



RAF SPORT ASSOCIATION FUNDS HANDLING POLICY 2026

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ANNEX A: 2026 RAF Central Fund Grant/Allocation Policy

1. Introduction

The RAF Central Fund ('the Fund') delivers charitable impact by using sport and physical activity as a vehicle to enhance the mental, social, and physical wellbeing of RAF Serving Personnel.

RAF Sports Associations ('Associations') deliver a variety of engagement and development opportunities for personnel at all levels of ability, enabling the Fund's beneficiaries to stay mentally resilient, socially connected, physically fit and healthy, thereby actively contributing to the Fund's charitable mission and vision.

The Fund supports Associations with an annual funding programme, and in various other ways, from financial services and charity governance to income generation via commercial sponsorships and stewardship of charitable support via third-party organisations.

This policy sets out the key principles, requirements and expectations of how Associations generate, handle and apply funding to best effect.

2. Key Principles



Associations, both merged and non-merged, have a duty to generate and expend resources responsibly and in a way that furthers the aims and objectives of the Association.

2.1 Governance of RAF Sport

It is acknowledged that where Associations are conducting activity under duty status and/or in representation of the RAF, they must operate in compliance with terms and policy as outlined in the RAF's JSP660 and the supporting AP3415.

Associations merged with the Fund must follow policies and regulations as outlined in the [Sports Association Resource Hub](#), where a handbook is also available to support sport governance and operations. Please contact the Operations team at Governance@rafcf.org.uk with any queries.

2.2 Application and Prioritisation of Resources

All resources must be spent in line with any restrictions, policies or contracted requirements against them. This includes any personal contributions and/or donations gathered for a specific purpose.

Where possible, resources with time sensitive or complex restrictions (such as to certain activity, items or audiences) should be prioritised for spending over more flexible and/or enduring resources.

2.3 Charitable Expenditure

Use of charitable funds must adhere to the associated terms of the award and used solely to support the delivery of sporting activities. Expenditure is focused on providing opportunities, equipment, and resources for sporting activity, alongside essential administration, safety, and welfare provisions.

The use of charitable funds is not permitted for any activity that could bring the Fund, Associations or the wider RAF into disrepute. This includes, but is not limited to, expenditures related to gambling, excessive alcohol consumption, or any inappropriate entertainment or events that fall outside of core charitable objectives.

By maintaining a strict focus on charitable aims, we ensure that all charitable funds are used responsibly and transparently to support and enhance the sporting experience for beneficiaries.

2.4 Reporting

Any specific reporting requirements against charitable support or commercial funding will be outlined within the associated terms of award or contract of sponsorship.

Non-merged Associations remain ultimately responsible for all charity reporting essentials, as required by the Charity Commission.

2.5 Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of each Sports Association to collate and provide the RAF Central Fund Finance team with accurate and comprehensive invoices/records, which clearly confirms all detail of the expenditure. These records are necessary as they are required for external audits including HMRC and the Charity Commission.



2.6 Repayment or Recovery of Funds

The Fund may at its discretion withhold, suspend, or require the Associations to repay all or part of an allocation or restricted fund if:

- a. the Association (or any of its employees) act dishonestly or negligently in connection with the activities associated with the Funding or breaches any of their obligations in a way that could lead to reputational damage to the Fund.
- b. the Association applies any of the Funding in a manner not permitted under this Policy.
- c. the Association provides the Fund with any materially misleading or inaccurate information.

The Fund may at its discretion offset any amounts due to be repaid by the Association against any further instalments of the Allocation due to be paid, or against any other payments due from the Fund to the Association.

3. Definitions

Association resources are categorised as follows:

	Merged	Non-Merged
Designated (D)	Self-generated funds and reserves	N/A
Restricted (R)	External funding	External funding (incl. CF Grant)
Unrestricted (U)	CF Allocation (only)	Self-generated funds and reserves
Trading (T)	Sponsorship activity	Sponsorship activity

Guidance relating to common types of income/resource has been developed at section 4.

