



Workplace Health and Wellbeing Initiative Small Grant Scheme 2026-27

Introduction

Mind Body Business, is an initiative by Ards and North Down Borough Council that aims to benefit business owners and their employees.

The purpose of Mind Body Business is to raise awareness on health and wellbeing by providing a series of initiatives that encourages employers to put “health” at the centre of their business agenda;

- Employee illness, chronic poor health, low job satisfaction and high turnover leads to low productivity and lost business earnings, Happy workers are 12% more productive.
- Encouraging healthy habits now can prevent serious health conditions later and save your business money in the long run.
- Improving morale and health does not have to cost a fortune.

Mind Body Business is offering a small grant of financial support, up to £250 (per business and excluding VAT), to businesses based in Ards and North Down Borough who are interested in providing a workplace health and wellbeing initiative for their employees.

A small grant of financial support will be provided to businesses who propose to run a health and wellbeing initiative that meet the ‘Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing’, outlined as follows;

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.

There are five simple steps to help maintain and improve your wellbeing. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your ‘five a day’ for wellbeing.

Take5

steps to wellbeing



Connect

Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Initiative will open for applications on **Monday 1st June 2026**. The **closing deadline** for submissions is **4:00pm on Thursday 25th June 2026**.

Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Period of Grant Assistance

Grant assistance is available from the period **9th July 2026 – 9th October 2026**.

Grant Limit

The maximum grant assistance which can be applied is £250.00 *

*For businesses that are VAT registered, we will pay up to £250 excluding VAT, on approved activities.

*For small businesses that are not VAT registered, we will pay up to a maximum of £250 including VAT on approved activities.

Eligibility Criteria;

1. Traded business located in Ards and North Down Borough Council area,
2. Apply **one** application per individual business by the owner/manager.
3. An application can be made per business that proposes more than one activity provided the total cost does not exceed £250 and full details of proposed initiatives and ALL costs are provided in application.
4. Initiatives should be easily delivered / continued by the individual or employer (at their own expense) in the future should the initiative be successful.
5. Businesses will not be eligible for funding if they propose to repeat the same or similar initiatives previously supported through the small grant scheme. The scheme is intended to support the introduction of new health and wellbeing initiatives that employers can continue independently if they prove effective.
6. Entrants shall agree to source a local provider from the Ards and North Down Borough Council area where possible, regional charitable providers can also be used.
7. Entrants shall agree that no activities can commence until they have received written confirmation that their grant has been approved up to the specified amount *
8. Entrants shall agree to complete a UK Subsidy/State Aid Form Declaration, an evaluation form and submit detailed receipts and / or paid invoices on completion of the initiative and NO LATER THAN 23rd October 2026.
9. Evaluation form must be completed and returned once your initiative is complete with evidence of activity, e.g. photographs, sign-in sheets, staff feedback on activity, before payment can be processed.
10. Businesses who have previously availed of the small grant scheme must focus on a different activity relating to the Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing for their application.

Grants will only be offered to businesses who meet the eligibility criteria.

Priority will be given to new applicants. As part of the application process, businesses not currently on the Mind Body Business mailing list will be added automatically. A consent box indicating agreement to this is included at the end of the application form.

A detailed breakdown of all costs including itemised spending, is required so that eligibility can be assessed.

The following will not be considered for funding: membership fees, beauty treatments, team building events, taxi, transport costs, medical treatments, alcohol or other costs not associated with this grant and deemed ineligible by the Council.

Suggestions for Initiatives following the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing include:

1. Bring you and your employees together for a shared healthy breakfast or lunch.
2. Offer free health checks to employees.
3. Run a 15-minute lunchtime walk twice a week. Attendees are also offered free fruit at break and lunch.
4. Engage a trainer to provide a session or series of sessions for employees regarding mindfulness, stress management, mental health awareness or relaxation techniques.
5. Run a workshop after working hours to take Notice of what is around you and to connect with other employees e.g. Foraging workshop, walking historical tours, boat tours, active workshops.
6. Offer stress relief activities such as knot massages, sound bath / healing session.
7. Encourage creativity and new learning through craft classes, cooking workshops or photography courses.
8. Support physical wellbeing by engaging in fitness sessions, walking groups, and movement-based classes.

