



The Start Line

Onboarding resource for Performance Programmes and UK Sport funded athletes



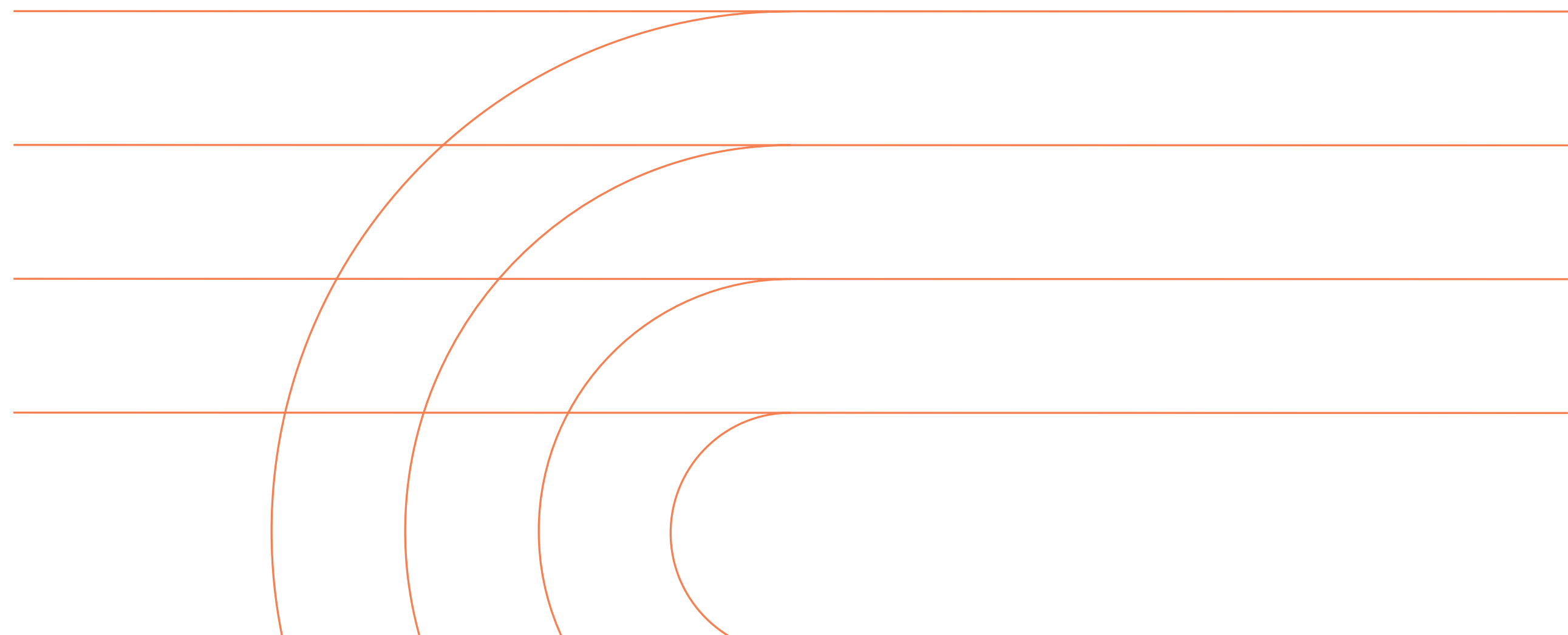
Purpose of this resource

As an athlete, you will receive a number of inductions, introductions and briefings during your time on the programme from across the high performance community. For example, from your Performance Programme, National Governing Body (NGB) or partner organisations such as Team GB, ParalympicsGB or the British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA).

The Start Line is your introduction to UK Sport and the high performance community. It outlines the responsibilities of being part of this community, the support available to you and insights from members of the high performance community.

The Start Line contains key information and links to a series of videos (without flashing lights). We recommend that you complete The Start Line within 8 weeks of applying for your Athlete Performance Award (APA) or nomination to the Performance Programme.

If you are returning to a programme, you can also use this resource to refer back to and refamiliarise yourself with key information. This will ensure that you remain clear on the support and opportunities available to you, and your responsibilities as an athlete.



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Chapter one:

About UK Sport

Welcome to The Start Line

We are here to help you make the most of this exciting opportunity when becoming a Performance Programme or UK Sport funded athlete.

This marks a significant step in your athlete journey, and we are committed to supporting you every step of the way.

As a starting point you are probably wondering who we are and what do we do?

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.



The National Lottery

The National Lottery plays a critical part in funding our elite athletes to train and compete on the world stage as part of their work supporting good causes.

Prior to funding from The National Lottery and the UK Government, Performance Programmes, as they are commonly referred to, did not exist. Athletes would have to self-fund their development, often with limited resources. This meant being an elite athlete presented additional challenges alongside training, such as competing and the physical and mental impact of high performance sport.

Over 1000 athletes across Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Performance Programmes are supported with Athlete Performance Awards (APAs), funded by The National Lottery. You will find out more about these in Chapter three.



WHERE HISTORY BEGINS

Chapter two:

About Performance Programmes

The Performance Programme offer

So here you are, nominated onto a Performance Programme or UK Sport funding, congratulations! You have an exciting journey ahead of you, with the incredible opportunity the Performance Programme provides.

Watch this short [video](#) to find out more.



Performance Programmes

Athletes representing Great Britain and Northern Ireland have delivered many impressive performances and had incredible successes at Olympic and Paralympic Games. This achievement is the result of the combined efforts of everyone in the high performance community, where athletes, training partners, staff, and partners have continuously supported, challenged, and inspired each other to achieve more.

Performance Programmes may support you by providing coaching, coordination, administration and competition entry. As part of your development, you are likely to have to attend domestic and international training camps and competitions. Where possible, your sport will either provide a relevant financial contribution, or cover this cost.

UK Sport also funds sports and athletes where there is not a fully funded Performance Programme structure in place. In such cases, athletes are directly funded and elements of the funded performance athlete support are in place. These athletes have access to many of the athlete support offers and the expertise that many of the high performance community partners also offer. Your programme will provide you with details about the support available to you.

