

Physical Activity Grants 2026

Essential Guidance for
Applicants



Physical Activity Grants

Being active can have a significant impact on living well with Parkinson's, regardless of symptoms or time since diagnosis.

The Parkinson's UK Physical Activity Grants Programme supports activity providers to develop more physical activity opportunities across the UK for inactive people with Parkinson's to become and stay active, and improve social wellbeing as a result of attending the project.

This guide will tell you more about the programme and the type of projects it is designed to fund.

Please fully read this guidance document before applying.



The Grants Programme

Priorities for funded projects

Who can apply?

The following types of organisations can apply:

- Occupational Therapist
- Community Interest Company
- Local Authority
- Sole Trader
- Physiotherapist
- NHS
- Commercial Organisation
- Private Sports Club
- Parkinson's UK Local Group
- Charity/Charitable Trust
- Community Ammateur Sports Club
- Constituted Community Group
- NGO/NGB
- Not for Profit organisation
- For profit organisation

Programme Priorities

What we are
looking for

We are looking for innovative and new projects that will:

- Support people with Parkinson's to take part in movement-based activities that **help build their confidence** and **encourage a growing interest in being physically active**
- and/or
- Support people with Parkinson's **who are currently inactive** to **begin engaging** in physical activity and to **maintain ongoing participation**



Please note: We will not fund existing provision or provision that is for people with Parkinson's who are currently active.

Gateway activities

We recognise that some people may find it more difficult to engage in Physical Activity opportunities for a variety of reasons so we have broadened our reach to include 'Gateway Activities'. These are activities that support people with Parkinson's to take part in movement-based activities that help build confidence, and encourage a growing interest in being physically active.

This year the grants will be focusing on people with Parkinson's who are currently inactive, supporting them to begin engaging in physical activity and to maintain ongoing participation.

Examples of gateway activities can include:

- Art based activities such as theatrical acting, musical and circus skills
- Singing and movement
- Playing large musical instruments that requires big movements like Samba Drumming
- Gardening or Horticulture projects

What does someone who is currently inactive mean?

When we talk about someone with Parkinson's who is currently inactive, we mean a person who is not taking part in regular physical activity that supports their health, mobility, or wellbeing. Being 'inactive' doesn't refer to motivation or ability, it simply means that the person is not yet engaging in the recommended levels of movement that can help them live well.

People who are currently inactive might:

- Move very little during a typical week or only do light day-to-day tasks, with no structured or intentional activity
- Want to be more active but feel unsure where to start or face barriers such as fatigue, pain, balance concerns, anxiety, or lack of suitable opportunities
- Have recently been diagnosed and haven't yet explored physical activity options or have stopped being active due to changes in symptoms or life circumstances

Projects funded through the Physical Activity Grants programme should be designed to gently support these individuals to begin moving more, build confidence, and develop a positive relationship with physical activity.

Reaching Underserved/Underrepresented Communities

We encourage new projects that will reach and engage with a wide range of people with Parkinson's, especially those who may be from the following groups:

- People who are inactive, or active at low levels
- Newly diagnosed
- Young onset
- People and groups seen as 'under represented' including socially isolated, ethnic communities or those that are not digitally connected
- People from marginalised communities/protected characteristics
- People who are not engaged with Parkinson's UK
- People who are still working

Eligibility Criteria

The fundamentals of an
applicant's eligibility to apply

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- be based in the UK
- have a business or community bank account as funds cannot be transferred into a personal account. Written confirmation from the chair of a Parkinson's UK local group confirming that they can hold the funding on your behalf will be considered acceptable
- where applicable, provide evidence of your [articles of association](#) and [constitution or other relevant governing documents](#) (this doesn't apply to organisations that are set up for profit)
- ensure that all relevant qualifications are held and insurance is in place prior to the delivery of the project
- Ensure that the target audience for the project is people with Parkinsons/the Parkinson's community who are not currently active

Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Providers who have already received a Physical Activity Grant in previous years are welcome to apply, but they must meet the following conditions:

- The project must be a new project. A duplication of your previous project or application will not be accepted
- The End of Project Report for your previous grant must be submitted and signed off by our grants team prior to making an application
- Funds from your previous grant must be spent in full

Our position on applications from Regional/National Organisations

We recognise that some regional or national organisations may wish to apply for a Parkinson's UK Physical Activity Grant to support activity in different local areas. This can result in multiple applications being submitted by the same parent organisation. To ensure fairness, each parent organisation may apply for up to **£6,000 in total** (submitted as separate applications). We strongly encourage organisations to coordinate internally so that locally based providers in areas of greatest need are supported to submit applications.

