Financial Assistance
Call 1 2027-2028

Ag freastal ar an Dún agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down and South Armagh

Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
Newry, Mourne
and Down
District Council

Introduction

Aim: To inform you about the funding available, the grant management system and the associated application process.

- General Financial Assistance guidance
- Summary of the programmes
- Application and Electronic Grant Management System guidance
- Procurement guidance
- Where you can get additional help

General Financial Assistance Guidance

- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council invite applications for financial assistance from the community and voluntary sector.
- All projects must take place between **01 April 2027, with the exception of Summer Schemes, and the end date given in the theme guidance notes.**
- The closing date for applications is **12:00 noon on Monday 30 November 2026.**
- Applications should be completed on the Electronic Grant Management System (EGMS): https://newrymournedowndc.smartsimpleuk.com
- Late applications will not be possible or be considered.

Eligible Applicants

- Community and Voluntary sector inclusive of Social Enterprises including Community Interest Companies.
- All groups must be constituted with audited accounts or an income/expenditure report with corresponding bank account in the name of organisation applying.

Ineligible Applicants

- Sole Traders
- Private sector organisations

Ineligible projects

- **Projects which are generating a profit,** unless the income being generated is being used to enhance the project or offset costs.
- **Projects which are generating funds** for a charity or other third-party organisation via sponsorship or donations.

Application Overview

Number of applications per project: Only one application per project is permitted.

- Applicants in receipt of a Service Level Agreement or other Council funding for the delivery of an event/project must declare it in the application.

Six scored questions:

1. Description of the project and how the project relates to theme.
2. An outline of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the project.
3. Establishment of need and how this will be fulfilled.
4. Cost overview and economic benefit.
5. Equality of opportunity and Good Relations.
6. Sustainability.

Finance Tab

- Any income generated through the project or match funding must be declared and have a detailed breakdown.
- Any gap in funding or shortfall, must be accounted for or a rationale provided.
- The finance amounts should match across the fields on the finance tab with no variances.

Claim Process

- Evaluations must contain accurate reporting on project related outputs and outcomes, as per application.
- Claims workshops will be offered to all applicants in receipt of Letter of Offer.
- All claims must be submitted within **6 weeks of project end date** (less if the project is finishing near the end of the financial year), otherwise funding may be withdrawn. No exceptions will be made.

Theme Guidance Notes

- The Guidance Notes have been rewritten to make them more applicant friendly.

- New guidance notes additions include:
  - A summary of important theme details
  - Clarification of eligible and ineligible expenditure including caps

Please review the eligible and ineligible expenditure caps carefully before applying. Pay particular attention to each theme criteria when completing the application.

Points to consider before applying:

- Organisations in receipt of public funding must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the delivery and access of projects.

- Adequate insurance must be in place **prior** to the project taking place. Insurance costs are **only** eligible items of expenditure if it relates to the project activity applied for; this is subject to Council approval.

- Consideration will only be given to projects seeking funding from the Council that is **between the minimum and maximum limit for each thematic area**.

- The Council will not accept retrospective applications (i.e. applications seeking funding for projects already started prior to **01 April 2027 will not be eligible or as per theme i.e. Summer themes).**

- Applicants **must** submit their most recent annual accounts and constitution or governing document. **Please Note: accounts must be dated within two years of the call closing date.**

- Approved costs will only be reimbursed upon submission of original invoices, supporting bank statements and compliance with all relevant conditions.

- "**Own labour**" and hire of "**own facilities**" are **not** eligible items of expenditure.

The themes include:

1. Arts, Culture & Heritage Fund
2. Community Engagement
3. Community Events & Festivals
4. Community Summer Schemes
5. Community Growing – 'Let's Grow NMD'
6. Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG)
7. Good Relations
8. Irish Language
9. Local Biodiversity
10. Minority Communities Fund
11. PCSP Community Safety Support
12. Sports Programmes
13. Suicide Prevention & Promotion of Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing
14. Tourism Events



Please Note: Themes are open to the Community, Voluntary and Sports sectors.

Community Growing 'Let's Grow NMD'

Threshold: £500 - £1,500

Aim:
This funding is to promote and develop Community Growing for food growing – i.e. fruit and vegetable growing. Projects should be principally based on fruit and/or vegetable community growing and not solely for flower or non-edible plant growing, memorial gardens or sensory gardens.

Objectives:

- To support and promote community growing (food growing) within the District.
- To support community-based groups to develop their community growing sites.
- To support community growing groups to:
  - Purchase tools and equipment for their activities.
  - Purchase seeds, plants, compost, soil and other items essential to community growing activities.
- To support the establishment and upkeep of community orchards.

Key points: Applicants **MUST** enclose the identity of the landowner(s) and proof of written permission, for use of the land from the landowner(s). Invasive and non-native species are not eligible. Please see Guidance Notes for further details.

Local Biodiversity Enhancement

Threshold: £500 - £1,500

Aim:
Assist in implementation of local biodiversity action through the delivery of practical conservation projects.