As a funded athlete, you will typically have access to elite training environments. The facilities might include: exclusive or extended use of facilities such as gyms, pools, tracks, or sports halls.

Training venues can vary, from university campuses and purpose built high performance centres (which may also serve the public), to specialist facilities hired specifically to host training camps for your Performance Programme.

As a high performance community we are fortunate to have committed, knowledgeable and experienced individuals who will work with you both as a person and an athlete to develop and achieve your goals.





Programmes typically provide access to services, such as physiotherapists, nutritionists, strength and conditioning coaches, technical coaches, psychologists and mental health provision. These will of course differ across programmes and sometimes amongst the athlete cohort within programmes. Your programme will clarify what is available to you.

Having access to this expertise is of significant benefit to you as an elite athlete. Through the supporting sports institutes there is additional expertise in areas such as paralympic performance, mental health and female health.

Injury is unfortunately a reality in high performance sport. Performance Programme and UK Sport funded athletes have free access to private medical cover. This cover includes a range of provisions including diagnostic tests such as MRIs and x-rays.

Additionally, you will have access to a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner. They can help you with areas involving education, financial basics, learning and development, mental health and wellbeing, career development and transitions.

Upon becoming an athlete on a Performance Programme or UK Sport funded athlete, you will receive membership to the BEAA who can provide you with independent advice and support.



Paralympic Performance Programmes

There is key information that you as a para-athlete would benefit from understanding, along with the support your programme will provide you with along the way. Additional safeguards are in place that prioritise para-athlete safety and respect, to ensure your well-being throughout your sporting experience.

Understanding the Classification system and eligibility criteria within para sports is essential for you. It is also important to know that during your career you will be classified and occasionally reclassified depending on the nature of your impairment, experience a change in sport class or be made ineligible. This can have significant personal and professional implications, your Performance Programme will discuss this with you in consultation with and support from ParalympicsGB.

Depending on your impairment group, there may be a greater likelihood of re-classification or changes to eligibility over time. It is therefore important to understand the category in which you are classified, the competitive landscape of your sport (including the depth of competition), and how these factors may influence your position on the Performance Programme. Athletes with fluctuating symptoms for example may experience additional classification uncertainty, which can further affect programme stability.

Classification can feel like a distraction to performance but is an essential part of para-sport. Please watch this short [video](#) which highlights the distractions and impact around the topic of Classification.

For further information on Classification please visit [ParalympicsGB | Classification](#)



To support long-term development, you are encouraged to remain engaged with your professional and personal development, make effective use of your Performance Development Award (PDA), and consider planning for life beyond a Performance Programme. Taking a proactive approach can help ensure you are able to maximise your potential while on the Performance Programme, with greater confidence about future pathways.

Where available, a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner can provide tailored guidance and support throughout this process with you.

It is beneficial to understand what para-athlete development journeys may look like and how to navigate and engage with local and national sport structures and support so you can then access the right things, at the right time in the right ways. This could include elements such as coaching, equipment, funding, carers, performance support personnel and training partners. Please speak with your Performance Programme if you would like further support.

It is important to understand how a commitment to sport fits with all other aspects of life as an athlete including personal and social care requirements, family circumstances and work/study demands. We encourage you to take the opportunity to share information about yourself; this might include relevant impairment-specific information and the impact of your impairment(s) on daily living, training and performance. Consider what biological-psychological-social needs you may have and if moving to a centralised or de-centralised programme is right for you, your well-being and performance needs. If you have a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner available to you, they can support with navigating these sometimes challenging decisions.

Your support networks will play a crucial role in assisting you with your development and progress towards achieving your goals. A shared understanding of aspirations and needs can help align your support network to clear goals.



Chapter three:

Your Athlete Performance Award



Your Athlete Performance Award

Being a nominated Performance Programme athlete means you are eligible to apply for an Athlete Performance Award, also known as an APA.

The APA is a contribution to enable and support you to appropriately engage with your training and competition (living and sporting costs), to best prepare you for the demands associated with progression towards the Olympic and Paralympic podium. Your NGB will set specific criteria within their athlete selection policy, against which they will nominate and select you and other athletes at each award level.

As a rule, if your personal income exceeds £65,000 (means testing threshold), you will be means tested out of receiving an APA. If however your personal income, plus your APA amount is greater than £65,000, your APA will be proportionately reduced to the £65,000 threshold. Any athlete who is nominated onto a Performance Programme (not in a Development Sport) but is 'means tested out' will still be able to access the support detailed in section four. Additionally they will continue to receive the support of the programme, details of which will be clarified by the programme.

Let's explore more about the award and the application process by watching this [video](#).



Applying for your APA

Below is an outline of the steps involved in applying for and receiving your Athlete Performance Award.

-  Sign your Performance Athlete Agreement with your National Governing Body / Performance Programme
-  Await an offer from UK Sport to apply for your APA
-  Register on the online athlete portal
-  Complete the online income assessment including submitting any required evidence
-  Await confirmation from UK Sport, read the terms and conditions and sign the acceptance offer
-  Receive your payment schedule detailing monthly payments
-  Remember to update UK Sport of any changes including contact details or personal circumstances

If you have any questions please email the Athlete Grants team at:
athlete.investment@uksport.gov.uk



More information about your APA

There are circumstances in which an APA can become taxable. If your sole income from sporting activities is your APA, you will not be considered a professional athlete by HMRC and so your Award will not be taxable. However, if you earn additional incomes (e.g., have another job, win prize money, and/or receive sponsorships) then you may be liable to tax if you earn over a certain amount. You should consult with a professional accountant if you have concerns or further questions or speak with a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner who may be able to signpost you to services that are familiar with the unique position of being an elite athlete, to provide a more bespoke service. You can find details of the current threshold and allowances by visiting the government [website](#).

It is important that you correctly declare what benefits you are receiving, as you may be selected via spot checks for audit.

If you are a Podium level athlete and are receiving means tested state benefits, such as income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) you will receive a General Purpose Training Support

(GPTS) APA. This type of award is one that is reduced to cover your sporting costs only and to ensure living costs provided from your means tested state benefit are not duplicated.