All expenditure by Associations must be applied and administered in line with key principles as outlined in section 2.

4. Categories of Funding

4.1 RAF Central Fund Programmes

The Fund's grant programmes fulfil our charitable objects and deliver impact through:

- Generating inclusive and accessible communities around a shared passion for sport, resulting in an enhanced sense of belonging, motivation and morale.
- Providing positive experiences that enable RAF serving personnel to detach from operational demands and recover from the day-to-day pressures of service.
- Supporting personnel to maintain an active lifestyle, leading to an increased sense of wellbeing by:
 - Developing physical and mental resilience through regular training and competition.
 - Developing social connections through sport networks and team challenges, aiding communication and developing leadership qualities.
- Increasing participation by ensuring personnel are equipped and provisioned to effectively engage.
- Enhancing facilities on station/unit to inspire participation and create opportunities to engage.



It is encouraged that all RAF personnel benefitting from Sports Association Funding hold Sport Lottery tickets to ensure sustainability of future funding. Sign up to the RAF Sports Lottery by visiting www.rafcf.org.uk/sports-lottery or email rafsports@sterlinglotteries.co.uk to increase tickets!

i. Annual Sport Association Funding [Non-Merged (R), Merged (U)]

Run to a 3-year planning cycle, the Fund's Sport Association funding programme is an annual allocation/grant award supporting sports to deliver a core programme of activities. A supporting policy can be found at Annex A.

The Funding allocation is for use in year. Any unspent funding will be recalled to the Fund for redistribution through the Underspend process.

ii. Additional Awards (RAFCF sourced) [Non-Merged (R), Merged (U)]

The Fund is often able to provide opportunities for additional in-year funding to Associations, generally during Q2 and Q4.

iii. Additional Awards (Stewarded) [Non-Merged (R), Merged (R)]

Through several long-standing partnerships with third-party charitable supporters, the Fund also stewards additional in-year funding opportunities for Associations. This includes an opportunity to bid for support of large-scale capital projects through the Nuffield Trust for the Forces of the Crown.

iv. Wider Funding Programmes [N/A]

Serving members of Associations are likely to be eligible for support through the Fund's [Sports Grants](#) programme, empowering individuals with up to £375 (subject to competing level and engagement in the RAF Sports Lottery) towards a range of equipment and pursuits that engage personnel in physical activity. In addition, High Performing and Elite Athletes could be eligible for up to £1,000 through our partnership work with BAE Systems.

Associations that hold a connection to a network of Station/Unit level clubs could indirectly benefit from the Fund's [Station Grants](#), enriching lived experience across RAF locations through development of facilities for sport and physical activity.

4.2 Fundraising [Non-Merged (U), Merged (D)]

Whether an endurance challenge, taster experiences or representation at an organised event, fundraising is a fantastic way to proactively enhance the funds available to your sport.

Providing any funds raised are wholly intended as a donation to the RAF Central Fund (which can then be ring fenced for Associations), the Fund can provide a personalised fundraising site. The platform facilitates safe and quick payments and can support ticket sales under suggested donation as well as the collection of gift aid. To discuss further, please contact fundraising@rafcf.org.uk.

4.3 External Funding Applications [Non-Merged (R), Merged (R)]

Where Associations independently source third party charitable grant programmes not connected to the Fund's existing programme of works, it is essential that the Fund's Grants Department is notified in advance of any intended applications to external funders so that we can review and approve any potential partnerships for merged Associations.



We would then look to help strengthen any applications by sharing insights from our ongoing work to better define and communicate the charitable impact of Associations, so it's also in the interest of non-merged Associations to notify the Fund of intended applications.

4.4 Sponsorship [Non-Merged (T), Merged (T)]

The Fund's Commercial Department acts on behalf of RAF Sport and all Sport Associations seeking to attract and secure sponsorship. The sponsorship rights will be defined in consultation with the Sport Association before an agreement is put in place with a sponsor.