Project eligibility criteria

There are a number of expectations we expect from the project:

- Projects must run for a minimum of **12** weeks and a maximum of **52** weeks and must start within **12** weeks of receiving the grant
- Each participant must be offered at least **12** weeks of consecutive Physical Activity opportunity
- **All** match funding must already be secured before applying for this grant
- Applicants must demonstrate a clear and genuine need for their project. This is essential because it proves that it addresses a genuine, urgent gap and will in essence create a measurable impact.

We have a responsibility to exercise due diligence when grant making, so we adhere to our governance framework at various stages of the grant process. Applicants who don't meet the governance requirements will be deemed ineligible for this funding.

Parkinson's UK is an accredited Living Wage employer. This means we encourage organisations that employ staff to become an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Quality Provision

Identifying good physical
activity sessions

Identifying good quality provision

What does a really good physical activity session look and feel like for someone living with Parkinson's?

- **Sessions should be well-planned**, inclusive, and supportive of people who may be inactive or lacking confidence.
- **The environment should feel welcoming**, with participants able to take part safely and at their own pace.
- **Instructors should understand the needs** and barriers of the group and adapt activities appropriately.
- **Activities should be accessible**, clearly explained, and designed to build confidence, enjoyment, and physical ability.
- **Sessions should leave participants feeling valued**, capable, and motivated to continue being active

Minimum Essential Standards

The bare minimum essential
criteria for a provider

Minimum essential standards

Here are the minimum essential standards we look for when funding the delivery of physical activity sessions in the community:

- **Relevant qualifications and training** — the instructor should hold the relevant and appropriate physical activity qualifications that are recognised in the UK
- **Instructor/Coach led group sessions** — all funded sessions **must** be instructor / coach-led to ensure they are safe, well-structured, and delivered to a good standard
- **Experience with the population** — the organisation should understand the needs, abilities, and barriers of people with Parkinson's or similar long-term health conditions
- **Safeguarding compliance** — the organisation should have up-to-date safeguarding training, DBS checks (where required), and clear safeguarding procedures in place
- **Insurance** – the organisation should hold the appropriate public liability insurance or other relevant insurances, and evidence risk assessments for venues and activities

Minimum essential standards

- **Risk management** — the organisations **must** complete a risk assessment for the activities and ensure it covers everything that would be expected
- **Inclusive practice** — the organisation should have the ability to adapt activities so people can participate safely and at their own pace
- **Accessibility and environment** — sessions should be delivered in a safe, welcoming, and accessible setting
- **Professional conduct** — the organisation has reliable communication, clear boundaries, and a commitment to participant wellbeing
- **Monitoring and reporting capability** — the organisation demonstrates willingness and capacity to collect basic data and feedback
- **Sustainability awareness** — the organisation demonstrates an understanding of how their delivery fits into wider community provision and how it might continue beyond the grant

Applying for a grant

What you should know before
starting your application

When you can apply

In 2026 the application period will be open from **Monday 2 March at 12pm**. It is a rolling programme and applications will be accepted until all of the funding has been allocated.

Size of grant available

Applications can be made for a minimum of £500 up to a maximum of £3,000. Up to 100% of costs are available if required (if the criteria is met, to a maximum of £3,000 and at the discretion of the awarding panel).



Please note: Although this is a rolling programme, we will close early should funds be allocated sooner due to the number of applications received and high demand.

What we fund

Examples of what this fund will support include:

- **New** physical activity provision for people with Parkinson's who are not currently active
- Buying equipment that will facilitate or enhance activities, or essential maintenance / replacement of equipment that will lead to greater participation or increased impact
 - This is a capital cost and you can only apply for up to **£750**
- Facility hire, should you need to hire gym space or a studio
- Trainer, Instructor or Coaching fees, for the delivery of the activity you wish to set up
- Coaching qualifications for **volunteers** up to £300, such as a volunteer gaining a coaching qualification to enable sustained delivery
- Online provision for up to **£1,000**
- Marketing materials (e.g. printing costs for leaflets or posters) for up to **£100**
- Core costs of up to **£300**

What we don't fund

The grant will not support:

- Costs for existing activities or for people who are already active
- Relevant Insurances
- Purchasing any items that are not directly involved with project delivery
- Activity providers for individuals or personal trainers delivering one to one training
- Applications from individuals to participate in activity, such as gym memberships
- The cost of qualifications or professional development for **activity providers / instructors**
- Transport costs (including travel costs) for activity providers / instructors and participants
- Refreshments
- Competition entry fees or trophies, medals, or prizes

What we don't fund

The grant will not support:

- Accommodation
- Overseas transport
- Feasibility studies or research
- IT or technology not directly used in sport or physical activity
- Costs associated with supporting elite athletes
- Retrospective projects or activities
- Online provision where over **£1,000** is requested
- Your organisation subcontracting the grant out to other organisations / businesses
- One Day / One Off Events

The application process

1. Carry out your evidence of need. This is essential because it proves that it addresses a genuine, urgent gap and will create a measurable impact. It justifies that the proposed work is necessary, prevents duplicating existing services, and ensures that funds are targeted where they are most effective
2. Applications are submitted through an online form on our grants web page and you'll receive a copy of your application once you've submitted it. An [Application Form Checklist](#) is available to support you with completing your application form. If you require the application in another format please contact physicalactivity@parkinsons.org.uk
3. A panel of Parkinson's UK staff will assess applications against a set scoring criteria and your application will be shared with the relevant Parkinson's UK staff as necessary

Once you've completed and submitted your application, it will take approximately up to **5** weeks for you to be notified about the decision on your application and a further **5** weeks to receive the payment.

Sustainability

Sustainability is an important part of the physical activity grants because we want projects to make a lasting difference for people with Parkinson's.

By thinking about how your activity can continue beyond the initial funding, you help ensure that people with Parkinson's can keep benefiting from safe, enjoyable physical activity over time. This might involve building local partnerships, developing skills within your team, or planning for future funding.

A sustainable approach helps your project grow stronger and supports long-term impact in the community.

The following are examples of methods you can consider when designing your sustainability plan:

Plan Early

- Identify long-term hosts or funders
- Set sustainability milestones

Sustainability

Short-term sustainability measures

- Diversifying Funding Streams
- Participant-Supported Models
- Embedding Sessions in Existing Provision
- Optimise Existing Resources
- Boost Visibility and Referrals

Longer-term sustainability measures

- Training and Capacity Building
- Partnership-Based Sustainability
- Programme Design for Sustainability
- Boost Visibility and Referrals

Evidence of Need

Evidencing the need for your project helps us understand why your work matters and who it will benefit. Clear, relevant evidence shows that your idea responds to real priorities within the community, supporting fair and consistent assessment. By drawing on data, lived experience and community or local insight, you demonstrate that your project is grounded, timely, and shaped by the people it aims to support.

The following are different ways in which you can evidence the need for your project:

Referrals and Professional Insight

- Letters or statements from physiotherapists, OTs, Parkinson's nurses, or GPs
- Social prescribers reporting unmet need or lack of suitable options for people with Parkinson's
- Community health teams identifying exercise as a priority

Evidence of Need

Local Data and Statistics

- Prevalence of Parkinson's in the local area (e.g. number of people diagnosed, ageing population trends)
- Rates of inactivity, falls, or long-term condition prevalence locally
- Waiting lists or gaps in local rehabilitation, physio, or exercise pathways

Alignment With National or Local Strategies

- References to physical-activity, falls-prevention, or long-term condition priorities
- Local health strategies emphasising movement, wellbeing, or community support



Please note: you can access our Prevalence and Incidence of Parkinson's in the UK interactive data dashboard by [clicking here](#).

Evidence of Need

Feedback From People With Parkinson's / Barriers they identify

- Short quotes from people expressing interest or describing barriers they face
- Surveys or polls showing demand for specific types of activity
- Conversations captured through local groups, peer support, or taster sessions

Evidence of Service Gaps / Demographic or Geographic Factors

- No existing Parkinson's-specific exercise classes in the area
- Existing classes are full, have long waiting lists, are too far away or inaccessible (cost, transport, timing)
- Areas with ageing populations or high long-term condition prevalence
- High deprivation areas where cost is a barrier

Evidence of Need

Feedback From People With Parkinson's / Barriers they identify

- Short quotes from people expressing interest or describing barriers they face
- Surveys or polls showing demand for specific types of activity
- Conversations captured through local groups, peer support, or taster sessions

Evidence of Service Gaps / Demographic or Geographic Factors

- No existing Parkinson's-specific exercise classes in the area
- Existing classes are full, have long waiting lists, are too far away or inaccessible (cost, transport, timing)
- Areas with ageing populations or high long-term condition prevalence
- High deprivation areas where cost is a barrier

Evidence of Need

Pilot or Taster Session Findings

- Attendance numbers from trial sessions
- Positive feedback or requests for more sessions
- Evidence that people travelled long distances because nothing local exists

Organisational Insight

- Past experience delivering similar sessions and seeing unmet demand
- Evidence from previous projects (attendance, waiting lists, drop-off reasons)
- Staff or volunteer observations about local need

Evidence of Need

Partnership Intelligence

- Local Parkinson's UK groups reporting unmet need
- Community organisations identifying gaps in accessible activity for people with Parkinson's
- Local authority or ICS priorities that align with the project

Ineligible applications

Please note that ineligible applications (based on the project eligibility criteria above) and non-compliant applications will not be considered and you will be informed about this outcome when all applicants receive their outcome email which will take approximately up to **5** weeks.