Other government benefits, which are not means tested, such as Personal Independence Payment (PIP), will not impact the APA you receive - whether on Podium level funding or not.

You must also inform DWP that you are in receipt of a National Lottery funded APA from UK Sport. Please note that your benefits may be affected depending on your personal circumstances. You are advised to speak to Citizens Advice, your Local Council or specialist charities for further advice.

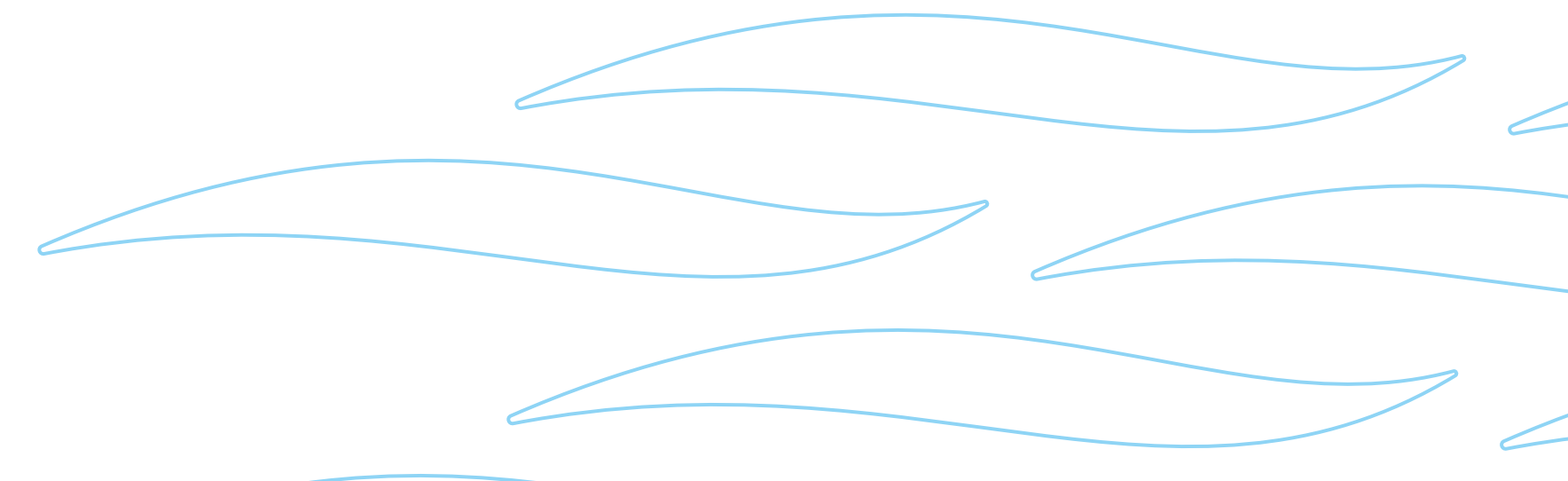
We encourage you, if you have not already, to speak with your Coach, Programme Manager and or Performance Director to gain a clear understanding of what the programme will cover financially, and what costs you are expected to manage yourself throughout the year. This should align with your Individual Athlete Development Plan (IADP).

We have a small and dedicated Athlete Grants team who will support you in applying for, processing and ultimately ensuring prompt payment of your APA. In order to ensure timely payment we need you to play your part and take responsibility in assisting with this process.

APA payments are made to your nominated bank account once a month, typically on the 25th of each month.

If we do not receive and process your application by the date stated by the Athlete Grants team then your payment will not be made until the following month. On the next page are some of the reasons your payment may be delayed. Please consider how you might take actions to avoid a delayed payment.

Watch this [video](#) where you can hear more about what you can and cannot use your APA for.



Reasons your APA payment may be delayed

Not signing a Performance Athlete Agreement.

If we have not had confirmation of your athlete agreement being signed with your NGB, we cannot start the APA process to get you paid.

Not reading emails sent to you from UK Sport.

Make sure you proactively check your emails (including junk mailbox) for emails from UK Sport. These will come not long after you have been advised of nomination to receive an APA. These emails will come from either Athlete.Investment@uksport.gov.uk or directly from your nominated Athlete Grants Officer, either way it will be from an email address that ends with @uksport.gov.uk.

If you change devices, update your mobile number, or delete the Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) app at any point, you will lose access to Athlete Zone.

You will need to re-install the app if deleted or re-register that device or phone number for Multi-Factor Authentication. You can contact the Athlete Grants team for help to register your new device, remember you can only have one device registered at any one time.

APA payments are not an automatic process.

You are **invited** to apply; this means you will have to **carry out all three actions**:

1. Set up an online account on the athlete portal (Athlete Zone) if you don't already have one. For security reasons, it will require Multi-Factor Authentication for that specific device. Where possible, please use a laptop rather than a mobile device.
2. Complete the income assessment form **annually**, including providing any required evidence for any income over £35,000 (note: a parent/responsible adult will do this for a child/person in their care and it is based on the income of the child/person in their care).
3. Log back in when prompted (by email from us) to manually accept your APA. You must do this last step, or you will not get paid.

There is a monthly deadline to ensure payment that month.

A date will be communicated to you as to when you need to have completed all the steps to ensure your first payment reaches you that month. If this deadline is missed you will be paid the following month. There is a limit as to how far we will back date your payment, so please be prompt in completing these steps. If after an initial 60 days the APA offer is not accepted, the value of the APA will be reduced every 30 days thereafter. You will be considered ineligible if the APA offer is not accepted after the initial 180 days of the original offer email. Therefore it is in your interest to complete this process promptly, please do ask us for help if you need it.

Your APA: Key things to remember

Expected uses of your APA:

- Rent or mortgage payments
- Travelling to and from training or tournaments and competitions
- Contribution towards a vehicle or bike to attend training
- Kit and equipment
- Additional coaching
- Competition fees
- Food and nutrition
- Dental fees

Uses not permitted for your APA

- Holidays
- Cosmetic surgery
- Betting and gambling

This list does not cover everything, if you are unsure please contact:
athlete.investment@uksport.gov.uk



Chapter four:

Support for you

Support for you

Being part of a Performance Programme, or a UK Sport funded athlete, means you have access to a wide range of support to make your time as an elite athlete as successful as possible.

