



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council



Ards and North Down **SPORTS FORUM**

2026-2027

Goldcard

Guidance Notes

Aim of Grant

The Goldcard grant is to support athletes who have qualified and are **training for a specific event and/or competition**, by providing concessionary use of leisure facilities within the Ards and North Down Borough

Facilities include:

- Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex
- Bangor Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex
- Bangor Sportsplex
- Comber Leisure Centre
- Londonderry Park
- Portaferry Sports Centre
- Queen’s Leisure Complex, Hollywood

Athletes can avail of the following within the Goldcard scheme:

- Gym Facilities
- Swimming Pools
- Health Suite
- Cryo-Spa at Londonderry Park & Bangor Aurora
- Sports-specific facilities e.g. the track at Bangor Sportsplex.

Application Timeline

Goldcard grants are open all year round from 1st April 2026 - 23rd February 2027. Applications are assessed monthly by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, please see deadline and assessment dates listed below:

Submission Deadline (12 noon)	Assessment Date
28 April 2026	5 May 2026
26 May 2026	2 June 2026
30 June 2026	7 July 2026
28 July 2026	4 August 2026
25 August 2026	1 September 2026
29 September 2026	6 October 2026
27 October 2026	3 November 2026
24 November 2026	1 December 2026
29 December 2026	5 January 2027
26 January 2027	4 February 2027
23 February 2027	2 March 2027

Completed applications are to be submitted by email to sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk by 12 noon on the submission dates above.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be 12 years, at the time of application.
- Be a resident in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area
- Take part in a Sport affiliated to a National Governing Body (NGB) recognised by Sport NI/Sport Ireland
- Be of amateur status OR be a member of a recognised elite squad OR be ranked within the top 10 in Northern Ireland / Ireland (elite squad/panel e.g. Ulster, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Great Britain, European and above). This will cover junior and senior athletes and be inclusive of those with a disability.
- Be qualified and selected to represent their province/country (i.e. Ulster, Northern Ireland, Ireland or Great Britain).
- Provide specific selection letter for the event from the relevant Sport NI/Sport Ireland **Recognised National Governing Body*** (NGB) To view the list of NGB's please check the relevant websites:
[Sport NI | Committed to Sport](#)
[About Sport Ireland | Sport Ireland](#)
- The selection letter/email must include the following details:
 - i. full name,
 - ii. verifies that you are part of a recognised squad or an individual in preparation for a specific event/competition
 - iii. provides event dates and location
 - iv. provides event details you are preparing for and when the final squad will be announced, if applicable,
 - v. submitted on official governing body headed paper or official governing body email.
 - vi. Athletes must not be in receipt of any other grant that would cover event costs
- The event/competition must take place within 12 months of application being made.
- Athletes must not be in receipt of any other grant that would cover the facility element of training costs.

The extent of use to be at the discretion of the Head of Leisure, Ards & North Down Borough Council.

Duration of GoldCard

- Goldcards will ONLY be granted if the event/competition exceeds more than 2 months from the date of application submission to a maximum of 12 months.
- If selected for multiple events, or part of a recognised squad preparing for events, Goldcards will cover from date of assessment to last event listed and only if detailed on the National Governing Body selection letter/email.

Restrictions

Please note applicants should be aware that there are restrictions in place at each facility according to the individual site's admissions policy, including:

- The health suite is for 16+ at Bangor Aurora and 8-15's must be accompanied by an adult at Ards Blair Mayne.

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- There are ‘restrictions’ for use of the gym for under 16’s and **inductions must be completed.**
- Swimming pool and Cryospa restrictions apply
- **Usage of facilities will be subject to availability at the time.**

For further information please visit:

[Admissions Policy | AND Leisure \(leisureardsandnorthdown.com\)](#)

[Northern Community Leisure Trust \(bangoraurora.com\)](#)

<https://www.leisureardsandnorthdown.com/CryospaAdmissionsPolicy>

Application Process

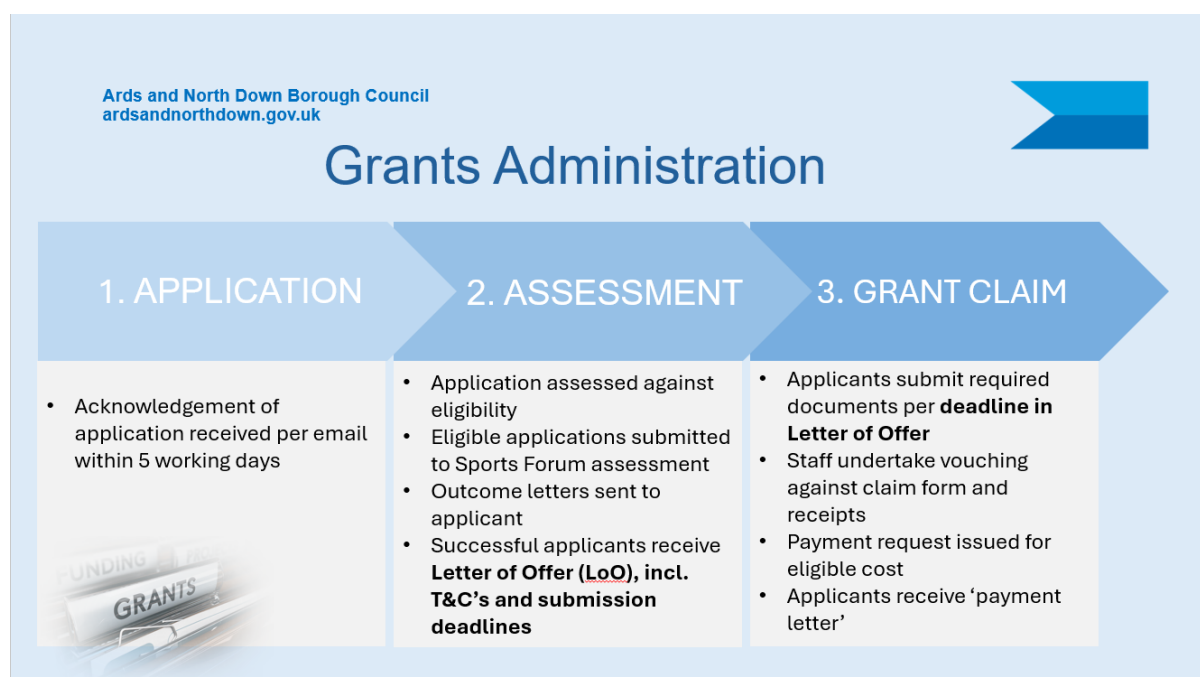
Successful applicants will be provided with a link to the App, or be provided with an appropriate membership card, that must be used on each visit to a leisure facility.

Please note that successful applicants may be requested by the Council to attend the promotion of specific sports events/ schemes during the lifespan of the Goldcard.

ONLY APPLICATIONS COMPLETED IN A TYPED FORMAT CAN BE ACCEPTED.

Grant Administration Process

Following submission of applications, the following process will be completed:



Incomplete applications, and applications submitted without the required mandatory documentation, will be deemed ineligible and not proceed for assessment.

Application Forms

Goldcard guidance notes and applications are available at:

2026–2027 Goldcard Guidance Notes

[Grants and Funding | AND Leisure \(leisureardsandnorthdown.com\)](#) or by emailing sportsdevelopment@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

For queries contact the Sports Development Team

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