NORTHERN IRELAND PLAYBOOK

Growing Northern Ireland credit unions

Northern Ireland has the UK's highest credit union membership rate with 40% of adults as members this is among the highest anywhere in the world. Yet the majority of members aren't engaging. Even fewer are borrowing. The result: credit unions lend well below their potential, leaving millions flowing to banks and high-cost lenders.

Low loan-to-savings ratios and an ageing membership are the key challenges. The demand is there, but the infrastructure can't keep pace — especially for younger, digitally-native borrowers.

This playbook provides Northern Ireland credit unions with a strategy to break through and achieve a 10% growth rate in the savings to loan ratio within 18 months. Without adding staff. Without compromising on risk. Follow these steps and your credit union will grow.

Growth constraints

Speed Manual checks mean straightforward loans can take days, and younger borrowers expecting quick decisions go elsewhere.

Confidence Teams want to move faster but need decisions that are consistent, defensible, and sit comfortably alongside the credit committee.

Capacity Small teams can't absorb more applications without hiring (expensive) or cutting corners (risky).

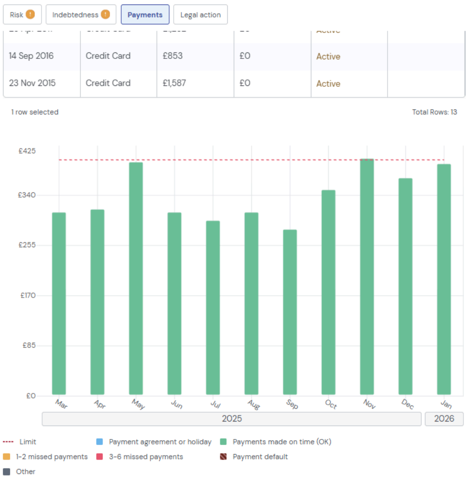
Software for growth

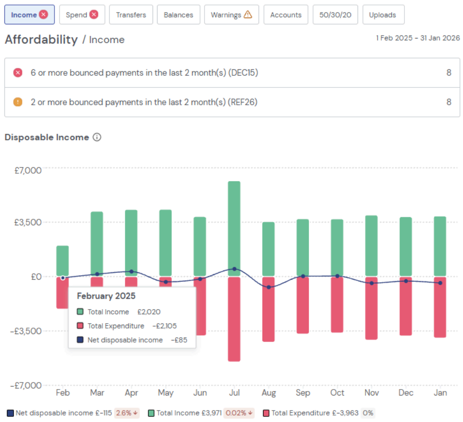
NestEgg's software has helped credit unions in Northern Ireland reduce the average age of members, better manage risk and grow their loan books significantly.

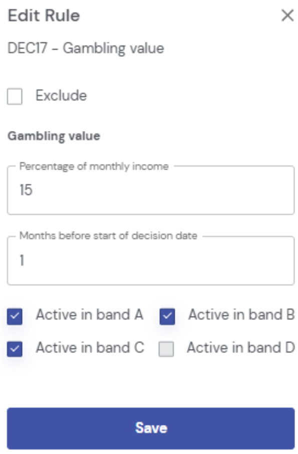
Decision Engine

Automate decisions in minutes. Consistent, decisions aligned to your risk appetite.

See repayment history for all accounts	Review income and expenditure at a glance	Configure rules in minutes







Decision Engine roadmap

1

Foundation (First 60 days)

1. Set, initially cautious, targets for automation
2. Map your credit policy onto decision rules
3. Configure affordability and credit checks, whether you credit check today or rely on statements and relationship

Target: 30% of applications automated within 60 days.