We encourage all Sports Associations to actively attract sponsorship, but it is essential all merged Associations inform us of any intended partnerships before rights are agreed. This enables us to ensure the partnership is mutually beneficial and secure the appropriate value against the sponsor's request. All contracted rights must be within our gift to give. In return for the rights, sponsorship can involve a monetary payment and/or goods in kind but must be captured in a sponsorship agreement and the correct treatment of VAT followed.

To reduce administration, we aim to offer one agreement to a sponsor and can therefore sub-license rights to a non-merged Association within an agreement. Once Sponsorship income is paid into the Fund's Trading Company, it is allocated to the merged Association or paid to the non-merged Association upon receipt of an invoice.



Annex A: 2026 RAF Central Fund Sport Association Grant/Allocation Policy

The RAF Central Fund issues over £1m in funding each year to RAF Sport Associations, awarded through a Funding Allocation Notice (merged) or Grant Agreement (non-merged).

Eligibility

The following are considered eligible for charitable support:

- Individuals currently serving in the Royal Air Force
- Members of the Royal Air Force Reserve
- Members of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force¹.

The Fund accepts that non-eligible personnel may incidentally benefit from funding.

Themes of Support

The programme recognises requirements of Associations in the following priority order:

1. Legal or Regulatory Requirement.
2. New Member Engagement.
3. Support of Development Level.
4. Support of Representative Level.
5. Desirable Support.

Categories of Expenditure

The programme provides support to Associations in the following areas:

- Operating Costs (Appendix I);
- New Member Engagement (Appendix II);
- Clothing & Equipment (Appendix III);
- Overseas Visits & Training Camps (Appendix IV);
- Capital Projects (Appendix V).

Items Attracting Support

Funding must only be requested for such items/activities that are deemed to be essential for the participation and development of RAF Serving Personnel in Association Sport. Individual needs are supported through the Fund's Individual Sports Grants programme and therefore cannot be supported through Sports Association Funding.

Items Not Attracting Support

The following are the principles that should be considered across all funding streams. A more detailed list can be found in each relevant appendix.

- Any items or expenditure that can or should be met via public resourcing (e.g. an Association branded banner promoting RAF recruitment). Where Associations are able to apply for public support to part-finance an item or activity, it is expected that these funds will have been utilised prior to use of Fund monies;
- Staff costs, including wages, insurances and travel, except where the benefit is focused on the wider Association and peripheral to the staff member. Coaching costs may be paid using Fund monies and are not considered staff costs, unless the coach is a paid employee of the Association;
- Costs incurred promoting sponsors, organisations or other charities.

It is encouraged that all RAF personnel benefitting from Sports Association Funding hold Sport Lottery tickets to ensure sustainability of future funding. Sign up to the RAF Sports Lottery by visiting www.rafcf.org.uk/sports-lottery or email rafsports@sterlinglotteries.co.uk to increase tickets!

1. Members of the RAFVR (UAS) may under some circumstances meet the eligibility requirements.



APPENDIX I – OPERATING COSTS

The aim of funding Operating Costs is to enhance the day-to-day activities of the Association that cannot be funded at public expense.

Charitable Objective

Operating Costs fulfil the charitable objectives of the Fund by ensuring that Associations can provide necessary administration in order to allow continued operation of the Association; thereby allowing serving personnel to participate in their chosen sport and enhancing their well-being and morale.

Principles of Support

The Fund understands that Associations require support for Operating Costs to ensure the continuity of participation and development of its serving RAF members through sport.

The Fund will support expenditure for Operating Costs that are fundamental to the Association's activities. Operating Costs funding is to support existing teams and participants including those considered as 'developing' towards RAF representative level.

