



Community Facilities – Guidance on User Category Classification and Charging Document

1. Document Title

Guidance on User Category Classification and Charging Document

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a clear and consistent framework for categorising users of community facilities. This ensures fair and transparent charging, appropriate use of subsidised public assets, and the long-term sustainability of community facilities. This guidance is issued under Clause 3.03 of the Licence Agreement. Boards of Management are required to apply these user categories and associated rate structures as a condition of managing community facilities on behalf of Fingal County Council.

3. Scope

This document applies to all individuals, groups, organisations, and enterprises seeking to hire or use community owned or community managed facilities on a short term or ongoing basis.

In applying this guidance, the “nature of the activity” includes both the public purpose and the operational model. This ensures that the pricing remains fair, consistent, and aligned with how the activity functions in practice, not only with what the activity looks like.

Where a user engages in multiple types of activity, each activity may be classified separately based on its operational model and financial structure.

4. Document Objectives

The objectives of this document are to:

- Ensure equitable access to community facilities
- Prioritise community benefit and social inclusion
- Apply charges consistently and transparently



- Protect public and community resources from inappropriate subsidy
- Support sustainable facility management

5. Guiding Principles

User classification is informed by:

- Ability to pay
- Access to funding or income generation
- Organisational structure and purpose
- Level of community benefit delivered
- Whether activity is voluntary, not-for-profit, or commercial

6. User Category Definitions

6.1 Voluntary Group

A **Voluntary Group** is defined as a group that:

- Does not charge, or charges only a nominal participation fee
- Has little or no access to external funding
- Is run entirely by volunteers
- Exists primarily to support social inclusion, wellbeing, or community connection

Document Position:

Voluntary Groups qualify for the lowest charging rate in recognition of their limited financial capacity and high social value.

6.2 Community Group

A **Community Group** is defined as a group that:

- Charges a membership or participation fee with open access
- Has access to external funding and/or grants,
- Operates on a not-for-profit basis



- Provides structured activities that benefit a defined section of the community
- All surplus revenue is reinvested into group initiatives on a non-profit basis

Document Position:

Community Groups are expected to contribute towards the cost of facility provision at a community rate, reflecting their access to income and funding while recognising their community benefit.

6.3 Social Enterprise

A **Social Enterprise** is defined as an organisation or activity that:

- Generates regular income through services or activities, is run in the course of business
- Includes, but is not limited to, fitness classes, dance or drama groups, and structured training or wellbeing programmes
- May employ paid staff or facilitators
- All surplus income belongs to the organiser

Document Position:

Social Enterprises are charged at a higher rate than community groups, reflecting their income generating capacity and regular use of facilities, while still acknowledging their positive social contribution.

6.4 Corporate / Commercial User

A **Corporate or Commercial User** is defined as an organisation or individual that:

- Operates on a for-profit basis
- Uses facilities for commercial delivery, private business, or promotional activity
- Does not have a primary community development remit

Document Position:

Corporate and commercial users are charged the full commercial rate to ensure community facilities are not subsidising private profit.

6.5 Pay-and-Play / Casual User (where applicable)



A Pay-and-Play User is an individual or informal group booking facilities on a casual, short-term basis without an organisational structure.

Document Position:

Charges are applied at a standard casual rate to balance accessibility with cost recovery.

7. Classification and Decision-Making

- All users must declare their organisational status at the time of booking
- Facility Management may require supporting documents such as constitutions, insurance, financial statements or facilitator invoices in order to verify correct categorisation
- Classification decisions are made based on the nature of the activity, not solely on the status of the organisation
- Misrepresentation may result in reclassification and retrospective charges
- If a voluntary or community group contracts a commercial facilitator, the activity may be reclassified as Social Enterprise or Commercial, depending on fee structure and profit distribution

8. Review and Appeals

- Users may request a review of their classification in writing
- Reviews will be escalated to Board of Management
- Decisions following review are final

9. Document Review

- This document will be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains fair, relevant, and aligned with community needs, operational sustainability, compliance with the Public Sector Duty, equal and fair access and non-discrimination in pricing and room allocation.