This list is not exhaustive. Any activity which promotes **Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing** and meets the funding criteria will be considered.

To assist you in sourcing a local provider the council offers a research facility, that can provide contact listings. Contact Rowena Moore, Business Researcher email rowena.moore@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

See below example application responses detailing initiatives following the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing:

1. *Our workplace will run a 4-week taster course such as Yoga/Pilates covering the ‘**Be Active**’ step encouraging staff to partake in physical activity, improving mental alertness and wellbeing. The “**Keep Learning**” step will be included as staff try this new activity. The staff members will be **Connecting** with each other during the activity encouraging friendships and team building. We’ve received a quotation from a local instructor and the charge is £60 per class, therefore we require £240.*
2. *My business aims to offer employees a boat trip down Strangford Lough by a guided tour. The cost of the trip is £40pp, we require the full grant amount of £250 and the business will cover remaining costs to ensure that all employees avail of the trip. Employees of my business will **Connect** with each other, outside the work environment and they will **Learn** about Strangford Lough and **Take Notice** of this area of outstanding beauty.*
3. *I am a sole trader and employ one other person in the business. The work we do is manual and requires a lot of heavy lifting. We are not confident swimmers and have often talked about taking lessons to help us improve, therefore we would use the MBB grant to book adult swimming lessons at the local leisure centre. The cost is*

*£25 for a 1-hour lesson for a private swimming coach and the overall cost for 10 lessons for myself and my employee totals £250. We would benefit from **Learning New Skills**, staying **Physically Active** outside of the job and **Taking Notice** of how important it is to look after our physical health.*

Award Criteria

Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria, we will use the following criteria to score your application

Award Criteria		Weighting
Criterion 1:	Initiative relating to the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing	40%
Criterion 2:	Impact and benefit of initiative on employer and employees	40%
Criterion 3:	Cost breakdown	20%
	Total	100%

Responses in applications must clearly demonstrate proposed initiative relating to responses to each of the areas in the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing: Connect, keeping learning, Be Active, Take Notice and Give. Providing clear details of how the initiative will impact your business and the impact it will have on you as business owner/manager and your employees.

A full breakdown of costs, including itemised spending, is required so that eligibility can be assessed.

Responses for each criterion will be given a score out of five using the scoring matrix below:

Measure	Score
Excellent response that meets the requirements. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses.	5
A good response that meets the requirements with good supporting evidence and few weaknesses	4
Meets Requirements. The response generally meets the requirements but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark.	3
A response with reservations. Lacks convincing detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirements.	2
An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Very limited detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirements.	1
The Tenderer failed to address the question.	0

Letter of Offer

Successful applicants will be issued a Letter of Offer and Supplier Details form by **9th July 2026**.

Acceptance form and supplier details form need to be returned promptly to speed up your payment process. Do NOT incur expenses for activities until you have received written approval (ie your Letter of Offer) that you will be receiving this grant.

All initiatives must be completed by **9th October 2026**.

Completed evaluation of the initiative should be returned as soon as possible upon completion of the activity, and no later than **23rd October 2026**, accompanied by receipts to the full amount claimed. We aim to pay your financial support payment within 14 days.

Claims

Successful applicants must comply with the following conditions when submitting claims:

1. The grant assistance shall only be made in response to claims. All claims shall be accompanied by the relevant paperwork completed in full.
 - Copy of invoices for all items claimed. Invoices must detail the supplier details, date of invoice, description of goods/services,
 - Applicant will be responsible for paying the suppliers and claiming back VAT if applicable.**Late payments and cash payment is not acceptable and will not be eligible for claiming**

2. Completed Evaluation of initiative returned with evidenced of activity from examples.
 - Participant consented photographs/video of activity,
 - Feedback from participants on the outcomes of the activity.