Objectives:

- Conserve and enhance the rich biodiversity of the district.
- Encourage community participation in the delivery of local biodiversity action. Further details are in the Biodiversity Strategy 2024-2030 (www.newrymournedown.org/biodiversity)
- Create new habitats for wildlife.

Please note: Schools can apply. We strongly encourage you to work outside of the school grounds and in the community where possible. We strongly recommend that schools think of the wider community benefits that their projects will bring. Invasive and non-native species are **not eligible.** Please see Guidance Notes for further details.

Local Biodiversity Enhancement Key Points

- Projects located within 5km of a protected site may be subject to Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) requirements. Further information is available via the DAERA Protected Areas Search (https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/services/searching-protected-areas). Applicants should include relevant details in Section 2.4 of the application form.

- Enclose the identity of the landowner(s).

- Enclose proof of written permission, for use of the land from the landowner(s).

Suicide Prevention and Promotion of Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing

Threshold: £500 - £1,000

Aim:
To increase public awareness of mental health, emotional wellbeing, and suicide prevention by encouraging community engagement in local activities which promote good mental health.

Objectives:
- Enhance community capacity to promote good mental health.
- Increase provision of local support to improve social wellbeing.
- Enhance community capacity to signpost people experiencing mental ill health to appropriate support.

Please note: Project activity end date is 31 March 2028

Community Summer Schemes

Threshold: £500 - £1,500

Aim:
To assist **constituted organisations & Community Associations** in the delivery of summer schemes**.**

The Summer Scheme grant supports community and voluntary groups to deliver enjoyable, inclusive summer programmes for local people.

Objectives:
- The purpose of this grant is to assist constituted organisations & community associations who run summer schemes for young people **over the summer period** from 1 July to 31 August 2027**.**
- Schemes must run for a minimum of 5 full days or 10 half days.
- Schemes must consist of a programme of activities rather than a one-off event.

Please Note: Sporting organisations should apply under **Sports Programmes** as opposed to Community Summer Schemes (where applicable).

Applicant organisations and Community Associations should be as follows:

- **Formally constituted:** It must have a governing document (for example constitution) that clearly outlines its purpose.
- **Community managed and autonomous:** It must be led by members of the community it serves and remain independent of external control.
- **Not-for-personal profit:** Its activities and assets must be used for the benefit of the community rather than individual gain.
- **Inclusive:** The constitution must state that membership is open to the "full range of opinion" within the identified community.
- **Democratically accountable:** The organisation must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) where every member has an equal vote.

Functional Role:

The Council views these associations as partners in Community Planning. Their primary purpose is to:

- **Improve Wellbeing:** Projects should focus on social, economic, or environmental improvements.
- **Promote Inclusion:** A core goal is to reduce social isolation and increase community involvement.
- **Facilitate Capacity Building:** Successful associations help residents develop the skills and resources needed to respond to local challenges.

Community Events & Festivals

Threshold: £500 - £3,000

Event type	Maximum grant available
One-day community event	Up to £1,000
Two-day festival or two separate one-day events	Up to £2,000
Three-day festival or multiple separate events consisting of 3 days or more	Up to £3,000

Aim:
The primary purpose of this theme is to assist community groups in the delivery of small local festivals and events held between 01 April 2027 and 31 March 2028, including but not exclusive to Summer, Halloween and Christmas switch on events and illuminations. Same definition as above applies to the applicant group.

The application should promote:
- Social Inclusion
- Community Development
- Demonstrate effective project planning

Definition of a Community Event:

A Community Event is a planned activity delivered for the benefit of the wider community which encourages participation, inclusion, learning, celebration and community engagement.

Events should aim to:

- Be open and accessible to the wider community.
- Provide opportunities for community involvement.
- Demonstrate added value beyond an organisation's normal programme of activities.
- Be inclusive and promote equality of opportunity.
- Support positive community relations and shared participation.
- Encourage volunteering, partnership working and community development.

Please note:

- Events which are funded through Tourism Events funding will not be considered for funding for this theme (including Council Service Level Agreements).
- Events considered to be large in scale i.e. overall cost **over £10,000** will not be considered for funding through this theme.
- Organisations in receipt of public funding must comply with all statutory obligations regarding the delivery and access of events.

Tourism Events

Threshold: £5,000 - £15,000

Aim:
To support events that attract visitors from outside of the district or Northern Ireland and where the event has played the key role in motivating their visit. Events must act to positively showcase the district on a regional or international scale as a unique tourism and cultural destination.

Objectives:
- The event must showcase the district as becoming one of the landmark tourism destinations on the island of Ireland.
- Events must have total visitor numbers greater than **1,000**.

Please note: Events must have a minimum total expenditure of **£20,000**. This comprises at least **£15,000 from sources other than this Fund** together with the minimum grant request of £5,000. If you do not meet this minimum expenditure your application will be **ineligible**.

Community Engagement

Threshold: £500 - £1,500

Aim:
To support projects which will contribute to the improvement of community development and the enhancement of community engagement outcomes across the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area.

Objectives:
- The applicant should support the following community engagement and community development outcomes as follows:
  - Empower and Build Capacity of Community
  - Improve Social Cohesion and Relationships
  - Enhance Community Civic Participation

Please note: Projects eligible for **Sports Programmes** theme should apply under that theme and are ineligible to apply to under this theme.

Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG)

Threshold: £1,000- £25,000

There are three tiers of grants available, outlined below and detailed further in the Guidance Notes

- Tier 1: Grants between £1,000 and £5,000
- Tier 2: Grants between £5,001 and £15,000
- Tier 3: Grants between £15,001 and up to £25,000

Aim:

The EVAWG Change Fund aims to equip community / voluntary sector groups and organisations to prevent violence against women and girls and to mobilise grassroots action, support innovative delivery and maximise the impact of community-led initiatives which will contribute to the Prevention Outcomes of the EVAWG Strategic Framework.

Objectives:

- Outcome 1 – Changed attitudes, behaviours and culture
- Outcome 2 – Healthy, respectful relationships
- Outcome 3 – Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere

Good Relations

Threshold: £500 - £1,500

Aim:
To provide the delivery of projects aimed at improving Good Relations across the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area.

Objective:
To support projects that complement the Council's Good Relations Strategy which identifies several key strategic priorities in meeting the good relation needs of the District.

Key points: Applicant projects should aim to address one or more of the four Key Priority themes defined by The Executive Office under the Together: Building a United Community strategy (2013).

- Summary headings of the key priorities are:
- Our Children and Young People,
- Our Shared Community,
- Our Safe Community and,
- Our Cultural Expression.

PCSP Community Safety Support

Threshold: £500 - £2,000

Aim:
To support the delivery of projects aimed at improving Community Safety across the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area.

Objective:
The fund seeks to encourage local community-based organisations to address local community safety issues, through innovative and appropriate local solutions.

There are three main themes:

- **Anti-social behaviour** – Projects which will prevent, reduce or address anti-social behaviour across the Council District.
- **Community Safety, Support and Vulnerability** – Projects which support vulnerable people and/or families, and which address mental health, substance abuse (including prescription medication), isolation and loneliness, and general community safety.
- **Confidence in Policing** – Projects which will increase confidence in policing by developing and enhancing opportunities for engagement between local communities and the PSNI.

Irish Language

Threshold: £500 - £3,000

Aim:
Applications to this theme must meet one of the two aims of this scheme:

- Irish Language community renewal and development or
- Positively engaging the Irish Language.

Objectives:
1. Projects/initiatives that encourage Irish language community capacity building, mentoring and volunteering. It is envisaged that this scheme will inspire better developed Irish language communities to partner with newer or developing language communities to share resources and build better networks and encourage volunteering.

OR

2. Community engagement projects/initiatives to build positive relations, raise awareness and understanding, address perceptions and promote respect for the Irish Language.

Key point: There is a change in the eligible expenditure caps.

Minority Communities

Threshold: £500 - £1,000

Aim:
To support Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist (PUL) focused community projects/initiatives **or** to support Black, Minority Ethnic (BME) focused community projects/initiatives.

Objectives:
To support projects which fit into one of the following themes:

1. **Cultural expression**

This theme is an open call for projects/initiatives that positively promotes minority community culture, tradition, and identity.

2. **Positively engaging minority communities**

This theme is an open call for community engagement projects/initiatives to build positive relations, raise awareness and understanding, address perceptions and promote respect for minority communities.

Key point:
There are changes in the eligible expenditure caps.

Sports Programmes

Threshold: £500 – £2,500

Aim:
The primary purpose of this is to support organisations from the sporting, community, and voluntary sectors in the delivery of Sports Programmes and Competitive Sports Events, with a focus on the delivery of sports activities and events which complement the Council's Sports Facility and Sports & Physical Activity Strategy.

Objective:
Schemes should run for a minimum of five full days or ten half days. Projects must increase and support the number of people adopting and sustaining a sporting lifestyle and complement the NMDDC Sports Facility Strategy. Please see Guidance Notes for link.

Key points:

- Applicants should refer to the Council's Sports Facility and Sports & Physical Activity Strategy in their application.
- Projects must be completed by **31st October 2027**.

Arts, Culture & Heritage Fund

Threshold: £2,000 - £10,000

Aim:
To support projects that improve the development of the culture, arts and heritage offering throughout the district and complement the Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy 2022 – 2027 which can be downloaded from the Council website.

Objectives:
- Projects must increase engagement in arts and cultural activities, create outreach opportunities and help to positively showcase the District's arts, culture and heritage offering.
- Projects will also be considered that open-up, animate and promote our historical sites to visitors and local residents and bring to life the myths, legends and stories of our district.