Non-compliant applications include:

- Applications missing out sections or questions in the application form
- Applications which are based on incorrect information such as incorrect project dates, incorrect grant amount, incorrect type of activity proposed
- Applications not proposing activity for people with Parkinson's
- Applications not meeting the grants' priorities or having different priorities
- Applications not providing adequate information
- Applicants not consulting with the right people

Our position on using AI in your submitted application

We recognise that Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be a valuable tool when planning a project or articulating your language. Whilst we accept some use of AI in your funding application, we would strongly discourage you to overuse the tool as it can compromise the integrity of the application process.

It is often clear when an organisation uses AI to write their application, as we notice similar or identical language and content within numerous funding applications. Applications written without excessive use of AI help us to understand your organisation and your unique project proposal, but when they are written by AI tools it compromises the authenticity and can be deemed as unachievable or unrealistic. It can also make your application difficult to understand regarding what you are planning to do.

Where we deem your application to have overused AI, we may ask for further information or we may decline it on this basis.

Application Results

What happens after your
application is assessed

Successful applicants

We will require the following documents to be submitted before any payments can be made by the given deadline:

- Signed Grant Agreement
- Bank statement or confirmation of account letter (this must be for a business/community bank account as funds cannot be transferred into a personal account)
- Any requested supporting evidence/documentation

All information provided for processing your funding must match the supporting documentation exactly. Any discrepancies may delay your payment by a further 6 weeks.

If we are unable to obtain the requested documentation after three attempts we reserve the right to retract our award offer.

Successful applicants

We strongly encourage all applicants to complete the free [Parkinson's UK Awareness Course](#) if you haven't already. This will give you a good understanding of how you can prepare to work with people with Parkinson's.

Once we have processed your funding, we will send you a welcome pack which will include information about payments, data gathering, evaluation, GDPR UK requirements and other useful information such as:

- Ideas on marketing and promoting your project
- Tips on how to effectively run your project
- Keeping your project going (fundraising and sustainability)

Reporting Requirements

It's a requirement that all successful applicants provide timely reports at different stages of their project. Clear reporting helps us stay connected to how your project is progressing and what you're learning, so we can understand the difference your work is making and offer support along the way.

You'll be required to complete an **Interim Project Form** in the earlier stages of your project. This will help us to understand if your project is on track, and act as an opportunity to troubleshoot and manage risk early on.

You'll also be required to complete an **End of Project Form** when requested, to capture and report outcomes and impact and produce at least one **case study / testimonial** from a participant with Parkinson's.

Some projects may be invited to take part in more **detailed insight gathering** by the Grants team at Parkinson's UK during the lifetime of your project, where in person visits may be carried out.

Unsuccessful applicants

Whilst we endeavour to fund more physical activity provision for people with Parkinson's, it's not possible to fund all of the great ideas due to a limited amount of funding, which inevitably means that there will be some unsuccessful applications. You'll be notified via email if you haven't been successful in this funding round.

You are welcome to reapply again but please note that the pot is finite and there is no guarantee that there will be funds available.

Please be aware that due to the number of applications we receive, we cannot provide detailed individual feedback. If you require more detailed feedback you'll need to email:

physicalactivity@parkinsons.org.uk

Appeals process

We understand that receiving the news that your application has been unsuccessful can be disappointing and you may feel like the decision was unfair or incorrect. In this circumstance we recommend that you take a short time away from the application. If after this period you still feel that the decision made was unfair or incorrect then please follow this process:

1. Email physicalactivity@parkinsons.org.uk, within 10 working days of receiving your result email, and state your reasons why you would like to challenge the decision made
2. You will be invited to attend an online meeting where the Physical Activity Grants Manager will discuss the reasons why your application was unsuccessful in more detail, and give suggestions of where improvements could be made
3. After this meeting if you still feel that the decision was unfair or incorrect, email physicalactivity@parkinsons.org.uk again. Your case will be sent for review by the Head of Community Programmes and Group Development, who will make contact with you with a final decision within 10 working days of receiving your second email. Please note that you cannot appeal this final decision

Frequently Asked

Questions
Additional information you
may want to know

Frequently Asked Questions – Eligibility

Who can apply for a Physical Activity Grant?