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.



Keeping you safe

Safeguarding means creating a safe environment for everyone.

This includes athletes, coaches, and support staff. Everyone has a role to play in this.

Each sport has policies and processes to help keep people safe. Every NGB has a Designated Safeguarding Lead, specially trained to support and protect you.

If you are worried about something that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, whether it is poor practice or something more serious, please speak to your Designated Safeguarding Lead, someone in your Performance Programme, or someone you trust. Support organisations will always act in your best interests, and everyone has the right to be safe.

You can also contact the British Elite Athletes Association, who have provided helpful links to in-sport and independent services which can be found [here](#).

If you're worried about something, share your concern with someone else.



Sport Integrity

Sport Integrity is an independent complaints and investigatory service. Its services are made available free of charge to all athletes and staff on Olympic and Paralympic Performance Programmes to report allegations of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse and sexual misconduct.

Watch the [video](#) to find out how Sport Integrity works and how to contact them.

Athlete Medical Scheme

Your physical and mental health are critically important. Therefore, we ensure that you have access to some of the best medical care that is available. Learn more in the following short video about what this means and how to access any services you might require.

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.



Social Protect

Social Protect is an app that automatically detects and deletes abusive or unwanted comments from your social media. The comments are deleted in real-time, quicker than notifications, meaning you, and your followers will not see them. To ensure the app works for you and meets your preferences, you can customise all the settings. Deleted comments are securely stored in case they are ever needed for an investigation. This service is free to you and other key people in your network (such as your coaches, support staff, and family members etc.).

The app works on Instagram, TikTok, Discord, YouTube and Facebook pages. No passwords from your social channels are needed as the app works without accessing your login details.

Social Protect works with your Performance Programme to provide you with a tailored onboarding session to help you get started. You will learn how the app works, the benefits, and how to set it up on your device. Please ask your Performance Programme for further information and attend the onboarding session to activate and start using Social Protect.

Download the app for free from your app store or by scanning the QR code on the right. You will need the Social Protect Access Code which is provided by your Performance Programme.



Your mental health and wellbeing

A person's mental health and wellbeing are a crucial part of keeping them happy, healthy and performing to their best. Let's look at why and the support that is available, should you ever need it.

Mental health is just like physical health. It is something that we have all of the time and can be good, bad and somewhere in between.

Mental health is 'a dynamic state of wellbeing', this means that it is normal for our mental health to go up and down from day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month and even year-to-year. It also includes poor mental health and mental illness, but this is not the whole picture.

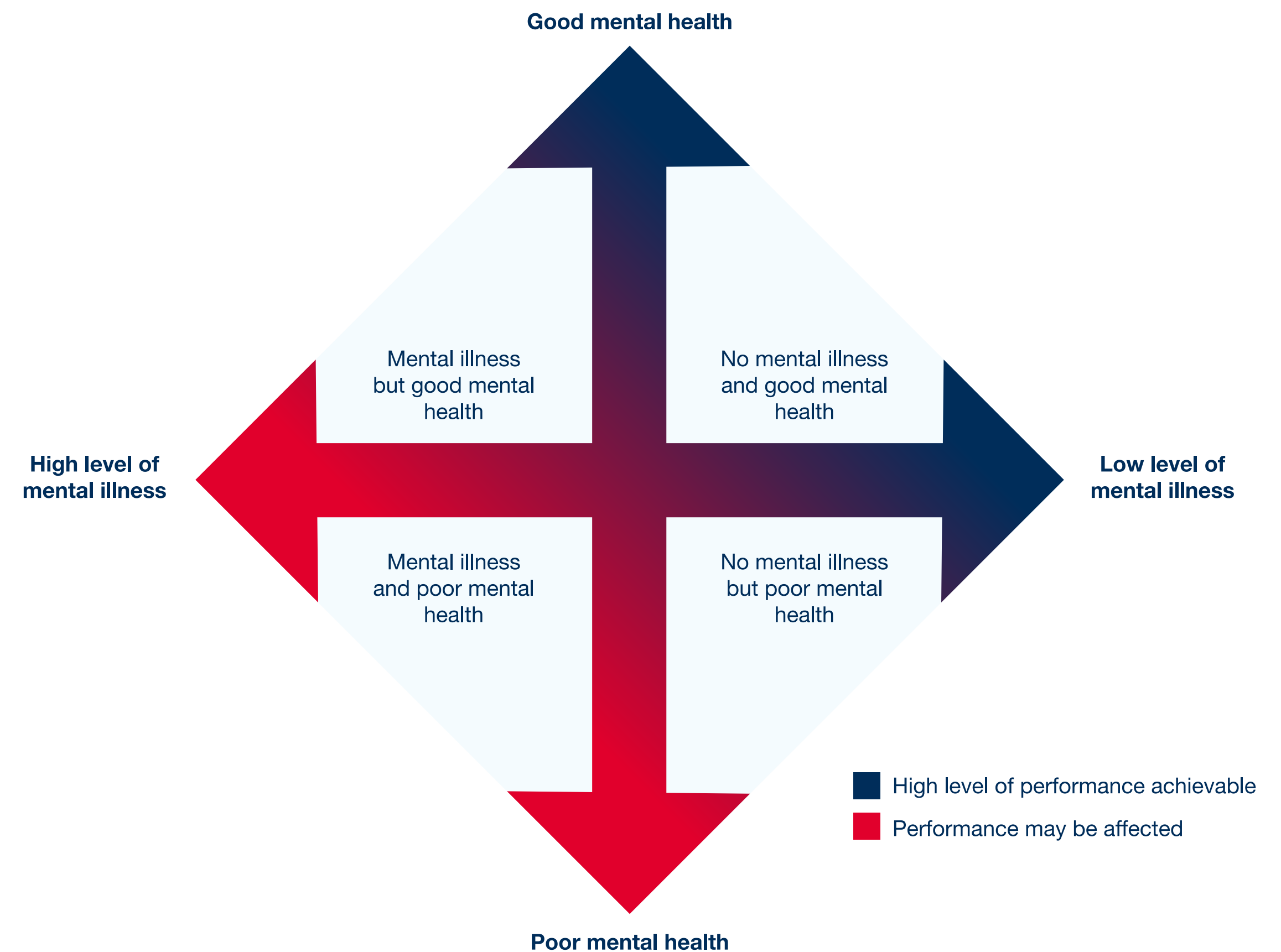
Most of the time we will be able to handle these ups and downs ourselves. However, we may sometimes need some extra support.

