of-mouth promotion.
- Community events.
- Partner organisation networks.
- Local stakeholder referrals.

Example Approaches

- Promoting junior coaching sessions through local schools, parent groups and social media channels.
- Working with housing providers, community centres and local partners to promote physical activity sessions to residents.
- Using existing member networks, local newsletters and community noticeboards to encourage participation from new members.

17. Funding Period

Projects funded through the programme should normally be delivered and all grant funding spent within 12 months of the grant award date.

Applicants should ensure that proposed activities can be realistically delivered within this timescale and must take this into account when developing project plans, delivery schedules and budgets.

Successful organisations will be expected to:

- Commence delivery within a reasonable period following receipt of the grant.
- Complete all project activity within the agreed funding period.
- Spend grant funding within the approved project timeframe.
- Submit any required monitoring and reporting information during or at the end of the delivery period as outlined in the grant agreement.

If circumstances arise that may significantly delay delivery, organisations should contact the Council as soon as possible to discuss the situation and any potential impact on the project.

18. Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements

Organisations receiving funding will be required to demonstrate how the grant has been used and the difference the project has made for participants and local communities. Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to the size and nature of the grant awarded.

18.1 Measuring impact

Organisations will be expected to collect appropriate evidence of delivery and impact throughout the project. Monitoring arrangements should be proportionate to the size and nature of the grant.

Examples of suitable evidence are outlined in Section 9.7

18.2 What you may be asked to report on

Depending on the nature of your project, reporting may include:

- The number of participants involved.
- The number of sessions delivered.
- The number of volunteers recruited or supported.
- Coaching qualifications or training completed.
- Improvements in participation, confidence, health or wellbeing.
- Feedback from participants and volunteers.

18.3 Monitoring responsibilities

Successful organisations will be expected to:

- Deliver the project as outlined in their grant agreement.
- Keep basic records of activities delivered and expenditure incurred.
- Retain receipts, invoices and other evidence of expenditure.
- Provide updates if requested during the delivery period.
- Inform the Council of any significant changes, delays or challenges affecting the project.
- Submit a final monitoring report at the end of the project.

The Council may contact organisations during delivery to discuss progress, request additional information or, where appropriate, arrange a project visit.

18.4 Retention of records

Organisations must retain records relating to project expenditure and delivery in accordance with the requirements set out in Section 19.7.

18.5 Final report

At the end of the project, organisations will be required to submit a short report using the Council's reporting template provided, confirming:

- What activities were delivered.
- How many people benefited.
- What difference the project made.
- How the funding was spent.
- Any lessons learned or successes achieved.

Where funding has been used to purchase equipment or assets, organisations may also be asked to confirm how these will continue to be used for community benefit.

19. Conditions of Funding

Successful applicants will be required to accept the terms and conditions of the grant before funding is released.

Failure to comply with these conditions may result in funding being withheld, reduced, recovered, or future grant applications being declined.

19.1 Use of grant funding

Grant funding must be used only for the activities, purposes and costs outlined in the approved application and Grant Agreement.

Organisations must ensure that:

- Funding is used solely for the agreed project.
- Funding is not used for personal gain or personal expenditure.
- Funding is not used to duplicate or replace funding received from another source for the same activity.
- Projects do not commence before a formal Grant Agreement has been issued by the Council.
- Retrospective costs or expenditure incurred before grant approval are not claimed.

Any significant changes to project activities, delivery arrangements or expenditure must be discussed with and approved by the Council in advance.

19.2 Project-delivery responsibilities

Funded organisations are responsible for delivering their project safely, effectively and in accordance with the approved application.

Organisations must:

- Inform the Council of any significant risks, issues or delays that may affect delivery.
- Maintain appropriate insurance cover throughout the project.
- Ensure appropriate health and safety arrangements are in place.
- Ensure activities are accessible and inclusive wherever reasonably practicable.
- Comply with any relevant legal and regulatory requirements relating to the activities being delivered.

19.3 Safeguarding

Organisations working with children, young people or adults at risk must have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place throughout the duration of the project.