The Guidance Notes

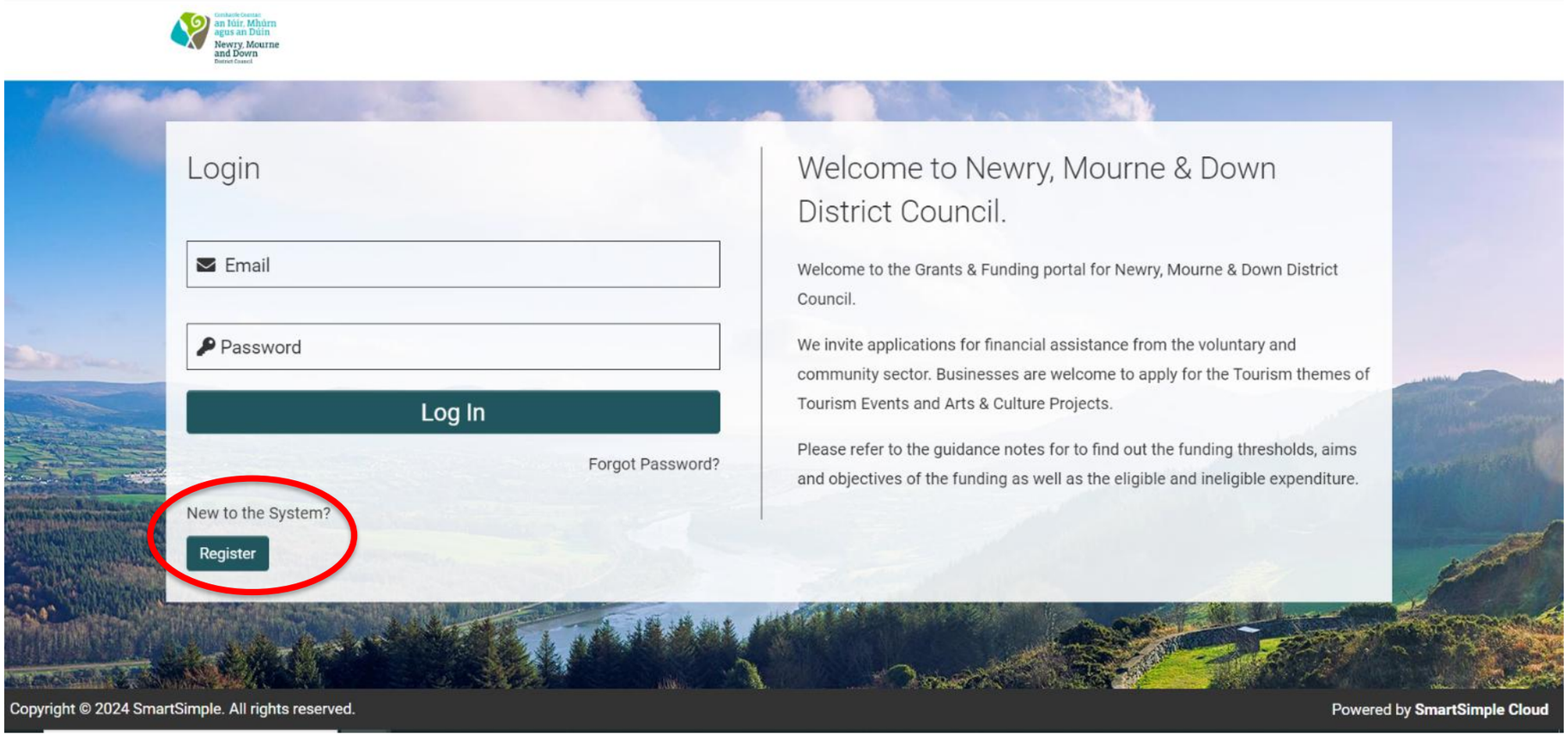
Each theme has its own Guidance Notes available for download. Before applying it is **vital** to read the Guidance Notes, which provide the following information:

Section Number	Section Title
1	About these Guidance Notes
2	How do I apply?
3	Quick Summary
4	About this Fund
5	Can I apply?
6	What is a Community Event or Festival?
7	What can be funded?
8	What cannot be funded?
9	Before you start your application
10	Completing your application
11	Assessment process
12	How applications are scored
13	Appeals

Account Registration

Applications must be completed online via the Electronic Grant Management System (EGMS).

You can register for an account at: https://newrymournedowndc.smartsimpleuk.com



Registration Options

I am applying as:

Business
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Limited Company
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Co-Operative
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Community Body
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Registered Charity
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Other
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

Sole Trader
Please choose the category which contains your main work organisation so that you can register yourself.

When setting up a new account you will first need to select what sort of organisation you represent from the registration options.

This will later determine what documentation is required and your theme eligibility.