Your mental health can also directly impact on your performance, as seen in the graphic pictured. This graphic also shows the difference between mental illness, which is a diagnosed condition, and mental health.

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.

Looking after and being aware of your mental health has so many benefits. It can be helpful to think about mental health in the same way as physical health; if you had a physical health problem you would seek treatment and support, mental health is just the same.

If you would like help, please speak to someone in your programme. Each programme will have its own mental health referral process and support team, so we encourage you to find out about how this works in your sport. Typically, this will involve a combination of your sport's Doctor, Sport Psychologist and/or Performance Lifestyle Practitioner.



Mental health support

To assist with understanding the importance of mental health and wellbeing you may be offered education sessions via your sport. We would encourage you to attend these as well as having open conversations.

The UKSI Mental Health Team has built a network of external mental health specialists with an understanding of the elite sport context who are accessible through your Athlete Medical Scheme membership. To access these services or for any questions about mental health related support we encourage you to follow your sport's referral process (typically this will involve speaking with your sport's Doctor, Sport Psychologist, Performance Lifestyle Practitioner, or another member of your support team).

Additional sources of support are also available, shown below:

Samaritans

116 123
(24hr helpline)

Shout

85258 (text)
(24hr crisis line)

Childline

0800 1111
(Helpline for young people)

Calm

0800 585858
(5pm – 12am helpline)

Mind

0300 123 3393
(Mental health info line)

Saneline

0845 767 8000
(Mental health helpline)

Rethink Mental Illness

0808 801 0525
(Mental health advice)

Papyrus

0800 068 4141
(Suicide prevention helpline)

Who else can help?

Beyond UK Sport and the immediate support you receive from your Performance Programme there are a range of other organisations across the high performance community there to help. You can find further information on each of them via their websites.

British Elite Athletes Association (BEAA)

- Independent athlete representative organisation, for British athletes across Olympic, Paralympic and professional sports.
- Automatic membership on joining the Performance Programme or receiving UK Sport funding.
- Access to independent advice and support, detailed in the welcome email they will send you.
- Continued BEAA membership support for six months when you leave your Performance Programme or UK Sport funding comes to an end.

Home Country Sports Institutes and Councils

- Many of the performance support services that you access will be delivered by the Institutes, with many practitioners being part of the Performance Programme or National Governing Body's Performance team.
- These organisations are known as Home Country Sports Institutes (HCSIs). They are based in the home nations; the UK Sports Institute (UKSI) (in England), sportscotland institute of sport, Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland.
- You will receive varying levels of access to expert support and knowledge in areas of sport science, medicine, innovation and technical expertise in high performance sport and lifestyle.
- Your sport's induction should cover who's who and what services and support they specifically provide.
- Athletes can access Performance Lifestyle via your HCSI, and can also receive transition support via Performance Lifestyle, for up to two years.



uksportsinstitute.co.uk



sportscotland.org.uk/performance



sport.wales/performance-sport



sportni.net/performance/



britisheliteathletes.org

Who else can help?

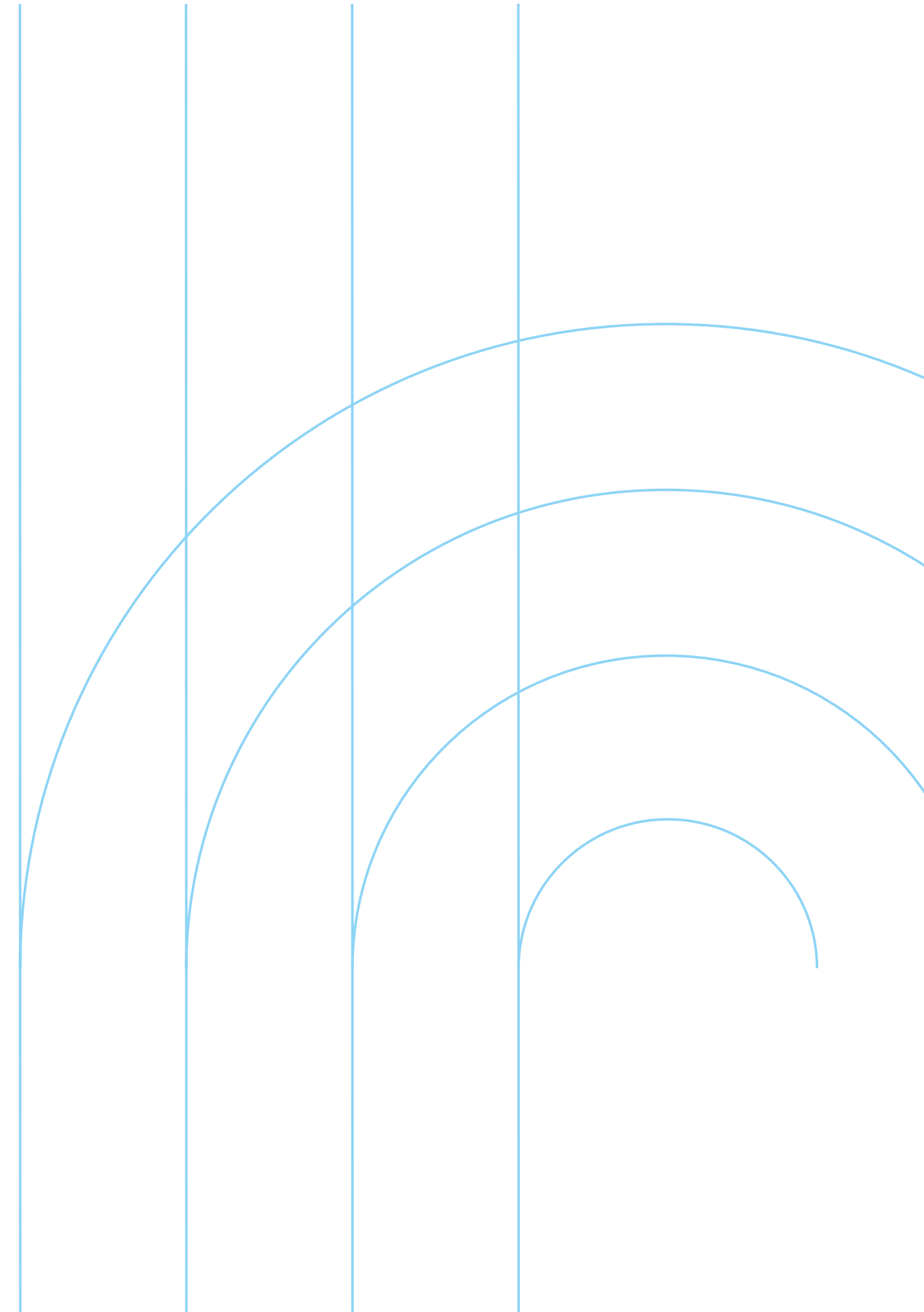
British Olympic Association (Team GB) www.teamgb.com