Where required, organisations should ensure that:

- Staff, coaches and volunteers hold appropriate DBS checks.
- Staff, coaches and volunteers have received appropriate safeguarding training.
- Safeguarding concerns are managed and reported in accordance with organisational safeguarding procedures.
- Appropriate supervision arrangements are in place during project delivery.

The Council may request copies of safeguarding policies, procedures or related documentation as part of the application, assessment, monitoring or compliance process.

19.4 Partnership projects

Applicants must declare any partner organisations involved in delivering the project as part of their application.

Where projects are delivered in partnership:

- A lead organisation must be identified.
- The lead organisation will remain accountable for the grant funding and project delivery.
- Partnership roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined.
- Grant funding must not be transferred to another organisation without prior approval from the Council.

19.5 Assets, equipment and legacy

Any equipment, assets or resources purchased using grant funding must be used for the purposes set out in the approved project.

Organisations must:

- Maintain a record of significant equipment or assets purchased through the grant.
- Retain and use those assets for community benefit.
- Obtain Council approval before selling, transferring or disposing of grant-funded assets.
- Notify the Council of any significant changes affecting the future use of funded assets.

The programme seeks to create lasting benefits for local communities beyond the funded delivery period.

Where equipment, qualifications, training, volunteer development or other assets are funded through the programme, organisations should demonstrate how these resources will continue to benefit local residents after the project has ended.

Examples may include:

- Volunteers continuing to deliver activities after funding has ended.
- Qualified coaches remaining active within local clubs or community organisations.
- Equipment continuing to be used for community sports activities.
- New partnerships that strengthen future provision.
- Ongoing opportunities for participants to remain active and engaged in sport.

The Council may request information regarding the ongoing use of equipment, qualifications, assets or other funded resources as part of its monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

19.6 Conflicts of Interest

Organisations must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest relating to the project or use of grant funding.

Conflicts of interest should be managed openly and transparently and must not influence decisions regarding the use of grant funding.

19.7 Record keeping

Organisations must keep sufficient records to demonstrate how the funding has been used and what has been achieved.

This may include:

- Invoices and receipts.
- Attendance records.
- Participant feedback.
- Monitoring information.
- Evidence of project delivery and outcomes.

The Council may request evidence of expenditure, delivery and outcomes during or after the funding period.

Records relating to the project should be retained for up to two years from the date the project is completed, unless otherwise stated in the Grant Agreement.

19.8 Publicity and acknowledgement

Successful organisations must acknowledge the support of Sandwell Council in project publicity and promotional materials.

Where requested, organisations must:

- Use the Sandwell Council logo.
- Use any programme branding provided.
- Clearly state that the project is funded by Sandwell Council.

19.9 Unspent funds and recovery

Any funding that is not used for the agreed purpose, remains unspent, or cannot be evidenced may be recoverable by the Council.

The Council reserves the right to withhold, reduce or recover grant funding where:

- Grant conditions have not been met.
- Funding has not been used for the approved purpose.
- False or misleading information has been provided.
- The project is not delivered as agreed.
- Required monitoring information is not provided.
- Significant concerns arise regarding project delivery or governance.

The Council is not responsible for any costs incurred above the agreed grant amount and will not provide additional funding to cover project overspend.

19.10 Payment of Grant

Payment of grant award is subject to the organisation accepting and complying with the terms and conditions set out in the Grant Agreement.

Successful applicants will be advised of the payment arrangements applicable to their grant award.

Depending on the grant amount, size, nature and risk profile of the project, funding may be:

- Paid in full.
- Paid in instalments.
- Paid in advance of delivery.
- Paid following receipt of agreed monitoring information or evidence of delivery.

The Council reserves the right to determine the most appropriate payment arrangements for each grant award.

19.11 Conditions before payment

Before releasing grant funding, the Council may request information or documentation to confirm that the organisation is ready to commence delivery and has met the requirements of the Grant Agreement.

Where instalment payments apply, future payments may be dependent upon:

- Satisfactory project progress.
- Submission of monitoring information.
- Evidence that previous payments have been spent appropriately.
- Compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant.

The Council reserves the right to withhold payment where appropriate information has not been provided or where there are concerns regarding project delivery or compliance with grant conditions.

19.12 Overspends and shortfalls

Organisations are responsible for managing their project budget and ensuring that expenditure remains within the approved grant amount.

