



National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF) – detailed guidance for applicants

Summary

Set out below is a summary of key information in respect of the NLRF.

Summary of key information	
What's the purpose and objectives of the NLRF?	<p>To enable the reopening of public leisure facilities and activities, post lockdown and to support a recovery of the public service leisure sector, to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term.</p> <p>The objectives of the NLRF are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure the continuation of public sector leisure services nationally• enhance health and wellbeing and support physical activity across England – contributing to the government's objectives around healthy lifestyles, reducing obesity and addressing widening inequality.

	<p>This investment is intended to ensure that, by 31 March 2021, successful applicants are either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fully or partially reopened (subject to continued coronavirus (Covid-19) restrictions); or • operating on a sustainable, cost-efficient basis so that, where relevant, they can reopen more fully at a later date.
Who can apply?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities in England with external operators for public sector leisure facilities. • Local authorities using external leisure operators up to 20 March 2020 that have since brought leisure provision in-house.
Who must the application come from?	Applications must be submitted by the local authority. All applications must evidence that they've been submitted with the provider's support.
When is the deadline for applications?	<p>Expressions of Interest period:</p> <p>Open: Monday 14 December</p> <p>Close: Noon on Monday 21 December</p> <p>Application period:</p> <p>Open: Monday 14 December</p> <p>Close: Noon on Friday 15 January</p> <p>You must submit an EoI before you can apply. Applications received after the closing date won't be considered for funding.</p>
How much can be applied for, per application?	Eligible applicants will be able to apply for funding to assist their recovery plan between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021.

	To help ensure an equitable distribution of the NLRF, a Notional Funding Allocation (NFA) has been calculated for each eligible local authority. Applicants will be notified of their NFA once an Expression of Interest has been submitted.
When must the recovery activity take place?	Funding must be used and applied to the relevant service during the period 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021.
When will applications be decided?	All applicants to the scheme will be notified of the outcome of their application by late February 2021.
What information will applicants need to provide?	<p>Applicants will be required to provide a Recovery Plan through the completion of an application form consisting of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Historic and forecast financial information ii. Operational information iii. Narrative responses to standard questions covering existing financial support, the facilities and activities to be provided and the impact of the funding in enabling facilities and activities to reopen that otherwise would've remained closed or offered on a restricted basis.
What criteria will guide funding decisions?	<p>Financial, non-financial information and the first narrative question will be assessed as either a pass or a fail against the standard assessment criteria.</p> <p>The final two narrative questions will be scored between one (very weak) and five (very strong) dependent upon how well they address the standard criteria. The standard criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a balanced portfolio of leisure facilities that, where applicable, includes swimming provision

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of the fund being used for its intended purpose of supporting the reopening and recovery of public sector leisure facilities • Evidence of a coherent recovery plan that's consistent with financial and non-financial information provided • Evidence of the reopening of facilities that have significant social value.
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For more information and to access the Expression of Interest form, please visit www.sportengland.org/nlrf.

Changes to this guidance or our funds

Sport England reserves the right to make changes to the guidance and/or fund after its launch. We'll communicate any changes as quickly as we can.

Any questions?

Please don't hesitate to contact us at queries@nationalleisurerecoveryfund.co.uk.

Detailed guidance

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Introduction

On 22 October 2020, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) confirmed £1 billion of additional support to local authorities to support them in their response to coronavirus. Alongside this, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) confirmed that £100 million of the £1b would be used to assist local authorities in England, with outsourced leisure provision, with the reopening of their public leisure facilities and to give them the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term.

This fund has been established as a biddable fund which will be allocated in full, over a single funding round, and is to cover the period from 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. Where a funding award is made, the funding will be distributed in a single award using a Funding Agreement to the local authority. The funding is to support the cost of leisure provision in the local authority area. The local authority will use this award to support their leisure service and provider as required under the NLRF Funding Agreement.