- The British Olympic Association (BOA) are the National Olympic Committee for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).
- The BOA are known publicly as Team GB.
- They are responsible for Games-time planning and support – this includes the lead-up to and period after the Games.
- They will get in touch with athletes, parents, carers and guardians at appropriate and relevant times across the Olympic cycle.



British Paralympic Association (ParalympicsGB) www.paralympics.org.uk

- The British Paralympic Association (BPA) are the National Paralympic Committee for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, as recognised by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).
- The BPA are known publicly as ParalympicsGB.
- They are responsible for Games-time planning and support – this includes the lead-up to and period after the Games.
- They will get in touch with athletes, parents, carers and guardians at appropriate and relevant times across the Paralympic cycle.



Chapter five:

Your responsibilities



Your responsibilities

As an athlete on a Performance Programme you have a range of support available as we have explained earlier. But as the famous superhero movie quote goes “with great power comes great responsibility” and becoming a funded athlete is a huge privilege.

We encourage you to take ownership of not only your athlete development programme, but also your own actions. As such, there are some responsibilities and requirements that we expect of you.

This section outlines some of these responsibilities and begins to explain the policies that sit behind them. The relevant policies and terms and conditions are available to you to view in full on the Athlete Portal and on The Learning Arena. As always if you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

Athlete agreements

You will remember that you signed a Performance Athlete Agreement (PAA), an agreement between you and your sport’s NGB.

All sports are required to enter into an agreement with all athletes who go onto a Performance Programme or who are receipt of UK Sport funding. This is because you are directly or indirectly accessing and benefitting from publicly funded services and support around you.

If you require independent support regarding your PAA, then the BEAA are best placed to advise you on any queries you may have.

Watch this [video](#) to understand more about the PAA which sets out the various expectations, obligations and requirements expected of you and your sport.



Funding eligibility policy

Receiving public funding is a privilege, not a right.

At UK Sport, we are responsible for ensuring that those who receive public funds uphold the highest standards of conduct. This applies to athletes, support personnel and staff from Performance Programmes and NGBs. To ensure this, we have the Funding Eligibility Policy in place.

The next video will help you understand why the policy exists and the potential impact of failing to meet the standards it sets, whether for you or for anyone accessing publicly funded benefits. The video provides a summary of the key points of the Funding Eligibility Policy. However, you are responsible for reading and understanding the full policy. Details of the eligibility process, panel and decisions can be found on our website: www.uk sport.gov.uk/resources/integrity-and-safeguarding.

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.

Intentional misrepresentation in classification

Para-athletes have a responsibility to give a true reflection of their impairment and ability during classification. If you do not, you could be accused and found guilty of intentional misrepresentation which may carry severe consequences. Intentional misrepresentation is misrepresenting the nature of your impairment, skills and or abilities during classification. It can be considered as cheating. If you think someone has committed intentional misrepresentation you should report this to your National Governing Body or International Federation. Anonymous concerns can be made to ParalympicsGB by completing this [online form](#).

For more information contact classification@paralympics.org.uk



Grant funding requirements

As you are aware, both high performance and community sport receive significant amounts of funding from both The National Lottery and the Government via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

Whether you receive direct funding via an APA, or you are accessing any of the facilities or support services via your sport and beyond, you are benefiting from public funds.

The high performance community remains grateful for the considerable ongoing funding and support received from The National Lottery and the British public.

Therefore, we kindly ask you to recognise and acknowledge this support during your time on programme.

This may include public messages of acknowledgement and thanks to The National Lottery and its players. Responsible use of funds, services, and facilities, as well as mutual respect towards support staff and practitioners.

Watch this [video](#) to understand what an APA is and is not.

You can also download the full APA terms and conditions [here](#).

