



RAF CENTRAL FUND – 2026 SPORTS GRANTS FUNDING POLICY

Introduction

The RAF Central Fund ('the Fund') can trace its charitable origins back to 1919 and has remained dedicated to providing support to those who serve in the RAF.

Vision

For serving RAF personnel to develop their full potential through sport and physical activities.

Programme Objectives

Grant programmes fulfil the charitable objectives of the Fund by:

- Generating **inclusive and accessible communities** around a shared passion for sport, resulting in an enhanced **sense of belonging, motivation and morale**.
- Enabling **positive experiences** that empower 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 **improved sense of wellbeing** by:
 - Developing **physical and mental resilience** through regular training and competition.
 - Establishing **social connections** through sport networks and team challenges.
 - **Skill building, problem solving, stress management** and **realising purpose** through supporting and engaging in sporting activities.
- 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 and develop**.

Charitable Expenditure

The Fund is committed to ensuring that all charitable funds are 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.

We do not permit the use of charitable funds for any activity that could bring the Fund or the wider RAF into disrepute. This includes, but is not limited to, expenditures related to alcohol, gambling, or any inappropriate entertainment, events and activities that fall outside of core sporting objectives.

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

Policy Structure

This policy provides the Fund's conditions of support for the grant streams available to individuals taking part in sport for 2026.

Details for each grant stream are contained within the policy at:

Section	Policy	Relevance	Pages
1	General	Applicable to all applications.	2
2	Sports Grant - Individual	Applicable for applications to support an individual's participation in sport.	3-7
3	Sports Grant - Group	Applicable for applications to support station/club level groups/teams participating in sports events.	8-9
4	Sports Grant – RAF Alpine Championships	Applicable for annual applications to support individuals to attend the RAF Alpine Championships	10



1 2026 – SPORTS GRANTS GENERAL POLICY

1.1 Principles of Funding

The Fund acknowledges that the provision of support is to assist individuals to participate in sporting activities to meet the charity's objectives.

1.2 Eligible Personnel

The following are considered as eligible for support:

- Individuals currently serving in the Royal Air Force
- Members of the Royal Air Force Reserve
- Members of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force.¹

1.3 Lottery Enhanced Funding

All eligible personnel are able to apply for support under the terms of the policy. Applicants may wish to apply for enhanced grant support if they play the RAF Sports Lottery ('the Lottery'). The maximum level of enhanced funding available is considered according to the number of Lottery tickets held in play by the applicant at the date of the funding application².

- Maximum levels of funding for each grant type are detailed in the relevant section of this policy;
- The number of tickets declared as 'held in play' must be in play for a continuous period which includes the application submission date;
- The minimum required period for tickets to remain 'in play' for each stream of funding is detailed in the relevant section;
- Failure to continue to hold tickets in play for the required period will result in a requirement to return the enhanced element of the grant award and a ban from further consideration of funding for a period of at least 12 months.

1.4 Liability

Sports grant funding under this policy is wholly discretionary and dependent on available income during the funding period. The successful award of grant funding during 2026 is not to be taken as indicative of any entitlement to future funding.

The award of grant funding from the Fund does not infer Duty Status. The total liability of the Fund is limited to payment of the grant.

Eligible personnel should consider their own skill and ability level when compiling requests for funding. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that any equipment purchased with support of a Sport Grant is stored safely and maintained to an appropriate standard.

Engagement in sport and physical activity should be conducted under appropriate supervision and safety guidance. National Governing Bodies will hold advice and guidance for specific sports, and those recognised by the RAF are all supported by dedicated RAF Sport Associations.

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

² Tickets are not deemed to be 'held in play' until such time as the first payment deduction is taken.



2 2026 SPORTS GRANTS – INDIVIDUAL SPORTS GRANTS POLICY

Eligible individuals (as defined in the General section) participating in sport and physical activity may apply to the Fund for grant support towards their participation in activities, events, and courses, or to purchase individual kit and equipment.

Funding must only be requested for such items/activities that are deemed to be essential for participation in the applicants chosen sport(s) and physical activity.

2.1 Funding Detail

2.1.1 Application Timings

The 2026 funding period begins on 1 January. Applications on 2026 forms may be submitted in advance of this date however will not be considered until after 1 January.

Complete applications must be received by the Fund by 30 September 2026, for activities taking place during 2026. Any applications received after this date will not be considered for support.