We anticipate demand for the fund is likely to be very high and only those bodies meeting the eligibility criteria and presenting a case aligning with the fund's core objectives should apply.

The NLRF's award criteria have been developed by Sport England and DCMS. With Sport England being the accountable body for the administration and monitoring of the fund, on behalf of DCMS.

Objectives

The NLRF's key objectives are to:

- Support the reopening of public sector leisure facilities and activities following the second period of national lockdown in England.
- Provide the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium to long term.
- Sustain the delivery of activities (such as swimming) that aren't widely accessible in the private market.
- Enhance health and wellbeing and support physical activity across England – contributing to the government's objectives around healthy lifestyles, reducing obesity and reducing inequality.

The investment is intended to ensure that, by 31 March 2021, successful applicants are either:

- fully or partially reopened (subject to continued coronavirus restrictions); or
- operating on a sustainable, cost-efficient basis so that, where relevant, they can reopen more fully at a later date.

Timetable

Date	Milestone
14 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund open for Expression of Interests • Draft fund guidance and application forms released • Fund open for applications • Online application portal open
Noon on 21 December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window for Expression of Interests closes
Noon on 15 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application portal closes
Mid-January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First funding decisions made
End January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities begin to receive payments
Late February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All applicants notified of outcome and final funding decisions made
31 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final payments made

Who can apply?

Applications will be accepted from local authorities who hold responsibility for the provision of leisure services and have outsourced their leisure provision to an external body to the local authority (e.g. leisure trust, private sector contractor).

This includes local authorities whose outsourced leisure arrangements have ended since 20 March 2020 and services are now delivered as an in-house function.

Where local authorities have multiple outsourced leisure providers, they must submit one application for funding, supported by separate details for the providers for whom they're applying.

For the purposes of the NLRf, a local authority is defined as 'an organisation that's officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular geographical area'. This specifically refers to local authorities classified as a district, metropolitan district, unitary, London borough or county council.

The eligibility of parish/town councils to access the NLRf is dependent on the specific circumstances. If a parish/town council operates a leisure facility that's outsourced to an external provider, then it would be eligible for the NLRf. In this circumstance, the application to the NLRf must come from the parent local authority with the parish/town council identified as an outsourced operator to the local authority. Parish/town councils aren't able to submit direct applications to the NLRf. If the parish/town council operates a leisure facility with council-employed staff then this wouldn't be eligible to the NLRf.

Who can't apply?

- Local authorities not located in England.
- Local authorities delivering their leisure service as an in-house function of the local authority – these authorities should access the MHCLG Income Compensation Scheme
- Local authorities that don't hold responsibility for the provision of leisure services.
- Any organisation not defined as a 'local authority'.

In some instances, authorities may provide a part of its public sector leisure centre provision through a facility not owned (or no longer owned) by the authority. If an authority considers this provision to be a part of its leisure service and wishes to include that provision in its application, it should be separately and clearly shown and include a justification for its inclusion and/or a description of the agreement/contract that requires that facility to deliver public provision.

Where a local authority has leisure centre provision on school sites which are contracted to an external provider to operate, and that offer leisure services to the local community, then an authority could include these facilities within their application to the NLRF.

What'll the NLRF fund and not fund?

The NLRF is available to support the difference between income and expenditure for the period of 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021, that enables leisure facilities to reopen or partially reopen post lockdown, where this offers a reasonable balance of activities and programming within coronavirus guidelines. More detail on the income and expenditure that the NLRF will assess and how this should be categorised can be found on the application form.

Where a funding award is made, the money must flow through the local authority to the leisure services operator in order to help meet the additional costs of delivering these services.

For the purpose of the NLRF, primary activity areas have been defined as swimming pools, health and fitness suites, studios, sports halls and artificial grass pitches. All other activity areas have been classified as 'secondary activity areas' and won't form a core part of the assessment of applications. Applications will be accepted that include 'secondary activity areas' but assessment will focus on the provision of primary activity areas.