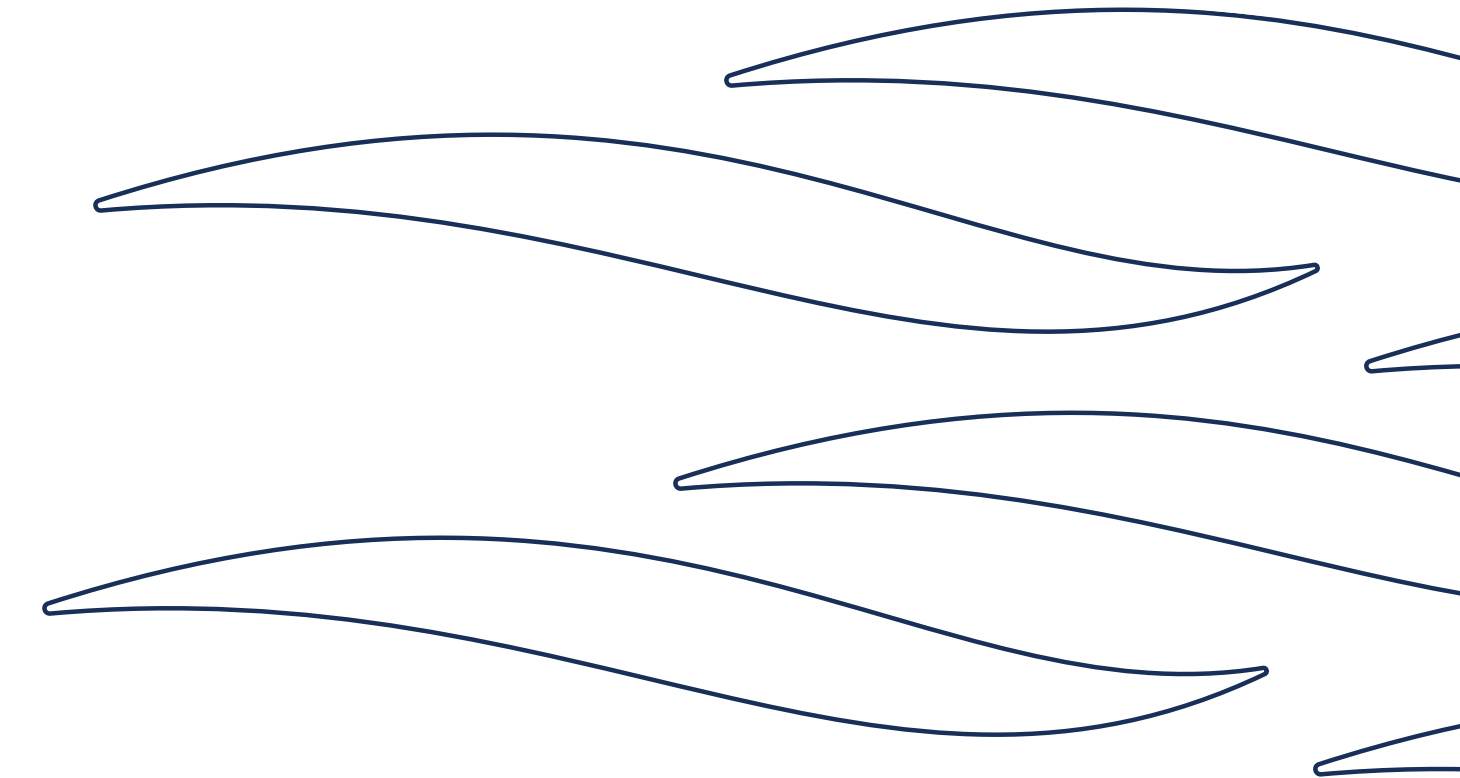
Anti-doping

One of the key principles of sport is fairness. We are very much in support of clean sport and believe that you are too.

Ultimately, you are solely responsible and accountable for what you put into your body.

The next video helps you to understand more about Anti-Doping or Clean Sport in the UK.

Watch this [video](#) to find out more.



Culture and environments

A healthy performance culture is about creating an environment that is constructive, safe, respectful, and enables people to perform at their best. When culture becomes negative however, it can leave people feeling fearful, mistreated, or unable to speak openly, which impacts wellbeing, development, and performance. Your lived experience matters. The way you act, interact, and share feedback shapes the culture around you, and you have both the opportunity and the responsibility to influence it.

We strongly encourage you to use the feedback routes available; these might be surveys, focus groups, athlete representatives, or other mechanisms such as the UK Sport Annual Culture engagement. These provide opportunities where your voice can help strengthen what is working, highlight what is not and ensure the environment remains safe, fair, and enabling for everyone. In taking part, you help shape an environment that supports performance, wellbeing, and fairness for everyone who comes after you. Your contribution is a vital part of building cultures that are constructive, transparent, and strong enough to face the demands of high performance.





Chapter six:

Athlete life and experiences



Athlete life and experiences

Athlete reflections

Becoming an elite athlete and joining a Performance Programme can be exciting, challenging, fun, hard, life changing and so much more. In this section you will hear from athletes about their experiences. This is a great time to start thinking about what being on a Performance Programme might mean for you. The video that follows shares athletes' reflections on their experiences.

Watch the [video](#) here.

Athlete and coach relationship

One of the most important relationships you will have is with your coach. As an athlete, you will have access to high quality coaching which may be in addition to what you already or continue to receive outside of the programme environment. Take a look at this video where BMX Olympic medalists Kye Whyte and Beth Shriever talk about their coach Marcus Bloomfield.

Watch the [video](#) here.



I believe sharing and utilizing lived experiences of mental blocks can positively impact the

Chapter seven:

Personal and Professional Development

Lead by my passion to help others, this is my purpose.



Personal and Professional Development

Being an athlete develops many skills and attributes that are both valuable now, whilst on and off the field of play, and in the future. Your time on programme or in receipt of UK Sport funding can be complimented by your curiosity to grow, develop and seek knowledge that may help you both now and in the years to come.

As you continue throughout your sporting journey, you are encouraged to think about the personal and professional development opportunities you might want to explore.

Consider the opportunities that might be immediately available to you. These could include work experience, educational or vocational courses, networking events, community work, volunteering, or skill development.

Remember, employers value the skillsets that athletes bring, such as commitment to results and excellence, teamwork, problem-solving, and the ability to adapt, learn, and perform under pressure.

We would encourage you to speak to people about your development aspirations and how they might help you to access these. This might be with a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner, your coach, someone in your Performance Programme, or NGB, or your wider network. And remember, platforms such as LinkedIn allows you to be both curious and connected to people of interest and potential opportunities. So, do not be afraid to reach out.

Take a look at this [video](#) where athletes share their experiences of personal and professional development.



Personal Development Awards

During your time as a performance athlete, supported by UK Sport, You will have access to a Personal Development Award (PDA), to help with costs towards learning and development. You can take advantage of your PDA for educational, personal development or career-based courses.

You are able to apply every 12 months whilst in receipt of UK Sport funding or on a Performance Programme and the amount varies depending on your funding grade.