Applicants must be based in the UK, have a business or community bank account, and ensure their project is designed for people with Parkinson's who are not currently active. You can find more information about [the eligibility criteria here](#).

Can previous grant holders apply again?

Yes, as long as the new project is genuinely new, previous funds have been fully spent, and the End of Project Report has been submitted and approved.

What counts as a 'new' project?

A new project is an activity that has not been delivered before and is not a repeat or duplication of a previous grant-funded project.

Frequently Asked Questions – Eligibility

Can for-profit organisations apply?

Yes, as long as the project itself is not-for-profit and meets all eligibility criteria. You may need to provide relevant governing documents.

Do activity providers need specific qualifications?

Yes. All relevant qualifications and insurance must be in place before delivery. You can find more qualification guidance [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions – Costs & Funding

How much funding can I apply for?

You can apply for between £500 and £3,000, with up to 100% of project costs covered if the criteria are met.

Do I need match funding?

No. You can apply for up to 100% of costs. Any match funding you do have must already be secured before applying.

What costs are not eligible?

We cannot support existing activities, one-to-one training, transport costs, refreshments, or items not directly linked to project delivery. [See the full list of ineligible costs here.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Costs & Funding

Can I apply for equipment?

Yes, but only equipment directly linked to delivering the activity. Capital items are capped at £750.

Can I include online sessions?

Yes, but only where the total request is under £1,000.

Can I include refreshments or social time?

No. Refreshments and social-only activities cannot be funded.

Frequently Asked Questions – Costs & Funding

Can I apply for transport costs?

No. Transport for participants or instructors is not eligible.

Can I subcontract delivery?

No. Subcontracting the grant to other organisations or businesses is not permitted.

Frequently Asked Questions – Project Delivery

How long should my project run?

Projects must run for a minimum of 12 weeks and a maximum of 52 weeks, and must start within 12 weeks of receiving the grant.

Do I need to evidence the need for my project?

Yes. Applicants must demonstrate a clear and genuine need. This is essential because it proves that it addresses a genuine, urgent gap and will in essence create a measurable impact. [Learn more about evidencing need here.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Project Delivery

What types of projects will the grant support?

We fund new physical activity opportunities for people with Parkinson's who are currently inactive, including gateway activities that help build confidence and interest in being active.

What does sustainability mean for this grant?

Sustainability refers to how your project can continue beyond the initial funding—through partnerships, skills development, or future fundraising. [You can find more sustainability guidance here.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Application Process

How long will it take to receive a decision?

You'll be notified of the outcome within approximately 5 weeks of submitting your application, with payment following within a further 5 weeks.

Can I use AI to help write my application?

Limited use of AI is acceptable, but overuse may compromise the authenticity of your application and could lead to it being declined.

Frequently Asked Questions – Application Process

Can I appeal if my application is unsuccessful?

Yes. There is a clear appeals process involving written reasons, a meeting with the Grants Manager, and a final review by the Head of Community Programmes and Group Development. [You can find more information about the Appeals Process here.](#)

Can I reapply if I'm unsuccessful?

Yes. You're welcome to reapply, though funding is limited and not guaranteed. You can request more detailed feedback by emailing the grants team.

Frequently Asked Questions – Successful Applicants

What documents do I need to provide before my grant can be paid?

You'll need to submit a signed Grant Agreement, a recent bank statement or confirmation letter for a business/community account, and any other requested supporting documents. All requested documents must correspond with each other and the details must match exactly.

What happens if the information in my documents doesn't match?

Any discrepancies may delay payment by up to a further 6 weeks. If we're unable to obtain the correct documentation after three attempts, we may need to withdraw the award offer.

What happens if I can't provide the required information on time?

Delays in submitting required documents or reports may delay payment or affect your eligibility for future funding. If you're experiencing difficulties, please contact the Grants Team as early as possible so we can support you.

Frequently Asked Questions – Successful Applicants

Will I receive support once my project is funded?

Yes. You'll receive a welcome pack with information on payments, data gathering, evaluation, GDPR requirements, marketing tips, and guidance on running and sustaining your project.

Do I need to complete any training?

We strongly encourage all successful applicants to complete the free Parkinson's UK Awareness Course, which helps you prepare to work confidently and safely with people with Parkinson's. [You can access the awareness course here.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Reporting Requirements

Why is reporting required?

Clear reporting helps us stay connected to how your project is progressing and what you're learning, so we can understand the difference your work is making and offer support along the way.

What reporting will be required?

Successful applicants must complete an Interim Project Form and an End of Project Form, including at least one participant case study.

Will Parkinson's UK visit my project?

Some projects may be invited to take part in more detailed insight gathering, which may include in-person visits.