The Council will not provide additional funding to cover project overspend, unforeseen costs or budget shortfalls.

19.13 Repayment

Any funding paid in error, used for purposes other than those approved, or identified as ineligible expenditure may be recovered by the Council.

The Council may also seek repayment of all or part of a grant where grant conditions have not been met or where the project has not been delivered as agreed.

All awards remain subject to available funding and completion of the Council's approval processes.

20. How to Apply

20.1 Application deadline

Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted by:

Friday 2 October 2026

Late applications will not be accepted.

20.2 Submit an application

Complete the online application form and upload all required supporting documents.

Before submitting, ensure that:

- Every section is complete.
- All required documents are uploaded.
- The information is accurate and current.
- The budget contains no ineligible or unexplained costs.
- An authorised person has approved the application.
- Submission takes place before the deadline.

20.3 Help and advice

If you have any questions about the programme, eligibility requirements or application process queries, please email: admin_vsqt@sandwell.gov.uk

We can provide advice on:

- Eligibility requirements.
- Understanding the grant criteria.
- Required supporting documents.
- The application process.
- Technical issues accessing, completing or submitting the online application form.
- Uploading supporting documents.

We encourage organisations to seek advice as early as possible if unsure whether your project is eligible or require support with the application process. This is particularly encouraged for smaller grassroots organisations or first-time applicants.

Please note that Council officers cannot complete the application form on your behalf or write responses to application questions, but we can provide guidance to help you understand the requirements and successfully submit your application.

20.4 Important information

- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications received after the closing date will not be accepted.
- Submission of an application does not guarantee funding.
- Applications will be assessed against the programme criteria and available budget.

21. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

This has been developed to help applicants understand the Community Sports Grants Programme and complete an application. It is particularly aimed at smaller grassroots organisations, volunteer-led groups and first-time applicants.

i) ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAMME

What is the Community Sports Grants Programme?

The Community Sports Grants Programme provides funding to support projects that use sport and physical activity to improve health, wellbeing, inclusion, volunteering opportunities and community cohesion for Sandwell residents.

How much funding can I apply for?

There are two funding levels:

- **Standard Grants:** £500 to £5,000
- **Enhanced Grants:** Over £5,000 up to £10,000

Enhanced funding is intended for larger, innovative or collaborative projects that can demonstrate additional community benefit and impact.

Who can apply?

Applications are welcomed from:

- Community groups
- Sports clubs
- Voluntary organisations
- Faith organisations
- Charities

- Community Interest Companies (CICs)
- Other not-for-profit organisations delivering activities for Sandwell residents

Grassroots organisations are particularly encouraged to apply.

Does my organisation need to be registered?

No. Unregistered community groups can apply, provided they meet the programme's eligibility requirements and have appropriate governance arrangements in place. If your organisation is registered, you will be asked to provide your registration number.

Can a new organisation apply?

Yes. New organisations can apply. If you are newly established, explain the experience, skills and qualifications of your volunteers, coaches, committee members or project leads.

ii) GOVERNANCE, CONSTITUTION AND SUPPORT

We do not have a constitution. Can we still apply?

A constitution or governing document is normally required to meet the programme's eligibility requirements.

If your organisation does not currently have a constitution, we encourage you to seek support from Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), the Council's voluntary and community sector infrastructure partner. Contact them at support@scvo.info

SCVO can provide support with:

- Developing a constitution or governing document.
- Setting up a new community group.
- Strengthening governance arrangements.
- Preparing for funding applications.

We have never applied for funding before. Where can we get support?

We recognise that many grassroots groups and volunteer-led organisations may be applying for funding for the first time.

If you have any questions about the programme, eligibility requirements or application process queries, please email: admin_vsgt@sandwell.gov.uk

We particularly encourage first-time applicants, newly established groups and organisations seeking Enhanced Grant funding to seek early support before submitting an application.

Please note that Council officers cannot complete the application form on your behalf or write responses to application questions, but we can provide guidance to help you understand the requirements and successfully submit your application.

iii) ELIGIBILITY

What documents do I need?