Publicity

All promotional materials and publicity will include a clear acknowledgement of the Council's support, with the "Supported by Council" logo prominently displayed on printed materials to recognise and demonstrate the Council's involvement in the business health and wellbeing initiatives.

Duplicate Funding

The applicant shall not seek or make any application for or accept any financial assistance from any other Government Department, Agency, or other funding body in respect of the expenditure for which Grant is or may be payable under the terms and conditions of a letter of offer.

The applicant shall not seek or make any application for or accept any financial assistance from any other Council department unless prior written agreement from the Economic Development unit.

Financial Management

The Council requires the applicant to always act with honesty and integrity and to safeguard the resources for which they are responsible. The applicant must maintain effective controls to mitigate opportunities for misappropriation or fraud. The applicant must notify the Council immediately should an instance of fraud or suspected fraud arise.

Monitoring and Inspection

Any record, financial or otherwise, premises and/or activity used for the Health and Wellbeing initiative shall be open to inspection at any time by the Council or its duly authorised officers. In addition, the applicant shall comply promptly with any requests by the Council for information concerning the progress, administration, monitoring, and evaluation of the financial assistance.

Withholding of Payment

Without prejudice to any other rights of the Council under this offer, the Council reserves the right to withhold any or all payments and/or to require the applicant to repay part or all the grant assistance if at any time:

- there is a substantial change in the nature, scale, or timing of the initiative for which prior approval from the Council was not sought, or if the grant is used for purposes other than those approved in application stage,
- any records (financial or otherwise) inspected by, or supplied, to the Council are found to be inaccurate or incomplete,
- the Council is not satisfied with the progression of the initiative,
- the organisation is in breach of any of its obligations as outlined in the offer of grant assistance,
- in the opinion of the Council the initiative has been abandoned, or ceased, or is not being pursued in a satisfactory manner.

Conflicts of Interest

The applicant should disclose in advance any potential conflicts of interest which may exist related to any of the proposed activity, letter of offer contract, or payment.

Changes to the applicant or health and wellbeing initiative

The grant assistance shall be used only for the purpose of the applicant's activity which the Council has approved. Any proposed changes to the applicants or the initiative must be notified immediately to the Council for approval.

Examples of significant changes include, but not limited to:

- Issues impacting on the applicant's ability to operate,
- Nature/ purpose of the health and wellbeing initiative,
- Changes in key personnel,
- Ways in which the initiative is to be carried out.

Please note this list is not exhaustive and you must contact the Environmental Health, Health and Wellbeing Department should any doubt exist.

The Council shall be entitled to review and, if necessary, amend or withdraw this offer of grant assistance in consequence to any such changes.

Insolvency/ Liquidation

The applicant undertakes to immediately notify the Council in the event that the business:

- Files a petition in bankruptcy,
- Is adjudicated bankrupt,
- Has a petition of bankruptcy filed against it which is not discharged within 30 days,
- Becomes insolvent,
- Makes a resolution to go into liquidation,
- Enters into any scheme or arrangement with their creditors.

Indemnity/ Insurance

The applicant shall maintain adequate insurance cover necessary to complete the initiative. The Council, or its duly authorised officers, shall be permitted to review insurance policies and document when requested.

In accepting the grant assistance, the applicant hereby indemnifies the Council in respect of any other claims howsoever arising and undertakes to hold the Council safe from any legal action in respect of such.

Withholding of Payment

Without prejudice to any other rights of the Council under this grant assistance, the Council reserves the right to withhold any or all payments and/or to require the applicant to repay part or all the grant if at any time:

- There is a substantial or material change in the nature, scale or timing of the initiative, or if the grant is used for purposes other than those specified,
- Any records (financial or otherwise) inspected by, or supplied to the Council are found to be inaccurate or incomplete,
- The Council is not satisfied with the progression of the initiative,
- The applicant is in breach of any of its obligations as outlined in the offer,
- In the opinion of the Council the initiative has been abandoned, or ceased, or is not being pursued in a satisfactory manner.