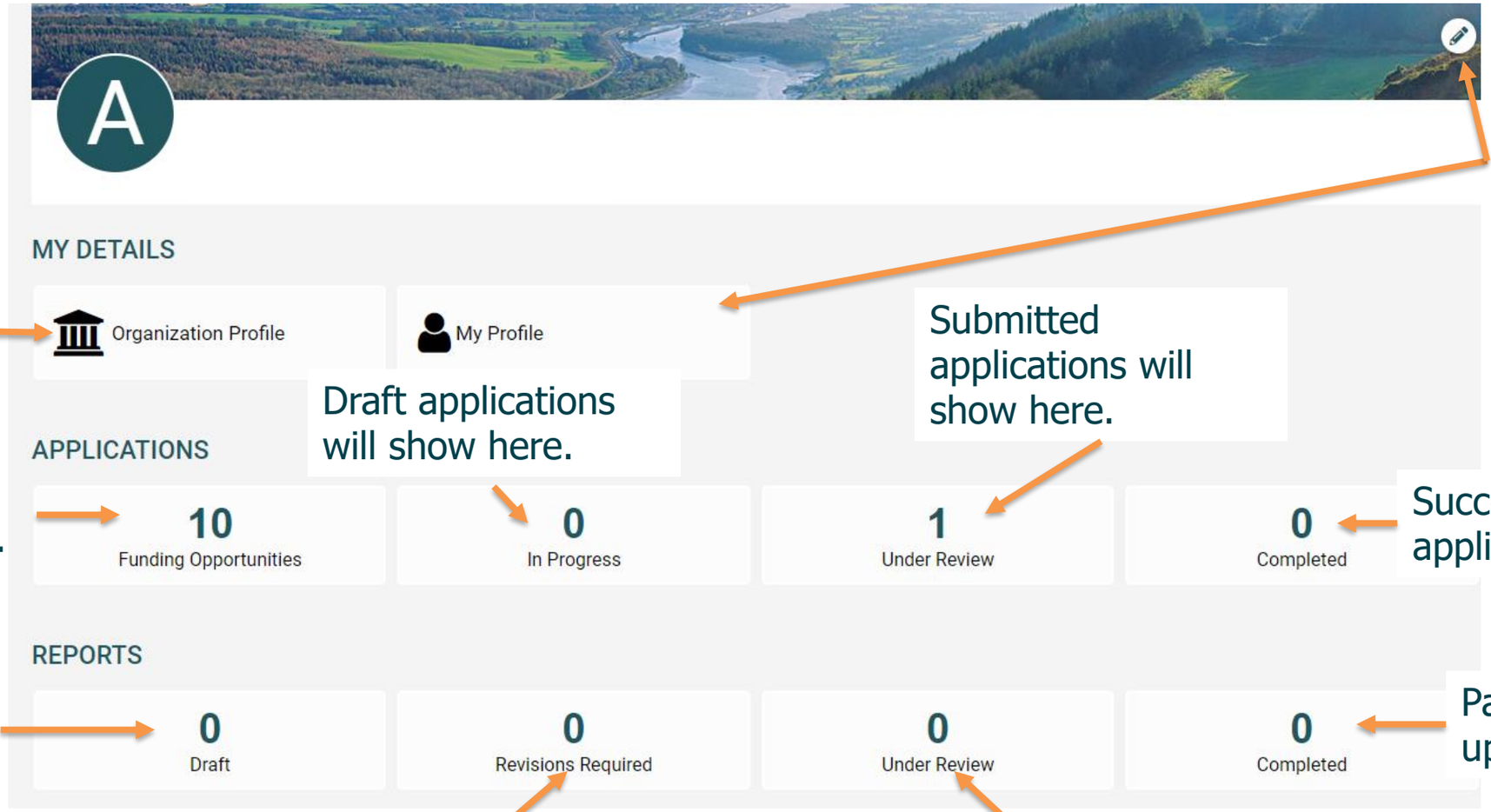
Registration Complete

Registration Complete

Thank you for registering. You will receive an email with a link to create a password and login within the next 5 minutes. If you do not receive this email, please check your spam folder.

Login here

SmartSimple: Applicant Landing Page



Contact details can be updated here

Upload legal documents and accounts here

Draft applications will show here.

Submitted applications will show here.

Open themes or calls will show here.

Successful & unsuccessful applications will show here.

Claim forms will show up here

Paid claims will show up here

Reverted claims will show up here for corrections

Claims submitted for processing will show here

Opportunity Details	Guidelines	Eligibility Criteria
Suicide Prevention & Emotional Wellbeing **Deadline: 12/01/2026 12:00 PM** Apply Now	2026-2027_-_Call_1_Suicide_Prevention_and_Emotional_Wellbeing_Guidance_Notes_-_FINAL.pdf	To increase public awareness of mental health, emotional wellbeing, and suicide prevention by encouraging community engagement in local activities which promote good mental health.
Local biodiversity **Deadline: 12/01/2026 12:00 PM** Apply Now	2026-2027_Call_1_Local_Biodiversity_Enhancement_Guidance_Notes_-_FINAL.pdf	Assist in implementation of local biodiversity action through delivery of practical conservation projects.
Community Growing **Deadline: 12/01/2026 12:00 PM**	2026-2027_-_Call_1_Community_Growing__Let_s_Grow_NMD__Guidance_Notes_-_FINAL.pdf	This funding is to promote and develop Community Growing for food growing – i.e. fruit and vegetable growing. Projects should be principally based on fruit and/or vegetable community growing and not solely for flower or non-edible plant growing, memorial