What can't be funded?

The NLRF doesn't provide support for applications that include any of the following costs:

- Anything that's already been covered by other strands of government support (i.e. the Job Retention Scheme).
- Anything incurred before 1 December 2020 and after 31 March 2021. This includes costs incurred during lockdown and any difference between income and expenditure between the period of 25 July 2020 to 4 November 2020.
- Financing associated with new capital expenditure undertaken since 20 March 2020.
- Anything associated with mothballing facilities that won't reopen during the period of 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021 (reasonable costs associated with preparing facilities to reopen from 1 April 2021 are eligible).
- Any capital expenditure relating to repairs and routine maintenance and any expenditure on repairs that's covered by insurance.
- Anything that doesn't relate to the operation of leisure assets and don't support the delivery of leisure activities.

- Any executive pay related to the delivery of leisure services.
- Any pay rises in the period of December 2020 to March 2021.

Expenditure and delivery timetable

The recovery funding is intended to cover eligible expenditure incurred between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021. Any approved expenditure not incurred by 31 March 2021 must be returned to Sport England from the applicant local authority.

How much will I be eligible to apply for?

To help ensure an equitable distribution of the NLRF, a Notional Funding Allocation (NFA) has been calculated for each eligible local authority and funding awards will only be made in excess of the NFA in the most exceptional circumstances.

The purpose of the NFA is to maximise the impact of the NLRF and provide financial assistance for as many local authorities and their leisure providers as possible.

The basis of the NFA is a per capita allocation. This has then been adjusted to take into consideration physical activity levels, number of facilities and health outcome indicators.

The NFA provides Sport England with a control to ensure funds are distributed equitably and not exhausted prematurely – however, eligible authorities are still required to demonstrate the need for funding and that the proposed recovery plan presents a sustainable model that can achieve the desired outcomes and objectives.

All applicants to the NLRF will receive an application form, elements of which will be pre-populated with historic operational data, and their respective NFA. The NFA is a guide for applicants in determining how much to apply for i.e. the funding request (FR).

All applicants should ensure the overall portfolio of facilities and activities proposed for reopening remains valid for an actual funding allocation (AFA) that's (+/-) 10% of the FR (i.e. if you were to have an AFA of 6% less than your FR, then you'd still be able to open all the facilities and operate all the activities detailed in your recovery plan).

It's important we're able to assess the contribution any funding will make to the overall cost of a sustainable recovery plan. If an FR is made that's materially beyond the level of the NFA then there's a risk the recovery plan can't be assessed as sustainable, given the availability of funding. This could delay the award process as you may be required to submit a revised recovery plan for an appropriate assessment to be made.

Please note, each applicant should consider their specific local circumstances when submitting their application for funding. Individual funding awards will be dependent upon the assessment of the application against the defined NLRF assessment criteria.

Can you provide some examples where the funding would be used appropriately?

Outlined below are three different scenarios where the nature of the application and appropriate use of the funding is considered:

1. There's *no existing financial support from the local authority towards the additional cost* of the public service leisure provision – the funding must be passed through to the leisure operator to support them with the additional cost of providing these services, there'll still be a requirement to provide core facility and activity data as per the NLRf award criteria or an application may not be successful.
2. The local authority *has provided full financial support to the operator* for the additional cost (due to coronavirus) of the leisure service being provided – the NLRf funding must still be passed through to the leisure provider to support them with the additional cost of providing these services. The local authority and operator may utilise the additional NLRf funding to reopen and offer a greater range of provision. If the local authority wishes to reduce the level of *additional* financial support to operators it's been providing by a proportion, to achieve a financially sustainable level of leisure spend, then this is acceptable (provided that pre-coronavirus budgeted local authority contributions to the operator are maintained).
3. The local authority *has provided some additional coronavirus financial support* to the operator but it's below the level of the additional cost of the service being provided – the NLRf funding must be passed through to the leisure operator to support them with the additional cost of providing these services above and beyond the level of financial support being provided by the local authority. Where the funding award exceeds this amount then the local authority and operator may use the NLRf funding to reopen more facilities and activities, or consider reducing the *additional* local authority support it's been providing to achieve a financially sustainable level of leisure spend.