Acknowledging that the exact nature of these costs can vary significantly across Associations, typical expenditure that can be supported by our funding includes:

- RAF Championships;
- Facility hire (where public resource is not available);
- Fees for officials (where these cannot be sourced within the Association or via public resource);
- Competition fixtures fees;
- Insurance costs;
- Coaching costs (where these cannot be sourced within the Association or via public resource and are essential to the continued successful development of the members);
- Affiliation fees;
- First aid (where resources are not available through a chosen venue)
- Inter Service Championships.

Costs incurred to introduce new members to the Association are not to be included within Operating Costs (these are covered within the New Member Engagement funding section).

Additional Items Not Attracting Support

This is not an exhaustive list but aims to provide guidance as to items the Fund cannot support:

- Stationary;
- Computer software packages (e.g. Adobe software);
- Postage;
- Mobile phone costs;
- Website hosting costs;
- Poster production;
- Trophies, medals (except when used for Inter-Services and RAF Championships), plaques, awards, framing work and engraving;



- Personal licenses;
- Mileage costs including personal travel costs for Committees, meetings or transporting kit from storage;
- Food and beverage costs (such as Committee or meeting refreshments) unless required by the NGB;
- Private car hire;
- Accommodation costs (unless agreed in advance with the RAF Central Fund in exceptional circumstances).



APPENDIX II – NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

The aim of New Member Engagement funding is to increase Association membership, thereby ensuring Fund monies are benefitting a wider number of serving personnel.

Charitable Objective

This support is key to the Fund meeting its charitable objectives, encouraging new, and a diverse range of participants, to take part in physical activity and providing all serving RAF personnel the opportunity to partake in that sport; thereby developing the individual and improving their morale.

Principles of Funding

The Fund acknowledges that development level activities are vital and key to encouraging new participants in the sport. The activities incur costs and therefore the Fund will support essential costs to allow the new participants to experience the sport.

The Fund will support introductory activity costs which are fundamental to the Association's New Member Engagement activities². Acknowledging that the exact nature of these costs can vary significantly across Associations, typical items which can be supported by our funding includes:

- Venue Hire (where public resource is not available). Where public resource is not utilised, this is to be justified within the bid;
- First Aid (where resources are not available through a chosen venue);
- Coaching;
- Entry fees.

Additional Items Not Attracting Support

The Fund will not support activities within this section that do not allow for the encouragement of new participation to the sport. Developing current members should be captured in Operating Costs. In addition, the cost of promotional give-away items will not be supported.

Reporting Requirements

Once New Member Engagement activities have been completed, the Association should report to the Fund on the following information:

- Nature of activity;
- Cost of activity;
- Total Number of participants;
- Number of potential new members of Association.

2. The Fund accepts no responsibility for any other costs incurred by the recipient in connection with the activities to which the grant relates, the recipient must indemnify and keep the Fund indemnified, where necessary, against any losses, damages, costs, expenses, liabilities, claims, actions, proceedings or other liabilities that result from or arise out of the recipient's acts or omissions in relation to the project or its duties to third parties.



APPENDIX III – CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT ('C&E')

The aim of the C&E grant funding is to provide Associations with the clothing and equipment required to allow the relevant sport to occur at the appropriate level.

Charitable Objective

C&E funding fulfils the charitable objectives of the Fund by ensuring that Associations provide the necessary clothing and equipment to allow the continued playing of the respective sport; in order to develop individuals and enhance their motivation.

Principles of Funding

The Fund acknowledges that sports require essential clothing and equipment to allow their continued play. It will support essential costs to allow Association members to play their chosen sport.

Items Attracting Support

Acknowledging that the exact nature of these costs may vary significantly across Associations, typical expenditure that may be supported by our funding includes:

- Essential safety equipment required for the sport;
- Sporting equipment essential to participation in the sport (where not provided at public expense);
- Pooled team clothing essential to the playing of the sport – from changing room to changing room³.
- Members can be supported to purchase specialist equipment, although the Association may only fund up to 50% of an item, with the other 50% being met through a personally funded contribution by the individual.

Please speak to your RAF Central Fund Ambassador if clarification is required.