Most applicants must provide:

- Constitution or governing document
- Organisation bank account details
- Latest accounts or income/expenditure information
- Public liability insurance
- Risk assessment

Applications over £5,000 must also provide:

- Business Plan
- Sustainability Plan

Can we apply if we don't yet have insurance?

You can submit an application, but appropriate insurance will need to be in place before funding can be released.

iv) SAFEGUARDING AND DBS

Does my organisation need a safeguarding policy?

If your project involves children, young people (under 18) or vulnerable adults, your organisation should have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place before project delivery begins.

Do our coaches and volunteers need DBS checks?

This depends on the activities being delivered and the nature of contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

When completing the application form, you will be asked:

Do relevant staff, coaches and volunteers hold appropriate DBS checks where required?

If you answer "Yes"

Please explain how DBS-checked coaches, staff or volunteers will support the project and help ensure safe delivery.

Examples include:

- Delivering sessions for children and young people.
- Coaching participants.
- Supervising activities.
- Supporting vulnerable adults.

If you answer "No"

Please explain why DBS checks are not required for your project.

Examples include:

- Activities involve adults only.
- No regulated activity takes place.
- Coaches and volunteers are not working unsupervised with children or vulnerable adults.

The Council may request further information where safeguarding requirements apply.

v) WHAT CAN BE FUNDED

What types of projects are eligible?

Projects should support one or more of the following:

- New opportunities to take part in sport.
- Progression into regular sporting activity.
- Volunteer development.
- Coach development and qualifications.

Can we apply for equipment?

Yes, where equipment is needed to help deliver the project and benefit the wider community.

Examples might include:

- Shared sports equipment.
- Training equipment.
- Community sports resources.
- Volunteer equipment.

Can we apply for coaching qualifications?

Yes.

The programme supports:

- Coaching qualifications.
- Volunteer training.
- Sports leadership training.
- First aid training linked to project delivery.
- Safeguarding training linked to project delivery.

Can we apply for venue hire?

Yes. Venue hire costs can be included where they are required to deliver the project.

Can we apply for staffing costs?

The programme does not normally fund permanent new posts.

Funding may support:

- Coaching fees.
- Sessional workers.
- Additional hours for existing staff directly linked to project delivery.

Can we apply for transport costs?

No. Transport costs are not eligible under this programme.

Can we apply for funding for DBS checks?

DBS checks may be considered on a case-by-case basis where they are essential to the delivery of new activities funded through this programme.

For example, funding may be considered where:

- A new community activity is being established.
- New volunteers are being recruited as part of the project.

- The organisation can demonstrate that DBS costs would otherwise prevent delivery.

However, the programme would not normally fund DBS checks where these form part of the organisation's existing day-to-day governance or operational responsibilities.

vi) APPLYING FOR FUNDING

What makes a strong application?

Strong applications usually:

- Demonstrate a clear community need.
- Benefit local residents.
- Have realistic costs.
- Clearly explain what will be delivered.
- Demonstrate community involvement.
- Explain how success will be measured.
- Create lasting benefits where possible.

Do I need formal surveys or research to submit with my application?

No.

For smaller grants we recognise that evidence may be informal.

Examples include:

- Waiting lists.
- Resident feedback.
- Requests from participants.
- Volunteer feedback.
- Previous experience delivering activities.

How do I show there is a need for my project?

Tell us:

- Why the project is needed.
- Who will benefit.
- How you know there is demand.

- Any feedback or local knowledge that informed the idea.

We do not expect complicated evidence from grassroots organisations.

What if local people did not help design the project?

You can still apply.

However, where possible, projects should demonstrate how local residents, participants, volunteers or partners helped shape the activities being proposed.

How detailed does my budget need to be?

Your budget should clearly explain what the funding will be spent on.

For example:

- Venue hire.
- Equipment.
- Coaching costs.
- Volunteer training.
- Marketing and promotion.

Costs should be realistic and linked directly to project delivery.

Should I provide quotes?

Quotes are recommended where available, particularly for larger purchases.

Examples include:

- Equipment quotations.
- Facility hire costs.
- Training course details.
- Coaching qualification information.

vii) ENHANCED GRANTS (£5,001 - £10,000)

When should I apply for an Enhanced Grant?