There are no exceptions to the full funding being passed through to the leisure operator to support with the additional costs of providing public sector leisure services in any scenario.

In circumstances 2 and 3 above, where a local authority may decide to reduce the proportion of additional support it's provided, this should only be done on the basis that: (a) there's no decrease in the core facilities and activities required by the NLRF; and (b) that the level of financial support provided by the local authority remains at or above the level of support provided pre-coronavirus.

What's the application process?

There's one round of applications to the NLRF. Applications must be submitted by the local authority, with the leisure provider's support.

A local authority can only submit one application to the NLRF. Where a local authority has more than one outsourced leisure operator, a single application must be submitted but this application must provide financial and non-financial information for each operator.

There are two stages to this application process.

1. Expression of Interest
2. Application

Expression of Interest (Eoi)

From 14 December 2020 to noon on 21 December 2020, potential applicants to the NLRF must submit an Eoi stating they intend to submit an application and to generate their pre-populated application pack. Early registration of interest in the scheme is recommended to ensure applicant receive the application details as quickly as possible. Eoi must be submitted via email to eoim@nationalleisurefund.co.uk, no later than noon on 21 December, 2020.

When an Eoi is received, an email will be sent to the named local authority officer, as well as the chief executive and Section 151 officer of the local authority. This email will include the following information:

1. A link to access the application portal, to be used for submission of application.
2. An application form, in Microsoft Excel, detailing the financial and operational information to be uploaded to the portal – the form will be partially pre-populated with elements of historical operational information and an NFA.
3. An example Funding Agreement for local authorities to review ahead of any potential funding decision given the document is final and no changes will be accepted.
4. Application form instructions.
5. Frequently asked questions.

All applicants that submit an EoI will receive an application form that's partially pre-populated with data taken from ActivePlaces on public sector leisure facilities within their area. The applicant will need to check the accuracy of this data, update where appropriate and provide additional data required for the full application.

Where an applicant local authority and/or leisure provider subscribe to DataHub, the application form will also be pre-populated with historic participation data taken from this data source. Please note that Sport England doesn't take responsibility for the data and each applicant will need to validate the accuracy of this information and can make amendments if required. If a local authority and leisure operator is not subscribed to DataHub then this historic participation data will need to be provided by the applicant.

The failure to submit an EoI by the stated deadline will preclude the submission of an application to the NLRF as you'll be unable to access the portal.

Applications

Applications will open on 14 December 2020 and the deadline for receipt of applications is noon on 15 January 2021. Applications won't be accepted after this date.

From 14 December 2020 applicants will be able to submit their application to the NLRF, which must be done through the portal. Details of how to access portal, to register and apply, will be shared with potential applicants once an EoI has been submitted. If an EoI isn't submitted by the stated deadline then it will preclude you from submitting a full application to the NLRF. *Applications will not be accepted via other routes.*

Before an application can be submitted, the local authority must register on the portal. Upon receipt, the local authority will be given an application reference number (ARN) that'll be attached to the application from submission through to award and subsequent monitoring.

What's needed to complete your application form?

The local authority will be asked to provide a Recovery Plan by completing the application form, comprising of the following:

- Historical and forecast financial information
- Operational information
- Narrative responses to a small number of questions, covering existing financial support, the facilities and activities to be provided and the impact of the funding in enabling facilities and activities to reopen that otherwise would've remained closed or offered on a restricted basis.

For ease, we recommend completing the narrative responses in a Word file, which you can copy and paste from into the application portal.