If you want to know more about the PDA, how to use it or what to use it for, we would encourage you to get in touch with either your Performance Lifestyle Practitioner or contact athlete.support@uksport.gov.uk

Athlete Core Offer

As UK Sport funded athlete you have access to an Athlete Core Offer – a dedicated package of support designed to be available to you, during your time on programme and for a fixed period when your funding ends.

This offer aims to ensure you have consistent access to key resources and opportunities helping you thrive both during and beyond your athletic career.

Examples include financial basics, athlete entrepreneurship, athlete leadership and social media training. Details of the specific opportunities will be made available to you as and when they arise.

To enable many of the offers and resources, we have created [The Learning Arena](#) which is an online learning and development platform. All athletes will have accounts automatically set up for them within one month of being nominated onto a Performance Programme, further details of which will be sent to you.

In addition, we will look to collaborate with partners on specific opportunities that may support you at timely points across Olympic and Paralympic cycles. Please do **get in touch** with our Athlete Support team if you have any ideas on areas you might like us to explore.

Social Impact

You can join hundreds of funded athletes, past and present, who have utilised the platform and profile of British Olympic and Paralympic sport to meaningfully give back to communities across the UK, learn more about our ambitions watching this short [video](#).

We encourage you to do this in a way that is both meaningful and authentic to your life experience, passions or causes of interest. In addition to doing this in a way that compliments, not detracts, from your performance commitments.

It does not matter whether you have been on programme for six months or six years, are an Olympic or Paralympic champion, or have not yet qualified for a Games. Each and every funded athlete has the opportunity to contribute positively towards having an impact and making a difference.

Please do get in touch with the Athlete Support Team or a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner if you would like to explore any of these areas and how you may engage further. Alternatively, take a look using the links below at some of the ways in which, through our investments into major events and NGB, we are powering positive change, by using the platform of sport and the voices of athletes.

[Social Impact](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#)

[Environmental Sustainability strategy](#)



Athlete and Beyond

Athlete and Beyond is a self-guided learning and development programme created by UK Sport, UKSI and the BEAA.

Athlete and Beyond aims to support you as an athlete, in understanding your strengths, transferable skills, and preparing for life both during and after your high performance athlete career.

The programme delivers interactive content focused on self and career development and can be completed at your own pace. Athlete and Beyond showcases a variety of jobs and roles within the high performance sporting community and will also highlight the support available to you as you navigate your high performance sporting journey and beyond.

Within Athlete and Beyond, you will discover a dedicated coaching module designed for those who have an interest in coaching and aspire to become a coach in the future.

This module offers insight and preparation for those that may be interested in participating in our in-person Athlete to Coach programme. The in-person programme runs every 18 months, and we will keep you updated about the start dates of future programmes.

You can access Athlete and Beyond via The Learning Arena.

We encourage you to use this time and opportunity wisely, it is possible to have a dual career, you are encouraged to have more than one focus or passion as this develops you as a person. Do not be afraid to reach out to others, try new experiences, and explore new passions that support your wellbeing or creativity. It is okay to try something and decide it is not for you, even failure can be a valuable part of the process. Reflect on the skills and experiences you have gained along the way, and consider how they might be transferable to other areas of life or future opportunities.





Chapter eight:

Transition support

Leaving the Performance Programme

When you are no longer in receipt of UK Sport funding, we want you to feel valued for your contribution to elite sport and supported during this transition.

When your time on programme or being in receipt of funding comes to an end, for whatever reason, we want you to know that support for you does not immediately end there. There is now more support available to you through this transition than ever before.

APA Funding

As a minimum, if you are on a UK Sport funded Performance Programme your sport will be required to give you one month's notice within your award term of ceasing APA funding and coming off the Performance Programme.

You will be given transitional APA funding. The amount you will receive will be dependent on the length of time you were on programme. We know the impact that financial changes can have on wellbeing so would encourage you to seek support to manage this aspect of transition.

Years in receipt of UK Sport funding	Amount of APA transitional funding
1 year but <2 years	1 month transitional award
>2 years but <3years	2 months transitional award
>3 years	3 months transitional award



Athlete Medical Scheme

Full access to the Athlete Medical Scheme (AMS) remains available whilst in receipt of an APA including through your transition. The AMS is then available for three months post receipt of your last APA transition payment, but only for pre-existing and pre-authorised injury and illness claims.

After your APA ends you have the option to self-fund and continue cover via BUPA or put in place private medical cover via another health insurance provider. Please be aware that there may be clauses that prevent pre-existing injuries and treatment (that may have been treated via your AMS cover) from being covered by another health insurance provider. Alternatively, you may wish to transition to NHS care.

If you wish to privately continue this cover, at your own cost, please contact [**athlete.investment@uksport.gov.uk**](mailto:athlete.investment@uksport.gov.uk). The team will then signpost you to the relevant external contact who will be able to discuss your options and provide a no obligation quote. This offer is available three months beyond your last APA payment date (and premiums must be backdated where necessary to give continuation of cover).

Performance Lifestyle support

You will continue to have access to a Performance Lifestyle Practitioner for up to two years after you leave.

British Elite Athletes Association

You will have access to BEAA support and membership for a further six months after your funding ends or you leave the programme. They can be contacted directly in the following ways:

- Live chat: [**britisheliteathletes.org**](https://britisheliteathletes.org)
- Email: [**support@britisheliteathletes.org**](mailto:support@britisheliteathletes.org)
- Facebook messages:
[**British Elite Athletes Association**](#)
- Instagram messages: [**@britishathletes**](#)

Alternative independent support

We recognise that transitioning from being a funded athlete can be difficult. As such, there is also access to a network of professionals who can provide independent and 1-1 mental health and wellbeing support through a dedicated and confidential service. This service is provided by Sporting Chance for up to two years and comes at no cost to you.

The details of the above will be provided to you during transition discussions or you can view details on the [**Athlete Support**](#) page.

Thank you

You have now reached the end of **The Start Line**. We hope that you have found this useful and feel clear about what it means to be a funded athlete, what we expect of you and all the support you can access.

Before you go, here is a **short message** from us here at UK Sport. We wish you the best of luck for the future.

If you have any questions on anything you have seen or heard in **The Start Line**, please feel free to get in touch with us at **athlete.support@uksport.gov.uk**