Items considered capital in nature⁴ are not to be included within C&E costs (these are covered within the Capital funding section).

Recommended Clothing & Equipment Suppliers

The Central Fund Commercial team have negotiated preferred pricing with selected suppliers on behalf of RAF Sport and RAF Associations, links to these can be found [here](#).

These agreements will be reviewed periodically. The Fund may also review purchases bought outside of this framework to determine if comparable savings were achieved.

Additional Items Not Attracting Support

The following is not an exhaustive list but aims to provide guidance as to items the Fund cannot support:

- Corporate clothing including polo shirts;
- Clothing that is ancillary to the playing of the sport and not essential; for example, hoodies or warm-up tops, unless the Association can justify why participants must have the equipment;



Items of match attire funded by the RAF Central Fund should be branded using Fund approved logos. Please contact marketing@rafcf.org.uk for appropriate hi-res logos. Fund monies may be utilised to cover the cost of such branding.

3. Where funding has been provided for clothing and equipment in the previous grant year, the Association must provide detail of write-off and disposal actions of old kit.
4. Items considered capital in nature are those that will endure beyond one season and are valued at £5,000 or more (this includes aggregated items).



APPENDIX IV – OVERSEAS VISITS ('OVs') AND TRAINING CAMPS ('TCs')

The aim of OV and TC funding is to develop individuals and teams and to allow competition with non-UK teams or where facilities/competitions are not available in the UK.

Charitable Objective

OVs and TCs fulfil the charitable objectives of the Fund by encouraging the development of individuals, challenging them to operate in an unfamiliar environment, enhancing their morale with the aim of increasing their motivation.

Principles of Funding

The Fund acknowledges that OVs and TCs incur costs that cannot be covered at public expense and so support serving RAF Sports Association members to attend such events (on a per person basis).

For Fund monies spent on Overseas Visits and Training Camps, a maximum of £225 may be funded per person, per Sport Association, per year. Please see footnotes 5 and 6 for numbers permitted for Overseas Visits and Training Camps.

All individuals attending an OV or TC must incur a minimum personal contribution, before the application of all other available funding of 20% per person.

In order for support to be allocated, the Association must provide a clear strategic reason for participating in the overseas event.

Items Attracting Support

Funding must only be requested for such items/activities that are approved by Directorate of RAF Sport (DRS) and deemed to be essential for the participation and development of RAF Serving Personnel in an Association. These include:

- Travel costs;
- Accommodation costs;
- Equipment;
- Visas;
- Insurance.

Items Not Attracting Support

The Fund may provide support to Associations to partake in Inter Services Championships, and this may be funded through Operating Costs should the events take place overseas.

Post Event Requirements

A final nominal roll, a brief summary of the event and a Post Event Report (if available) should be submitted to the Fund within six weeks of completion of the activity. Failure to submit this information may result in future event funding being denied.

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5. The total numbers attending a TC may be up to 33% higher than that for a tour (JSP 660 Annex A) and approval must be received from the Directorate of RAF Sport. The Association must be a CAT 1, 2 or 3 sport.
 6. JSP 660 – Annex A to Chapter 3 provides details of maximum numbers allowed to travel for overseas sports teams.



APPENDIX V – CAPITAL PROJECTS

The aim of Capital Projects funding is to contribute to significant clothing or equipment required to support Associations delivering sport at the appropriate level.

Charitable Objective

Capital Project funding fulfils the charitable objectives of the Fund by supporting Associations to provide the necessary resources to enable the continued playing of the respective sport; in order to develop individuals and enhance their motivation.

Principles of Funding

The Fund acknowledges that sports require resources to allow their continued play and will therefore support essential costs to allow serving Association members to continue to play their chosen sport.

Items considered capital in nature are those that will endure beyond one season and are valued at £5,000 or more (this includes aggregated items). Evidence will be required to show that other funding avenues have been explored and 3 quotes will need to be provided where possible.