The financial and operational information will be completed on a standalone Excel spreadsheet and the narrative questions will be completed on the portal. The completed Excel spreadsheet should be uploaded to the portal once both the local authority and the service provider have agreed the content.

The application form will require the local authority to provide:

- Local authority's bank details including:
 - account name, sort code, account number
 - account signatory name, job title and email.
- Local authority's signatory details for the Funding Agreement
 - Name, position and email.

These details will enable funding agreements to be distributed and payments to be made promptly following the return of a signed Funding Agreement.

The application form will also require the local authority to confirm the chief executive/Section 151 officer's given their permission to submit the completed application by selecting a tick box at the end of the form on the portal.

Financial information required

Information request	Purpose of this information
Monthly average staffing hours (excluding staff placed on furlough).	To understand the use of furlough and the forecast rate at which staff return from furlough during the recovery period.
A summary of monthly income and expenditure from April 2019 to November 2020.	To establish a financial baseline based on historic performance.
Forecast income and expenditure from 1 December 2020 to March 2021.	To inform the funding request of the application. This financial projection should reconcile to the forecast participation numbers, the proposed facility mix and the responses provided to the narrative questions
Forecast income and expenditure from April 2021 to March 2022. The assumptions made in preparing this forecast should be clearly stated in the available narrative box on the application form.	To understand the projected financial position of applicants and the ongoing financial pressures the sector is facing beyond 31 March to inform future requests for funding from government.
Published financial statements/management accounts in respect of leisure services for the previous three full financial years – 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 (or as applicable).	To inform the historic performance of providers in setting a baseline and support the other financial information provided.

Your income and expenditure proposals should reflect the recovery plan that will be implemented and reflect the likely level of award (NFA) and contribution to the additional costs made by the local authority.

Operational information required

Information request	Detailed request	Purpose of this information
<p>Monthly participation by activity, covering the following time periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2019–November 2020 (actual) • 1 December 2020–31 March 2021 (forecast). <p>Where an applicant is subscribed to DataHub they'll be provided with a tailored application form with the historic data pre-populated.</p>	<p>The activities the participation data is to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fitness (gym) • group workout • swimming – lessons • swimming activities • sports Hall activities • outdoor activities • other activities. <p>Further guidance on the activities that are classified beneath these headings can be found in the application form.</p>	<p>To understand the impact the funding will have on projected participation numbers when compared to a pre-coronavirus baseline and participation recovery following the end of the first national lockdown (March–July 2020).</p> <p>This Information will also be used to support the positioning of the sector for further tranches of funding from government.</p>

Operational information required (continued)

Information request	Detailed request	Purpose of this information
<p>Details of site and facility type, capacity and opening hours across the following time periods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 July 2020–4 November 2020 (actual) • 1 December 2020–31 March 2021 (forecast) <p>Applicants will be provided with a tailored application form with the data from ActivePlaces pre-populated for the sites deemed eligible for this fund. This data will act as a pre-coronavirus baseline and should be checked and amended as required.</p>	<p>The following information is required from applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal Capacity – capacity is defined as the available people capacity of the facilities and programme when compared to pre-coronavirus levels. Pre-coronavirus levels of capacity are assumed to equate to 100% of capacity. Information must be provided across two time periods; i) Between the two national lockdowns and ii) fund period of 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021. Capacity during these periods should be presented as a percentage of the pre-coronavirus capacity (i.e. if the swimming programme across lane swimming, swimming lessons and club use will be delivering physical activity opportunities to 1,500 per week compared to 3,000 per week pre-coronavirus then the capacity is 50%). Where there has been/proposed to be a phased reopening of facilities and activities please indicate the maximum people capacity reached within that period. • Opening hours – the average weekly opening hours of public sector leisure facilities (e.g. a facility open from 9am–5pm, seven days a week, would have an average weekly opening hours of 56 per week). 	<p>To understand the impact of the funding on the diversity and availability of public sector leisure facilities, compared to pre-coronavirus and the period following the first national lockdown.</p> <p>This Information will also be used to support the positioning of the sector for further tranches of funding from government.</p>

Sport England will publish a recovery report on their website detailing national benchmarks for recovery rates on participation levels across England for the period December 2020–March 2021. This may be a useful reference point to support local authorities and their leisure service provider but isn't integral to the application.

