ULSTER SCOTS AGENCY

APPEALS PROCEDURE

Document History

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....3
Initial Rejection.....3
Right of Appeal.....3
Grounds of Appeal.....3
Appeals Procedure.....4
Important points to note:.....4
Appendix 1: Sample Grants Appeal Request Form.....6

Introduction

1. This appeals procedure will apply in respect of applications for grant assistance made to the Ulster-Scots Agency.

2. The criteria according to which such applications are considered and the procedure for making applications, are set out separately in the Ulster-Scots Agency's Financial Assistance Scheme and the relevant Guidance Notes for each funding programme. All applications will be carefully assessed against the stated criteria for the funding programme.

3. This appeals procedure only applies where an application made to the Ulster-Scots Agency for funding has been unsuccessful, or where the level of funding offered is lower than that requested. If the applicant is unhappy with a grant assistance decision, they are entitled to ask for an appeal.

Initial Rejection

4. Whenever an application is unsuccessful, brief reasons will be given to the applicant explaining why the application has been unsuccessful. The rejection notification will refer unsuccessful applicants to the Appeals Policy.

5. If the applicant is not happy with the reasons given, they should contact the staff member responsible for handling the application to request further clarity.
   5.1. This contact can be in writing, by e-mail or by telephone.
   5.2. This contact should be within 10 working days of the date of the letter of rejection.
   5.3. The applicant can also ask for a meeting with the staff member within 12 working days of the date of the letter of rejection.

Right of Appeal

6. Whenever an application to the Agency is unsuccessful, the applicant has a right of appeal to an Appeals Panel, which will consist of three members:

   - Up to 2 Agency Board members
   - Up to 2 Agency staff members (CEO or Director)

7. Any such appeal must be lodged with the Appeals Panel **<u>within 15 days working days</u>** of the date of the letter communicating the decision not to make a grant or award.

8. The Grants Team will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 5 working days of receipt.

9. The Appeals Panel may extend the time limit for lodging an appeal where they consider it fair to do so in consideration of all the facts.

Grounds of Appeal

10. An appeal against a decision can only be made on the following grounds:

10.1. that the Agency failed to properly take into account relevant information presented in the application or

10.2. that the criteria and procedure for assessing applications was not fairly or reasonably applied.

This is not a re-assessment of your application and will only consider the grounds of appeal as listed above.

Appeals Procedure

11. Appeals must be in writing and addressed to:

The Appeals Panel,
The Ulster-Scots Agency
31 Gordon Street
Belfast
BT1 2 LG
Northern Ireland

Or by email to grants@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk. A sample appeal letter is attached at appendix 1.

The appeal should **clearly set out the grounds upon which the applicant is appealing and** detail any relevant information for consideration by the Appeals Panel. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the appeal; the onus is on the appellant to ensure that all relevant information is provided. The Appeals Panel may request the attendance of the Applicant at the hearing.

12. The Appeals Panel will convene to determine whether the grounds for appeal are substantiated and if so, the Panel will review the assessment in respect of the grounds upon which the decision is being challenged.

13. The Panel will make its decision on the appeal and advise the applicant of the outcome with reasons in writing within 5 working days of the date of the Panel hearing.

14. The decision of the Panel will be final.

Important points to note:

15.

- Appeals are not a mechanism for providing feedback. If you want feedback on an application, please contact your assessor via email or phone and request feedback.
- In any grants round, it is important to remember that decisions are made not simply on the merit of any given application in isolation, but in the wider perspective of multiple other applications on a limited budget.
- Appeals cannot consider material not submitted at the time of your application. Additional application material submitted with an appeal will not be considered.

16. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Appeals Panel (Stage 2), you can contact the Ombudsman:

Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO), Progressive House, 33 Wellington Place, Belfast BT1 6HN

Freepost:	Freepost NIPSO
Telephone:	028 90233821
Free phone:	0800 34 34 24
Fax:	028 90234912
Text phone:	028 90897789
Email:	nipso@nipso.org.uk

Website: www.nipso.org.uk

You should be aware that the Ombudsman will normally not investigate a complaint which has not been through the above procedure.

Please note that once the Agency's internal processes are complete, any subsequent complaint to the Ombudsman must be made within six months.

Appendix 1: Sample Grants Appeal Request Form

OBJ

GRANT APPEAL REQUEST FORM

This Form must be completed, signed and returned within 15 working days of the date of our letter notifying you of the funding decision to:
The Appeals Panel,
The Ulster-Scots Agency
31 Gordon Street
Belfast
BT1 2 LG
Northern Ireland

Or by email to grants@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk

Before completing this form, please ensure you have read and understood the Grants Appeal Policy.

1. Name of Applicant Organisation/Individual

2. Case or Reference number

3. Contact name for Correspondence

4 Address for Correspondence .

5. Telephone Nos.:
Daytime:
Evening:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Reviews will only be considered on the grounds that:

a) that the Agency failed to properly take into account relevant information presented in the application or

Or

14.1. b)that the criteria and procedure for assessing applications was not fairly or reasonably applied.

Please tick on which grounds you are making this application: a) ☐ b) ☐

Please state below, the grounds and detail upon which you are formally requesting aGrant Appeal (you may continue on a separate sheet, if necessary).