2

Optimisation (Months 3 to 6)

1. Analyse cases for lighter-touch assessment
2. Identify applications that need greater intervention
3. Refine rules based on performance to date

Target: 80% of applications turned around within 48 hours

3

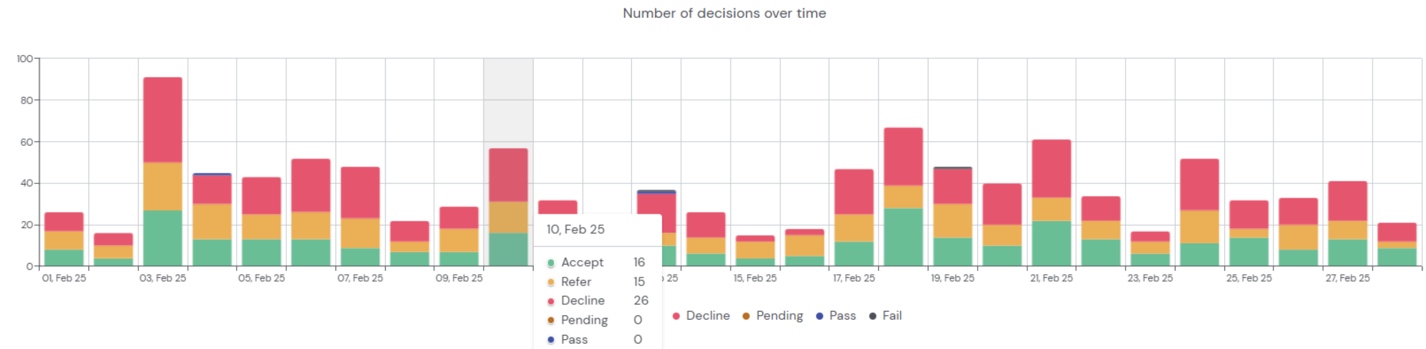
Scale (Months 7+)

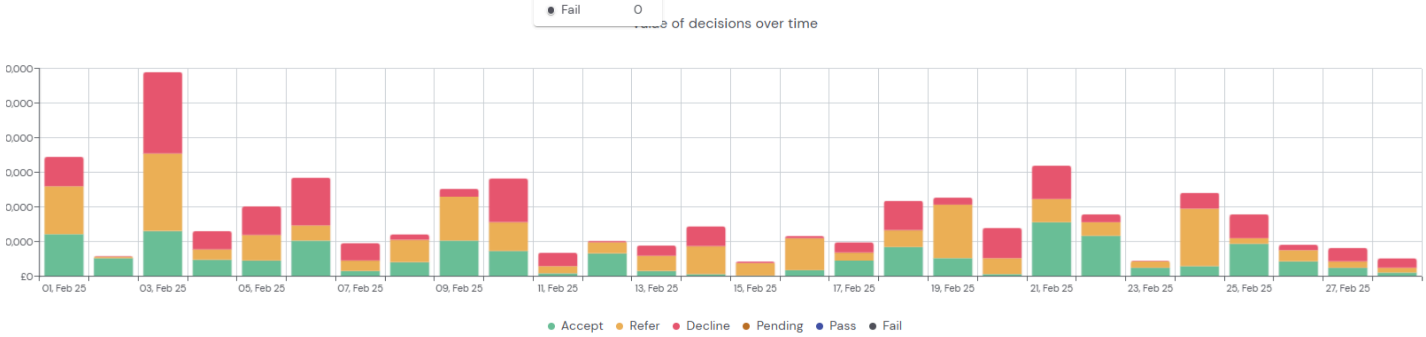
1. Use analytics to focus on drivers of growth:
    - Turnaround time and automation rates
    - Automation rates
    - Bad debt ratio

Target: 20% increase in loan volumes, with no increase in staffing hours

Track performance over time:

For example, check loan application volumes (number and value) month by month:





Review key delinquency performance:

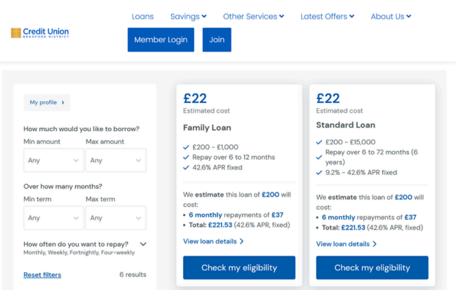
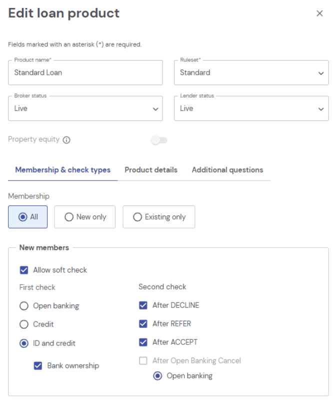
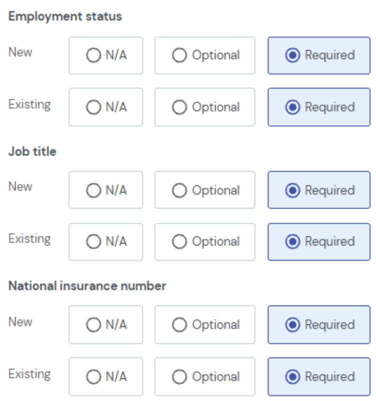
Average Time to Default	Average Time to Settle	Total Settled Percentage *% of loans that have been fully settled*	Default Percentage *% of loans that have defaulted*	Total Arrears Percentage *% of loans currently in arrears or overdue status. Excludes up-to-date loans*
26.8 Months	9.2 Months	12.43%	3.8%	2.5%

Lisnaskea Credit Union

Within 18 months of using NestEgg's Decision Engine, the Credit Union is now turning 83% of loans around within 48 hours. The loan book has grown 21% with £3/4m in new lending with a bad rate under 2%.

Loan Matching

Reach borrowers who don't yet know they're eligible, bringing you more qualified applicants sooner.

Help members find the right products, easily	Bring loan products to market in minutes	Flexible questions to ask
		

Loan Matching roadmap

Foundation (First 60 days)

1. Configure your loan products with flexibility on terms and rates
2. Balancing essential questions with ease of completion
3. Emphasise community values in product descriptions

Target: 50% of applications arrive online

Optimisation (Months 3 to 6)

1. Track where applicants drop off and optimise the journey
2. Add human touchpoints where they matter most
3. Segment messaging: younger borrowers want speed, older members value service, new-to-credit need reassurance

Target: 75% of all applications arrive online

Scale (Months 7+)

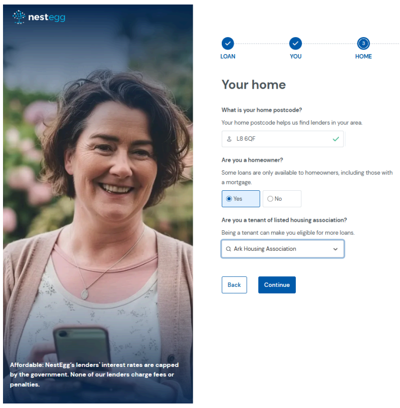
1. Begin to drive traffic through various marketing campaigns
2. Use access to extended data to focus on drivers of growth:
   - Conversion rate
   - Drop offs
   - Marketing campaign effectiveness

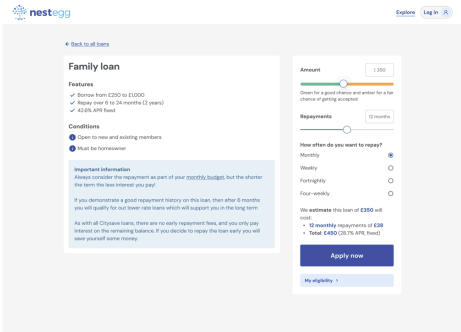
Target: 30% growth in loan applications

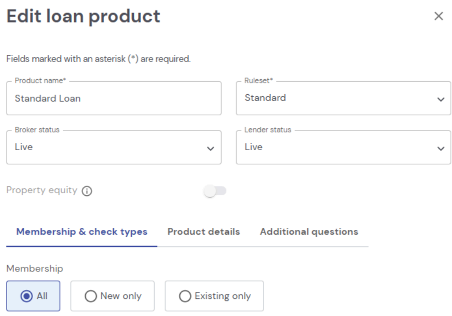
Broker Platform

Win responsible borrowers turned away by banks. Capture quality applicants before they give up or turn to alternatives.

High conversion User Experience	Maximise referrals with soft credit checks	Participate at the switch of a button







Broker Platform roadmap

1

Foundation (First 60 days)

1. Set your risk appetite for the kinds of loans you want referred
2. Create specific products for the Broker platform as required
3. Your advantage: human underwriting that sees beyond credit scores, community focus over profit, and relationships that matter.