Narrative – each response is limited to 5,000 characters inclusive of spaces (approximately 1,000 words)

Question	Further detail	What we're looking for from you	Why we require this information
<i>Additional financial support</i>			
1. As the outsourced delivery partner of public sector leisure services, what sources of financial support have you already accessed?	<p>Please set out financial support received from:</p> <p>i. Government (including furlough, bounce-back loans, business rate recovery etc.)</p> <p>ii. Local authority (including funds, loans and any other financial support mechanism)</p>	<p>We want you to clearly set out the level of financial support you've already received from central government, as well as the support you, as the local authority responsible for the service, have provided.</p> <p>Where a local authority has supported its leisure provider with additional financial support then we want you to clearly state the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of financial support provided • The time period this financial support covers • What the additional financial support was used for. 	<p>To ensure that the funding is not supporting costs that've already been supported by central government support.</p> <p>To provide further insight into the different financial arrangements between local authorities and providers to support the positioning of the sector for further financial support from government.</p> <p>To ensure the funding is being used in addition to other financial support packages, rather than as a replacement for them. This is important to demonstrate the additionality the funding will deliver when positioning the sector for further financial support from government.</p>

		<p>Please also Include details of any ongoing discussions between the local authority and providers around financial support and whether or not these have been Included In the financial projection for the period 1st December 2020 to 31 March 2021.</p> <p>We want you to explicitly confirm that the local authority will continue its existing level budget provision of pre-Covid subsidy during the fund period.</p>	
Question	Further detail	What we're looking for from you	Why we require this information
<i>What'll the funding from the NLRf be used for?</i>			
2. What's your recovery plan for the period of 1 December 2020 to 31 March 2021?	<p>Please describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what facilities you propose to reopen using this funding, and why? • what activities you propose to re-establish using 	<p>We want you to tell us what facilities and activities will be available to service users when facilities reopen.</p> <p>We want you to tell us why you think this balance of facilities and activities is appropriate and warrants support from the fund.</p>	<p>We want to understand the type of public sector leisure market that'll be in place from 1 December 2020, with the support of this funding.</p> <p>This is important to assess both the impact of the funding and to inform the positioning of the sector for future funding support from government.</p>

	<p>this funding, and why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your rationale for this recovery plan and why you think it's deliverable • your longer term (post 1 April 2021) recovery plan. 	<p>We're particularly interested in hearing about your proposed swimming provision, sports hall usage, your gym facilities, your studio facilities and your use of outdoor space. We also want to know about facilities and activities you're reopening that address the needs of society's most vulnerable.</p> <p>We want you to tell us your proposed approach to encouraging service users to return to your facilities and increase participation in physical activity. This should cover areas such as marketing activity and special offers, where applicable.</p> <p>We want you to tell us what the mix of facilities and activities could look like beyond 31 March 2021, based on the assumptions made in your forecast.</p>	<p>We also want to understand what the sector could look like post 31 March 2021 without additional support and with social distancing in place.</p> <p>The purpose of understanding this is to position the sector for further government support and to support our assessment of submitted applications.</p>
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Question	Further detail	What we're looking for from you	Why we require this information
<i>What'll the impact of the NLRF funding be?</i>			
3. What facilities and activities are you able to reopen with this funding that you wouldn't be able to open otherwise?	<p>Please tell us:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what specifically the funding will be used for, and why • what your portfolio of facilities and activities would look like without the funding, and why • how this portfolio of facilities and activities deliver against the desired outcomes of the fund. 	<p>We want you to tell us what the funding is enabling you to reopen/deliver that wouldn't have been possible without this funding.</p> <p>We want you to tell us the % of facilities you're able to reopen compared to the pre-coronavirus period and the period between the two national lockdowns. We also want to know the facilities this funding is enabling you to keep open and avoid further constraints on public sector leisure provision.</p> <p>We're particularly Interested in you telling us about the activities and facilities you're reopening that have the greatest social value.</p>	To demonstrate the impact this funding will have on the sector and to position the sector for further government support.