Applications for retrospective funding will not be supported.³

Applications must be received by the Fund prior to the purchase of any items and/or participation in the activities or events noted as requiring funding support. Purchases may be made following acknowledged receipt of the application by the Fund; however this is at the applicant's own financial risk as no guarantee of funding is made until confirmation of an award has been communicated to the applicant in writing.

2.1.2 Endorsement Requirements

All individuals must obtain the signed endorsement from the appropriate RAF Sport Association Chair (or their delegated representative(s)) before submitting an application form for grant funding **unless**:

- there is no recognised RAF Sports Association for the activity; or
- the relevant RAF Sports Association does not endorse development or station level bids.

Where either of these are noted, the application must carry a signed endorsement from a Sqn Ldr or above. If a Sqn Ldr or above is not available on location, an OF3 equivalent is acceptable. More details with regards to endorsers for specific sports may be found in the guidance document.

Applicants do not need to be a member of an RAF Sport Association to be eligible for endorsement by an Association. This particularly applies to development level applications.

Any purchased equipment is used at the individual's own risk and subject to liabilities as outlined in 1.4

Self-endorsed applications are not permitted.

³ The Fund will consider retrospective support in exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include, but not be limited to, the costs of competing at an event which falls in January or February 2026, for which the applicant was only selected for in the final quarter of 2025 (proof of this must be provided). The Fund will not consider retrospective funding for kit, equipment or other costs that could reasonably have been foreseen before the closure of the previous year's grant window. Grant applications received after February 2026 for retrospective funding will not be considered.



Endorsed application forms at all competing levels are to be submitted to the Fund by the endorser with the applicant being copied in as confirmation of submission. If an applicant submits an application form themselves, it **must** be accompanied by the email trail from the endorser. If this is not included it will result in a delay to the application being processed.

Applications are only confirmed as received by the Fund when a confirmation email has been sent back to the applicant. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure items are not purchased prior to this confirmation email being received.

2.1.3 Personal Contributions

A minimum of twenty percent (20%) personal contribution must be made by all applicants towards costs.

2.1.4 Other Funding

Applicants may utilise other sources of income to supplement the total cost of their activities. All applicants however must retain a minimum personal contribution as noted, towards the total cost of the activities before any RAF Central Fund or other income sources are considered.

2.1.5 Applications for Multiple Sports

Applications may be submitted by individuals for multiple sports within the funding period however each sport must be detailed on a separate application form and supported by the authorised endorser for each sport.

2.1.6 Maximum Levels of Support

An individual may apply for multiple sports grants during the funding period. The total level of support for any one individual in 2026 must not exceed the maximum levels detailed at 2.6. This includes funding provided through Individual Sports Grants, Group Sports Events, and RAF Alpine Championships.

2.1.7 Public Funding

Where public funding is available, this avenue of funding must be exhausted before applying to the Fund. A combination of Public and Fund grant monies is acceptable.

2.1.8 Supporting Other Charities

The Fund, as a charity, is not able to support individuals participating in events where the primary purpose for the activity is to fundraise for other charities.

2.1.9 Post Grant Award

Grant award monies may only be utilised for the items/activities specified on the application. Should an item/activity not be available following confirmation of a grant award the applicant must seek written approval from the Fund should they wish to use their grant monies for alternative items/activities.

Grant award monies may only be utilised/spent in 2026, and any unspent awards must be returned to the Fund by 31 January 2027.

2.1.10 Insurances

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that appropriate insurance policies are held for all activity undertaken which have been funded by Fund monies. Insurance policies are ineligible for funding through the Sports Grants programmes.



2.1.11 Partner Suppliers

When compiling intended purchases, please have a check for current partner offers on the Fund's website to explore available rates.

The Fund reserves the right to require that its partner suppliers are utilised where possible, except when there is already a conflicting sponsorship agreement, there is a medical requirement for specialist items, or the items requested are not available.

2.2 Available Funding

Grant funding for individuals is tiered according to:

- the level at which the individual currently participates (at the date of the application)
- the individual's Lottery ticket holding.

2.2.1 Definition of Participation Level

The level that an applicant **currently** participates at (as at date of application), not the level they are aspiring to, or have played in previous years.

The participation level must be confirmed by the endorser. Where the endorser advises that an individual participates at a lower level, funding will be considered at the endorsed participation level.

