

Means Testing

Means testing is applied to all APA awards to ensure UK Sport only targets resources where there is evidence of financial need. The principle of financial need underpins all public investment.

- Means testing will apply to athletes whose total income (including APA) exceeds £65,000 p.a. Where this is the case awards will be reduced pound for pound above this threshold.
- Exceptional cases will be considered for applying a higher threshold where there is substantial evidence that the essential costs of pursuing Olympic or Paralympic medal success in the sport exceeds £65,000 p.a.
- Where the athlete declares that their income has been over £35,000 p.a. (excluding APA), the athlete will be required to provide further evidence of this income.
 - Examples include:
 - I. Income over the past 12 months (as an individual)
 - II. Income per last self-assessment tax return (through self-employment)
 - III. Net profit stated in the last set of company accounts (through running a limited company)
- In assessing income, some discretion will be applied to the treatment of gifts and goods in kind, dividends in excess of profit and some loans (e.g. student finance), to ensure the assessment of income provides a true reflection of the resources available to the athlete.
- Where an athlete joining the programme experiences a significant reduction in their income as a result, (for example, leaving full-time employment) UK Sport may, entirely at its discretion, allow the athlete to access an APA in their first year. UK Sport may seek repayment of this APA if, at the next financial assessment of the athlete's income (typically after a 12-month period) there is no evidence of a reduction as declared by the athlete.
- Where an athlete that has previously, (i) not received an APA or, (ii) received a reduced APA due to the means testing process and is experiencing a significant reduction in their income during the APA award period, then the athlete will be eligible to reapply providing evidence of a reduction in income and any other relevant documentation.
- It is the athlete's responsibility to ensure that UK Sport is provided with accurate information on income. A series of validation checks are undertaken each year, and should it be found that inaccurate information has been provided, this may lead to the APA being withdrawn.
- UK Sport reserves the right to conduct random checks and ask for further documentation from athletes above and beyond the standard annual audit carried out by external parties, to validate an athlete's income declaration.
- Athletes and NGBs should be aware that knowingly making false statements and / or failing to make a full and fair disclosure of information relevant to the financial needs assessment is both a breach of the UK Sport Eligibility Policy and may constitute fraud. UK Sport takes the offence of fraud (including theft, corruption and bribery) seriously and where any instance of fraud or an attempt to defraud, occurs UK Sport will take appropriate action, including reporting to the police.

Athletes in Receipt of State Benefits

Podium level athletes that are in receipt of means-tested benefits from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will receive a reduced APA to enable them to continue receiving the benefits they are entitled to. These APAs are known as General Purpose Training Support (GPTS) APAs.

Where an athlete is eligible for government benefits, UK Sport would endorse applying for these prior to completing the APA application form in order to accurately reflect their household income. This however is an athlete's choice and there should be no expectation that athletes must apply for benefits.

UK Sport conducts a quadrennial review of the means-tested benefits currently paid by the DWP to ensure parity with GPTS APAs.

Injury and Illness

In the event of injury/illness (both physical and mental), and in cases where an athlete is considered likely to recover to full fitness for training and competition, the athlete should continue to receive their full APA up to three months from the point the injury/illness occurred or was identified.

If after three months the athlete remains unavailable for full selection or training, an expert review should be undertaken to confirm the likelihood that the athlete remains able to pursue success in the Olympic/Paralympic Games, to agree a programme of rehabilitation and to plot a timetable for return to full training and competition.

Each case will be considered on its own merit, and further expert advice may be sought where the long-term impact of the injury/illness is unclear (such as referral to the mental health panel). The athlete's progress against the timetable will need to be reported to UK Sport every three months thereafter, until the athlete has either fully resumed training and competition or left the programme.

Subject to satisfactory evidence of the likelihood of return, the APA should continue to be paid at the existing award level for up to a year but will only be extended beyond this in exceptional circumstances.

Where there is medical evidence that the injury/illness will affect the long-term potential of the athlete, or where the athlete has shown neither progress nor commitment to the agreed rehabilitation programme, the athlete can be removed from APA support providing an appropriate period of notice is given.

Pregnancy

Being pregnant and an elite athlete should not be mutually exclusive. To ensure support is provided for athletes who wish to have a child whilst they are in membership of a high-performance programme and in receipt of an APA, the following policy will apply:

- Athletes in receipt of APA funding will remain eligible to access their full APA (subject to means testing) for the duration of the pregnancy at the APA level they were on at the time of becoming pregnant and for up to nine months post childbirth.
- Continued access to the APA post childbirth will be dependent on:
 - a) The athlete's intention to return to the sport and the programme being discussed and confirmed no later than six months post childbirth
 - b) At the point where the intention of the athlete is clear, forming a mutually agreed plan/timetable for return to training and competition – this plan should acknowledge the athlete's experience of pregnancy, the impact on them physically and mentally and the nature of the event they are returning to
 - c) Monitoring, reviewing and confirming that the athlete has made the necessary commitment to this plan and is on track to return.

If the level of commitment and or progress against this plan are not demonstrated, the athlete would be given notice and offered a period of transition before the APA funding stops (see Athletes Leaving the Programme).

At nine months post childbirth the potential of the athlete should be assessed and confirmed to UK Sport in order to continue to access the APA. It is important to note that this assessment should indicate the athlete's future medal potential and not necessarily performance outcomes.

An athlete who announces retirement from their sport during pregnancy or in the initial six months post childbirth, will not be given a further period of notice before the APA terminates.

In the event of complications either during the pregnancy or post childbirth, this policy will be flexed as is reasonable to accommodate these circumstances on a case by case basis.

UK Sport has commissioned further research into athletes' experiences of pregnancy, with the aim of providing further guidance about how athletes should be supported through pregnancy and post childbirth.

UK Sport reserves the right to adjust this pregnancy policy where the findings of this research suggest the policy should change.