		We want to hear how the proposed range of facilities and activities will enhance health and wellbeing, support physical activity and contribute to government objectives around healthy lifestyles, reducing obesity and addressing widening inequality.	
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How's my application assessed?

All applications submitted to the NLRF will be assessed against a standard set of criteria. Applications will not be assessed competitively against other applications to the NLRF.

The financial and operational information provided by applicants will be used to assess the reasonableness of the application and the sustainability of the leisure provision as follows:

1. Reasonableness

- Pass – the application meets the criteria
- Fail – the application doesn't meet the criteria

2. Sustainability

- Pass – the application meets the criteria
- Fail – the application doesn't meet the criteria

The narrative responses will be assessed as follows:

1. Additional Financial Support

- Pass – the application meets the criteria
- Fail – the application doesn't meet the criteria

The criteria that need to be met to constitute a pass are:

1. Clear evidence that, where applicable, the local authority subsidy for leisure services remains at the same level, or higher, than the pre-coronavirus level
2. Clear evidence that, where a provider's used the furlough scheme, staff costs don't include those costs offset by furlough. This'll be assessed through a review of the correlation between monthly staff hours worked and staffing costs.

2. Use of the NLRF funding

- Five (very strong) – the response is very strong when assessed against the criteria and meets all criteria
- Four (strong) – the response is strong when assessed against the criteria and meets most of the criteria

- Three (average) – the response is average when assessed against the criteria and meets some of the criteria
- Two (weak) – the response is weak when assessed against the criteria and meets few of the criteria
- One (very weak) – the response is very weak when assessed against the criteria and meets none of the criteria

The criteria that'll need to be met include:

- Evidence there's a plan to reopen facilities in the period December 2020 to March 2021.
- Evidence of a coherent recovery plan that's consistent with the financial and non-financial information provided.
- Evidence of proactive work being undertaken to encourage service users to return to facilities and encourage participation in physical activity (i.e. marketing strategy/special offers).
- Evidence of a balanced portfolio of leisure facilities that includes swimming provision, unless clearly stated why no swimming provision is included in the portfolio of facilities.
- Evidence of activities that support the most vulnerable in society and add significant social value.

3. Impact of NLRF funding

- Five (very strong) – the response is very strong when assessed against the criteria and meets all criteria
- Four (strong) – the response is strong when assessed against the criteria and meets most of the criteria
- Three (average) – the response is average when assessed against the criteria and meets some of the criteria
- Two (weak) – the response is weak when assessed against the criteria and meets few of the criteria
- One (very weak) – the response is very weak when assessed against the criteria and meets none of the criteria

The criteria that'll need to be met include:

- Evidence the funding is being used for its intended purpose of reopening/recovery of leisure facilities.
- Evidence the fund's enabling facilities and/or activities to reopen, that otherwise wouldn't have been possible without the funding.
- Evidence of the fund enabling a leisure provision to be reopened that delivers against the core objectives of the fund.
- Evidence of the fund enabling facilities/activities to reopen that have significant social value.
- Evidence there's reopening of facilities above and beyond 'primary facilities', increasing the accessibility of physical activity to wider groups.

During the assessment if we require further information to enable a full and proper assessment of the application, then this'll be requested via email to the local authority officer who submitted the application on the portal. This information will need to be uploaded to the portal by the deadline specified in the email request. If this information isn't returned by the deadline then a recommendation to reject the funding application will be made, on the basis of insufficient information to make a full assessment. No information will be accepted following this deadline.