Participation Levels:

- **Development – Station/Masters/Other**
This level applies to individuals who have not been selected at RAF representative level or above. Station level representation includes juniors, development squads, grass roots, squadron, wing and branch levels.
- **RAF Representative & Above**
This level applies to individuals who have been selected to represent (compete for) the main RAF Sport Association team(s) at recognised fixtures, including Inter Service. This level does not apply to individuals currently playing in the RAF development and masters squads or station level participants. The 'above' applies to individuals who have been selected and will be regularly competing at recognised UKAF events/fixtures, or Tri-Service team events. This level also applies to individuals who regularly represent at national/international level.

2.2.2 Moving to a Different Level of Participation (within funding year)

Where an individual transitions to a different level during the funding period:

- Increase in level – a supplementary application may be submitted (before the submission deadline) for additional funding required which is determined by the higher competing level and the number of lottery tickets held by the applicant.
- Decrease in level – the Fund does not require the return of the funding associated with the higher competing level.

2.3 Items/Areas Not Supported

Support must only be requested for such items/activities that are deemed to be essential for participation and development in the applicants chosen sport(s). Sports Associations are supported through the Fund's Sports Association funding programme and therefore cannot be supported through the Individual Sports Grant programme.



The following will not be supported (this list is not exhaustive and is subject to amendment):

- RAF Sport Association costs – e.g. competitive kit, equipment, memberships, competition fees, etc.
- Adventurous Training and Force Development activities.
- Provision of any category driving licence.
- Mileage.
- Computers, laptops, software packages.
- Electronic personal performance monitoring products non-essential to participation in your sport including, but not limited to, GoPros or equivalents, cameras, smart watches, rangefinders, Heart rate monitors.
- Headphones.
- Polo shirts and other corporate clothing.
- Pressure washers.
- Any clothing item that will not be worn for training or competing in chosen sport.
- Certain obstacle courses.
- Postage fees.
- Bedding.
- Vitamins, medications and supplements (beyond proteins and electrolytes).
- Insurance policies
- Gym memberships, where suitable facilities are available through RAF Stations/Units.

2.4 Incomplete Applications

Should additional details or clarification be required by the Fund following receipt of an application, the applicant will be notified and given 14 days to supply the information, after which the application will be rejected if suitable response is not received. This will not prevent applicants applying for future grant funding.

2.5 Lottery Enhanced Funding

Individuals requesting enhanced grant funding must hold tickets in play for a consecutive period of no less than 12 months which includes the date of the application submission to the Fund.

The applicant must additionally comply with all the enhanced funding terms noted in section 1.1.2 of this policy.

2.6 Maximum Levels

An individual can apply for up to the following maximum annual grant award:

Sports Lottery Ticket Holding	0 Tickets	1 Ticket	2 Tickets	3 Tickets	4 Tickets	5 Tickets	6 Tickets
Level of Participation	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Development/Other	25	75	100	125	150	175	225
RAF Representative & above	25	75	100	125	150	175	375

2.7 Overseas Visits

See item 3 for further information on group applications and details of eligible OV activities. Individuals may apply for funding towards OVs if not part of a group application, but funding is



limited to the Development/Other funding levels shown in the table above.

2.8 Audit

Following the purchase/payment of items requested, individuals are to send their receipts to FundAwards@rafcf.org.uk. All evidence of expenditure is to be received by 31 December 2026.

Applicants must retain evidence (receipts/order confirmations/bank statements) that support their application for a period of 24 months from the grant award date.

Any applicants identified as failing to utilise funding in accordance with this policy will be asked to return their funding and be denied further support for a period of at least 12 months, to cover a minimum of one full funding year.



3 2026 SPORTS GRANTS – GROUP SPORTS EVENT POLICY

Station level groups are eligible to apply for grant funding to support participation in overseas sporting visits and events. **Any funding awarded from a group grant comes out of the individual's overall maximum allowable funding for that grant period** (see 3.7 for funding allocations).

3.1 Principles of Funding

3.1.1 Application Requirements

The following requirements apply to all applications:

3.1.1.1 Personal Contribution

All participants seeking funding support must make a minimum personal contribution of 20% of the total costs attributable to participation in the event, before any other income/funding is applied.

3.1.1.2 Endorsement

The application must carry a signed endorsement from the Station Commander (or equivalent if a Stn Cdr is not available at your location).

3.1.1.3 Maximum Numbers Attending

Funding is only available towards the costs associated with the maximum number of participants as detailed in JSP660 pt.2, V2.3, Feb 2021.

3.1.1.4 Supporting Documents

Applications must include an approved Admin Order.