Target: 10 referrals monthly

2

Optimisation (Months 3 to 6)

1. Track which referral sources produce the best borrowers
2. Adjust criteria to focus on high accept rates
3. Build feedback loops with partners.

Target: 75% accept rate

3

Scale (Months 7+)

1. Expand to additional products
2. Work to ensure same day turnaround of applications

Target: 10% of all loan applications originating from the Broker platform

Implementation Checklist

Before You Start:

- [ ] Board approval and buy-in secured
- [ ] Credit policy documented and ready to translate into decision rules
- [ ] Staff trained on new tools and understanding credit reports
- [ ] Member communication plan prepared for new online services like Open Banking and Loan Matching

Monthly Review:

- [ ] Decision data analysis (volumes, turnaround times, automation rates)
- [ ] Portfolio quality metrics (delinquency, arrears, write-offs)
- [ ] Application funnel performance (drop-offs, conversion rates)
- [ ] Staff and member feedback on workflow improvements

Regulatory Compliance:

- [ ] Consumer Duty considerations documented
- [ ] Audit trail maintained for all automated decisions
- [ ] Regular reviews of decision rules and outcomes scheduled
- [ ] Clear escalation processes for exceptions established

Your Northern Ireland Advantage

Leverage Northern Ireland's strong credit union culture - members trust you more than banks, so make that clear in all communications. Many NI credit unions serve rural communities, and digital tools let you serve dispersed members without requiring branch visits for routine transactions. The platform works with the way you already lend, including guarantor-backed loans, rather than asking you to change it.

Target households currently using high-cost lenders through your financial inclusion messaging. You can offer significantly better rates while maintaining responsible lending standards that protect both you and the borrower. Position yourself as the community alternative that combines modern technology with traditional values.

Common questions

Before taking the next step, here are the questions we hear most often - and the honest answers.

1	**Will this take the lending decision out of our hands?** No. Your credit union sets the rules, approval thresholds, decline criteria, and referral triggers. You control your own automation appetite, deciding what percentage of decisions are auto-approved or declined. When you first go live, all outputs are recommendations, giving your team confidence to adopt at their own pace. We remove the manual work; you stay in control.
2	**A lot of our members are shift workers, weekly paid, or have gaps in their credit history - does the system account for that?** Yes, and this is where Open Banking makes the difference. Rather than relying on a credit score, which can penalise irregular income, the Decision Engine analyses real bank transaction data, identifying variable income, weekly pay cycles, and spending patterns that traditional assessments miss. Members who look risky on paper often look very different with Open Banking.
3	**Does our team's knowledge of members still play a role in decisions?** Always. The Decision Engine handles straightforward cases automatically, enabling your team to focus where their judgement adds most value. The computer never has to say no, it can flag specific areas of risk for a Loan Officer or the credit committee to review. It works alongside your committee, not in place of it, so your existing approval process stays intact.
4	**Are credit unions like ours already using this - and how has it landed with staff and members?** Yes, and feedback has been extremely positive. Credit unions using NestEgg are seeing significant growth, and in Northern Ireland, online lending has become an invaluable service, particularly in rural areas. Staff consistently report less time on data gathering and more time for members. For members, faster decisions are a tangible improvement.
5	**We're a small team - is this realistic for a credit union our size?** It's arguably *most* valuable for smaller teams. Automating routine assessments means you can handle greater loan volumes without additional headcount. Implementation is straightforward, and we support you through it. No tech team required - just a willingness to process loans faster.

Getting Started

The credit unions seeing the best results aren't the largest or most technically sophisticated. They're the ones who started with clear goals like growing their loan book 30% in 12 months, measured consistently with weekly data reviews in early months, adjusted quickly by refining rules based on real performance rather than sticking to assumptions, and communicated clearly so members and staff understood the changes and why they mattered.

There's no minimum volume and the contract runs on a 30-day rolling basis, so it works whether you're processing hundreds of loans a year or thousands. Your first step is to book a call with NestEgg to walk through examples from Northern Ireland credit unions already seeing results. No pitch deck, just a conversation about what's possible for your credit union.

NestEgg Ltd

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