What happens after you've applied?

Once an application's been submitted using the portal, the applicant will receive an email notification to confirm receipt of their application.

The applications will be considered and reviewed by representatives of Sport England, DCMS and MHCLG at regular review meetings from mid-January to late February 2021.

If further information's required to enable an application to be assessed, an email detailing what's required and the deadline for the return of this information will be sent to the applicant. If the additional isn't returned by the stated deadline then the application won't be progressed and no funding will be awarded. If the application's deemed ineligible, no further information will be requested.

When a final decision's been made on an application, an email will be sent to the applicant notifying them of the decision. The funding award decision is final and there's no appeals process due to the time-limited nature of this fund. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by late February 2021.

Award Offered

- If a funding award's been approved, applicants will receive a copy of the Funding Agreement, with the notification of decision email, from Sport England's legal advisers. Absolutely no changes are permitted to the agreement. The Funding Agreement will need to be signed using e-signature and returned by the stated deadline. If a signed Funding Agreement isn't returned by the stated deadline then the award offer will expire and no funding will be awarded. This is to ensure the fund can be fully utilised in the timeframes available and achieve the maximum benefit.
- Payments will be made in full by BACS, within 21 days of the signed Funding Agreement being received by Sport England.

Award Rejection

- If the funding application's rejected, applicants will receive an email providing the reason why the application was unsuccessful.

What are the data and monitoring requirements?

The Funding Agreement details the data required from applicants following the award of funding to support the data and monitoring of the NLRf and the impact it's had on the sector.

From mid-February 2021, the local authority will be required to provide the actual data for the following;

- income
- expenditure
- facility opening information, including average weekly opening hours
- capacity of facilities
- visits by activity figures.

This information will need to be provided in the same format as the information provided in the application form, so that the actual performance can be compared with forecast performance. There'll be a commitment to provide this for up to 12 months, from February 2021.

There's an aspiration for the NLRf to collect detailed participation data to combine with the standard data above, to enable detailed analysis. This'll allow Sport England and the government to articulate what further support is needed to help protect £6.4bn of social value created by leisure facilities.

The additional information consists of:

- Participants – total number of unique individuals that've visited the facility to do an activity in the relevant month.
- Visits – total usage figures for the facility in the relevant month.

The information on visits and participants will be broken down into the following categories on a monthly basis:

- age/age group
- gender
- IMD (deprivation decile)
- ethnicity
- disability
- concessionary
- activity.

The local authority will be asked to provide this additional information wherever reasonably possible and ideally in an automated fashion.

Failure to adhere to the terms of the Funding Agreement and engage with the monitoring process for the NLRF will be deemed a material breach of the funding agreement and may lead to clawback.

There's a proposal to include an additional award on top of the NLRF that'll be specific to monitoring and evaluation. This is being developed as the fund launches, so the final details will be included in the funding agreement.

For interest, the proposal details how Sport England wish to analyse the monthly data returns and compare these with wider data sets to understand the impact of the fund and the position of the sector nationally.

The local authority, therefore, may be contacted by an external supplier who'll complete this work with no additional time or resource required by the applicant. The local authority would be invoiced directly by the external supplier for this service and must forward the funding on promptly.

The local authority would receive the outputs of this work for their interest and use. Further information will be available at the time of award and the FAQs will be updated with further information as soon as it's available. The Funding Agreement is drafted on the basis that the proposal is implemented.

What to do if you've a query on the application process:

- Contact queries@nationalleisurecoveryfund.co.uk.

Glossary

Active Places – www.activeplacespower.com

AFA – Actual Funding Allocation

ARN – Application Reference Number

DCMS – Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DataHub – web.datahubclub.com

Eoi – Expression of Interest

FAQ – Frequently asked questions

FR – Funding Request

MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

NFA – Notional Funding Allocation

NLRF – National Leisure Recovery Fund