Eligibility criteria appears here

Available funding themes appear here

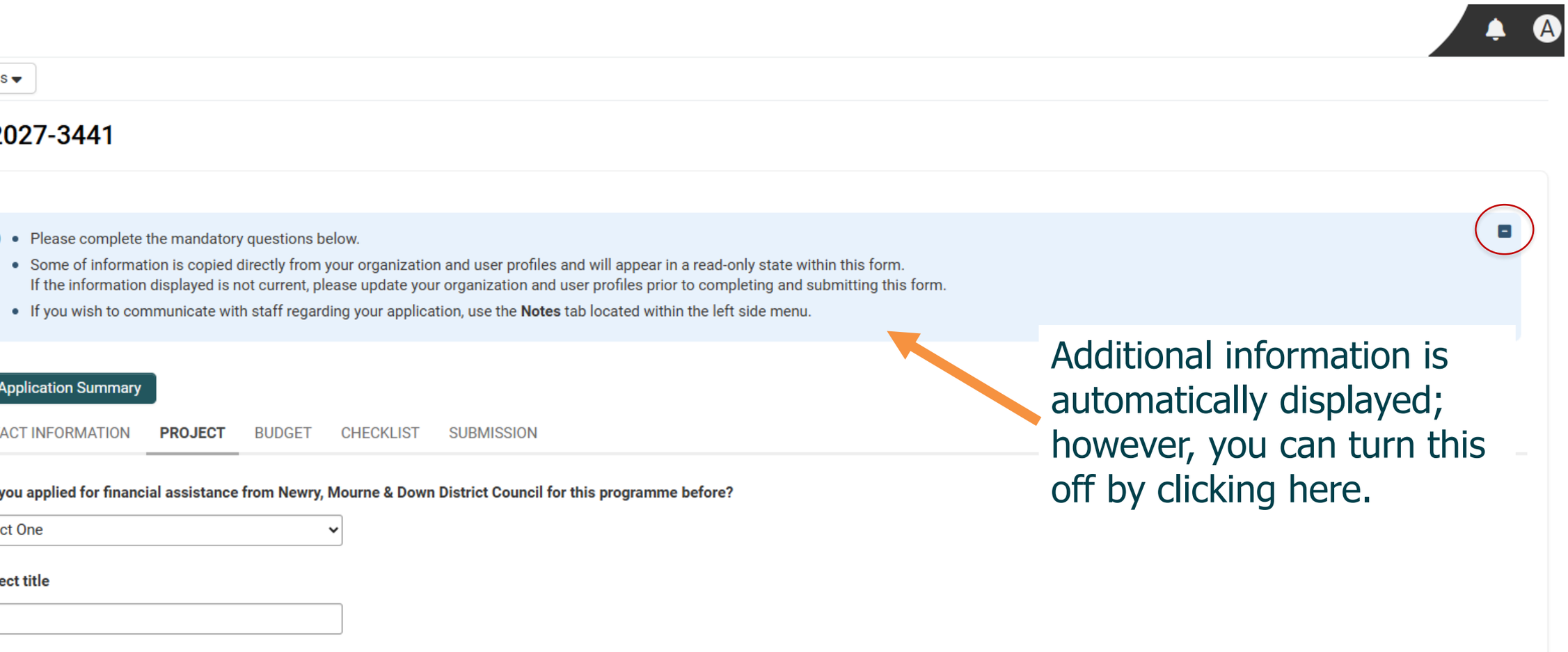
Guidance notes appear here



Return to the dashboard by clicking Home.

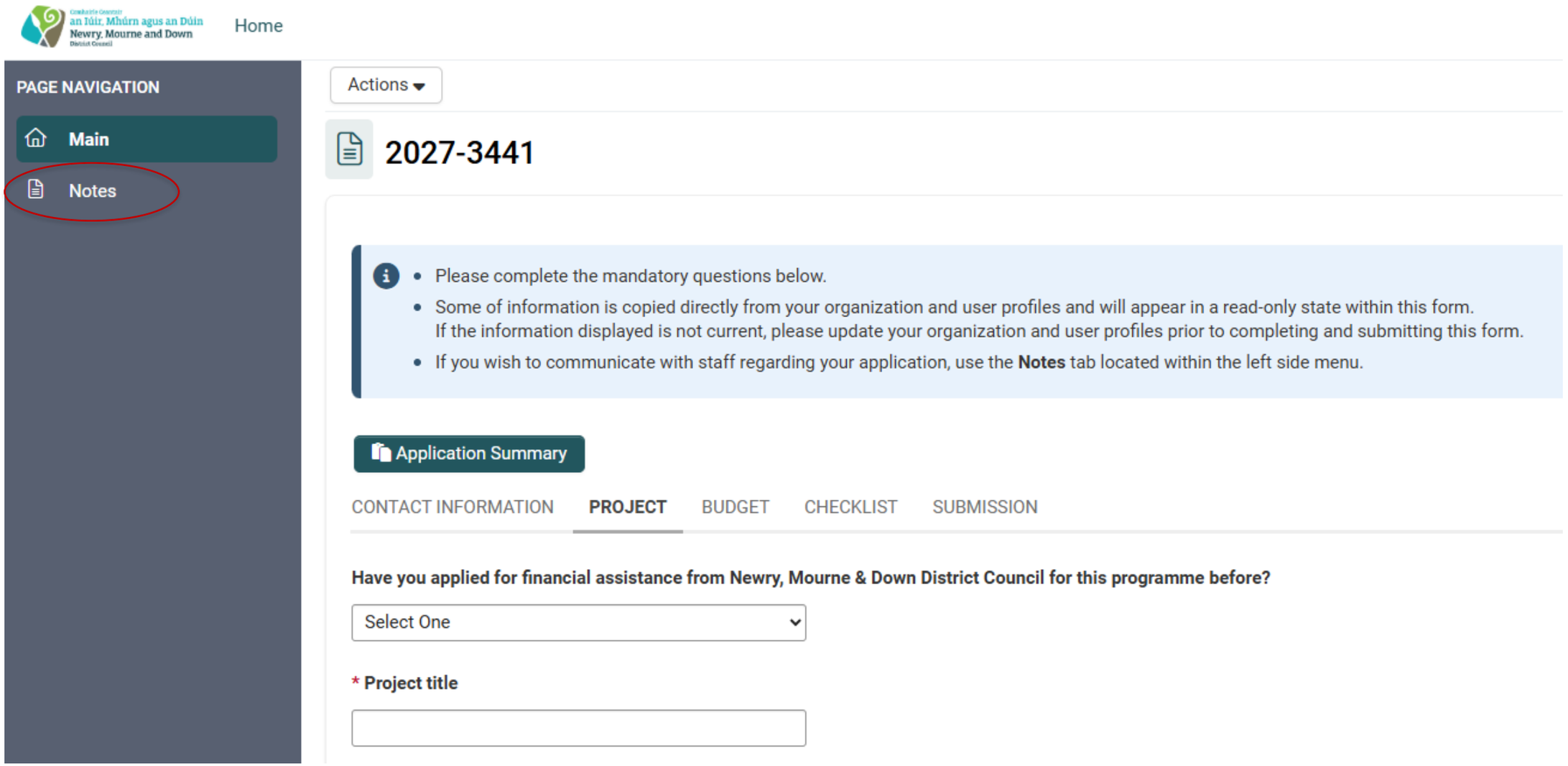
You can drag and drop files or use the browse files tab to upload relevant documents.