Enhanced funding should only be requested if:

- Additional funding is genuinely required.
- The project will deliver greater impact than a standard grant.

- Additional community benefits can be demonstrated.

What additional information is required?

Enhanced applications must provide:

- Business Plan.
- Sustainability Plan.
- Additional information about impact and community benefit.
- Partnership information where applicable.

What do you mean by sustainability?

We want to understand how benefits will continue after funding ends.

This might include:

- Volunteers continuing activities.
- Qualified coaches remaining active.
- Equipment continuing to be used.
- New partnerships.
- Future sources of funding.

viii) ASSESSMENT AND DECISION MAKING

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed against:

- Evidence of need.
- Community benefit.
- Value for money.
- Ability to deliver.
- Sustainability.
- Expected impact.
- Programme priorities.
- Council strategic themes.

Will standards be different for grassroots organisations?

Yes.

Applications are assessed proportionately. Smaller grants are not expected to provide the same level of evidence, planning and reporting as Enhanced Grant applications.

Is funding guaranteed if I submit an application?

No.

Submitting an application does not guarantee funding. Applications are assessed competitively against the available budget.

Can I appeal the decision if my application is unsuccessful?

No.

The decision of the Assessment and Scoring Panel is final.

ix) SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

When can I start spending the funding?

You must not commit expenditure or start the project until a Grant Agreement has been issued and accepted.

Can we change the project after approval?

Possibly.

Significant changes must be discussed with and approved by the Council before implementation.

How long do we have to deliver the project?

Projects should normally be completed within 12 months of the grant award.

Can we apply again if we already have a grant?

Applicants can only have one live Community Sports Grant in delivery at any one time.

Subject to the availability of funding, consideration may be given to applications for small one-off items, equipment purchases or similar requests where these are clearly aligned to the aims of the programme and do not duplicate existing grant-funded activity.

x) MONITORING AND REPORTING

Will we have to complete monitoring forms?

Yes.

All grant recipients will be required to provide monitoring information demonstrating how the funding has been used and the difference the project has made.

Monitoring requirements will be proportionate to:

- The size of the grant awarded.
- The scale of the project.
- The level of risk associated with delivery.

Smaller grassroots grants will generally have lighter-touch monitoring requirements than Enhanced Grants.

When will monitoring information be requested?

Monitoring information may be requested at various stages throughout the life of the project.

This may include:

- Interim progress updates during delivery.
- Requests for supporting information where appropriate.
- End-of-project monitoring and impact reports.
- Follow-up information relating to funded equipment, qualifications or sustainability activities.

The specific monitoring requirements will be set out within the Grant Agreement.

Will Council officers visit our project?

Yes.

Council officers may visit funded projects at any point during the delivery period to confirm that activities are taking place as described within the approved application and Grant Agreement.

Project visits may be used to:

- Observe project activities.
- Meet participants, volunteers and project leads.
- Discuss progress and achievements.
- Verify that funding is being used appropriately.
- Gather examples of good practice and project impact.
- Provide support where appropriate.

These visits help ensure public funding is being used effectively and support the sharing of successful projects across Sandwell.

What information will we need to provide?

Depending on the size and type of project, you may be asked to provide information relating to:

- Participant numbers.
- Volunteer numbers.
- Activities delivered.
- Outcomes achieved.
- Participant feedback.
- Community impact.
- Case studies and success stories.
- Evidence of expenditure.
- Qualifications achieved.
- Sustainability and legacy.

What evidence should we collect?

Monitoring does not need to be complicated.

Simple evidence is often sufficient, particularly for smaller grassroots organisations.

Examples include:

- Attendance registers.
- Sign-in sheets.
- Participant feedback.
- Volunteer feedback.

- Short surveys.
- Case studies.
- Testimonials.
- Photographs (with consent).

What happens if monitoring information is not provided?

Organisations are expected to comply with the monitoring requirements set out in their Grant Agreement.

Failure to provide required monitoring information may result in:

- Delays to future payments (where applicable).
- Requests for additional information.
- Recovery of funding in certain circumstances.
- Impact on future funding applications.

How long do we need to keep records?

Project records should be retained in accordance with the Grant Agreement and programme requirements which is usually up to 2 years.