3.1.1.5 Timings

Applications must be received no later than 30 days before the event commences. The 2026 funding period begins on 1 January. Applications on the 2026 forms may be submitted in advance of this date however will not be considered until after 1 January.

Complete applications must be received by the Fund by 30 September, for activities taking place during 2026. Any applications received after this date will not be considered for support.

3.1.1.6 Post Event Requirements

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

3.1.1.7 Cancellation

In the event of an OV being cancelled, the Fund must be notified as soon as practicable. Any funding already awarded will require to be repaid.

3.2 Lottery Enhanced Funding

Participants requesting enhanced grant funding must hold tickets in play for a consecutive period of not less than 12 months, which includes the date of the application submission to the Fund.



All participants requesting enhanced funding must additionally comply with all of the enhanced funding terms noted at section 1.3 of this policy.

3.3 Applications for retrospective funding will not be supported.

3.4 Group grant applications will require an initial application form to be submitted by the lead applicant. Individual attendees will then be advised to submit an Individual Sports Grant application form with only the sections marked 'OV' to be completed. Individuals who fail to submit their application by the deadline set will not be eligible for funding.

3.5 Should additional details or clarification be required by the Fund following receipt of an application, the applicant will be notified and given 14 days to supply the information, after which the application will be rejected if suitable response is not received. This will not prevent applicants applying for future grant funding.

3.6 Available Funding

Grant funding is tiered according to each participant's Lottery ticket holding.

3.7 Maximum Levels of Support Per Person

Individuals may attend multiple events during the current funding period. The total level of grant support available for any one individual within the Sports Grants funding programme is tiered according to lottery tickets held:

Ticket Holding	0 Tickets	1 Ticket	2 Tickets	3 Tickets	4 Tickets	5 Tickets	6 Tickets
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Maximum Annual Level	25	75	100	125	150	175	225
UKAF Only	25	75	100	125	150	175	375

3.8 Items/Areas Not Supported

The Fund is not able to support the following (this list is not exhaustive and is subject to amendment):

- Adventurous Training and Force Development - as these are publicly supported activities.
- RAF Sport Association led or supported events - as these are subject to support from the Fund via separate funding programmes.
- Costs that should be met via Public funds.
- Station/section/club kit or equipment.
- **Major Expeditions.** The funding of major expeditions is not covered within this policy and will be considered by the Fund Board of Trustees on a case-by-case basis. Expressions of interests should be submitted to the Fund at least six (6) months in advance of the expedition departure.

3.9 Partner Suppliers

Should clothing and equipment be required to support your trip, various partner offers on the Fund's website can be explored for available rates.



4 2027 SPORTS GRANTS – RAF ALPINE CHALLENGE POLICY

The RAF Central Fund ('the Fund') supports the participation of eligible individuals in the annual RAF Ski and Snowboarding Championships (Alpine Challenge) through charitable grant funding to offset some of the cost to individuals participating in the Championships.

Eligible participants who meet the funding criteria and who book a package through the nominated provider of the RAF Winter Sports Alpine Association (WSAA) can apply for charitable support funding to assist in meeting any required personal contribution.

4.1 Available Funding

Available grant funding is tiered according to the number of Sports Lottery tickets held in play by each eligible participant. Lottery tickets must be held in play for a minimum period of 12 months for a participant to be eligible for funding.

4.2 Repayment of Award

Any participants in the Championships who apply for charitable support who are subsequently identified as not holding the stated number of tickets in play and/or do not hold tickets for the minimum required period of 12 months will be required to:

- Return the value of their funded award to the RAF Central Fund; and
- Will be ineligible for consideration of any further funding for a period of at least 12 months, to cover a minimum of one full funding year.

4.3 Maximum Funding Levels

The maximum level of support for any one individual must not exceed the levels detailed below:

Sports Lottery Ticket Holding	Grant Award (£)
6	225
5	175
4	150
3	125
2	100
1	75

- 4.3.1 Funding to support an individual's participation in the Championships will be considered as part of the individual's annual funding limits that also include any individual and group sports grant funding. For annual maximum funding for individuals, see 2.6.

4.4 Application Process

Applications for grant awards relating to the Championships will be submitted to the Fund, on a specified form, directly by individual participants.

Please be advised that by submitting an application, you permit the nominated provider and the WSAA Registration Rep to pass your name, rank, station and email address to the RAF Central Fund for funding verification purposes.

Applications can be submitted for processing any time prior to and during the Championships. Awards will be made following the Championships once your attendance has been verified.