Completing the Application – Information Box

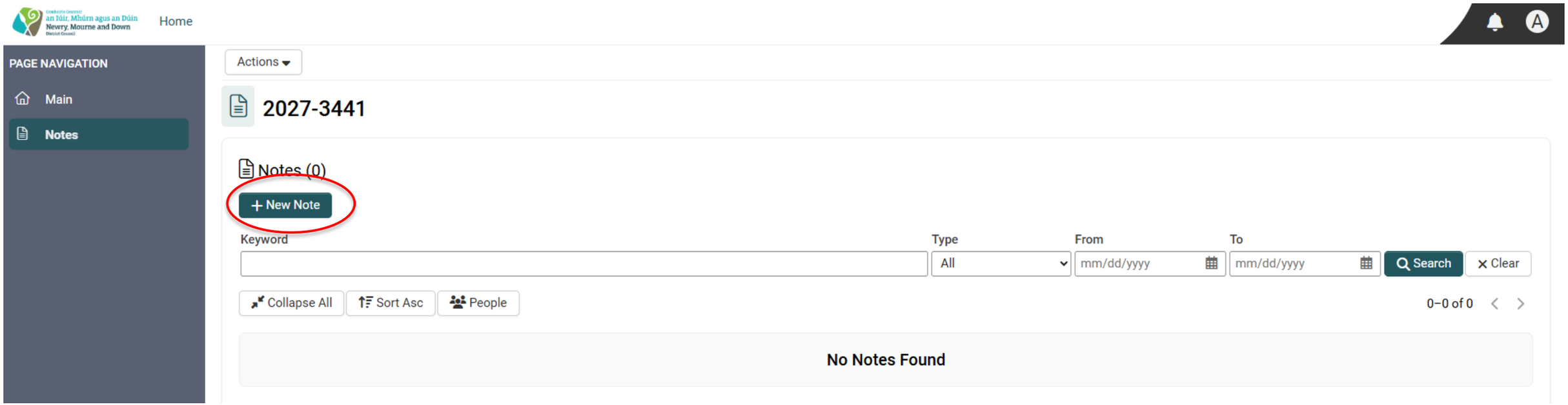


Additional information is automatically displayed; however, you can turn this off by clicking here.

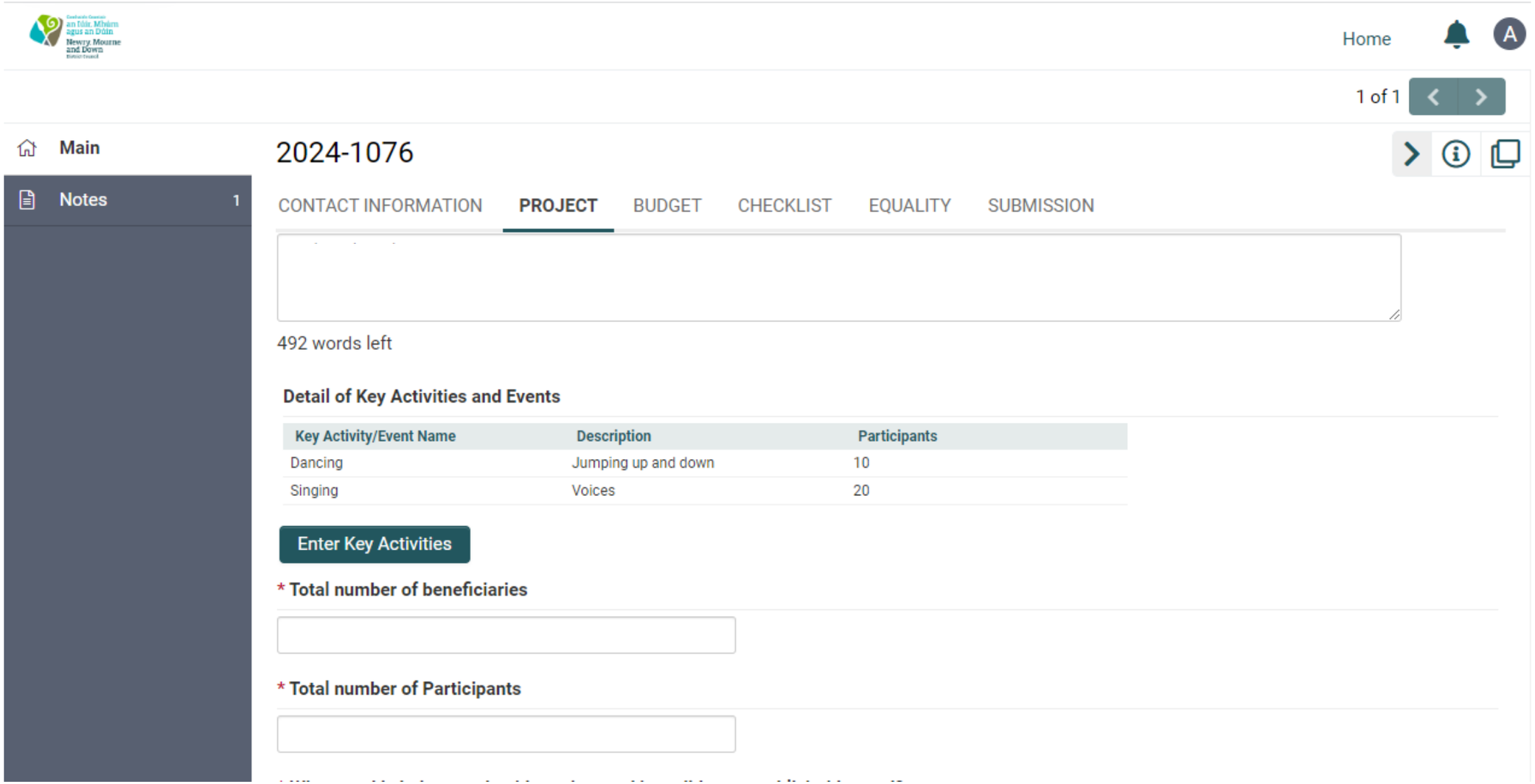
Completing the Application – Project page Notes feature



Completing the Application – Adding notes



Completing the Application – Key Activities table



Application Assessment

The application assessment process comprises of two stages:

Stage 1: Basic Eligibility Check – All of this stage must be passed in order for the application to be scored and pass to Stage 2. The guidance notes highlight what is included in the basic eligibility.

Stage 2: Full Project Appraisal and Scoring – This is where the details and benefits of your project are assessed and scored. All applicants should review the assessment criteria provided in Section 13 How applications are scored of the guidance notes. Questions are scored 0-5.

Tips for completing your application:

- Thoroughly read the guidance notes for the theme you are applying for before beginning your application.

- Each question will only be assessed on the information provided for that question, with the exception of the key activities question which takes into account the aims and objectives provided in the project description. The information provided in these two questions will also be used to verify your project end date.

- Don’t assume the assessment panel has any prior knowledge of your group or project.

- Keep answers concise, relevant to the question being asked, and the funding being sought.

- Activity information should be sufficiently detailed that an assessor, in theory, could turn up to participate in the activity and know exactly what to expect.

Groups will be notified of the outcome of their financial assistance application around **12 weeks** after the closing date.

Procurement Guidelines

All successful projects **must** adhere to Council's procurement requirements:

Total order value	Procurement steps required
£0.01 to £10,000	Value for Money (VfM) Applicant's must complete a 'Value for Money' (VfM) exercise for each item and show this has been carried out by demonstrating evidence that two prices have been sought, where possible. For some specialist supplies or services, there may only be one supplier in the market. If this is the case, sufficient justification for not seeking a second price check should be documented. VfM Form should be completed and submitted on request.
£10,000 to £50,000	Request for Quotation (RfQ) Three written quotations are sought, where possible. For some specialist supplies or services there may only be one supplier in the market. If this is the case, sufficient justification for not seeking additional price checks should be documented. RfQ Form to be completed and submitted on request.
Over £50,000	For contracts over £50,000 please contact grantsandfunding@nmandd.org to discuss procurement options.

Questions?

For any additional information contact the Grants & Funding Unit:

- E-mail : grantsandfunding@nmandd.org
- Phone: 0330 137 4040

