



COMPETITION GRANTS 2026

Application Information & Criteria

Overview

From April 2026, the UKA Rules for Competition will introduce a significant realignment of junior age groups from 'odd' to 'even' years. This change marks an important step forward for the sport, creating opportunities to address athlete drop-out during adolescence. By developing and evolving competition, we aim to make athletics more inclusive, engaging, and enjoyable for young people. While the sport has a proud and traditional history, its diverse and dynamic nature offers exciting potential to balance heritage with innovative formats, ensuring that athletes not only stay involved but build a lifelong connection with athletics.

As part of our ongoing commitment to delivering an inclusive and sustainable competition pathway, we are pleased to introduce a new funding model designed to better support the evolving needs of competition and event providers in England. This model reflects our strategic priorities around inclusivity, performance development, and long-term viability, ensuring that resources are directed where they can make the greatest difference. It also responds to feedback from stakeholders across the sport, who have highlighted the need for greater transparency, flexibility, and alignment with athlete progression.

This new approach is underpinned by our broader strategy for competition, which emphasises the importance of creating meaningful opportunities at every stage of the athlete journey. From grassroots to elite levels, our focus has been on enhancing the quality, accessibility, and relevance of competitive experiences. By aligning funding with our strategic outcomes, such as talent development, inclusion, equity, and innovation in event delivery, we aim to support a competition landscape that better supports both participation and performance.

Who Can Apply?

Competition providers who are delivering a key competition within the athlete development pathway are invited to apply for funding support. Eligible providers must be providing a strategic athlete development need by hosting championships, leagues, or open meetings that address critical event specific priorities at the local, regional, or national level. This funding aims to support competitions that play a vital role in athlete progression and contribute to the broader athletics and running development pathway.

Masters event providers are welcome to apply for funding, but must clearly demonstrate alignment with England Athletics' strategic objectives and show how the event supports the athlete development pathway.

What We Cannot Fund

While we are committed to supporting strategically important competitions, funding will not be available for events that generate significant profit, open meetings without a clear and specific strategic purpose (e.g. targeted event development or qualification opportunities for international teams), brand-new competition formats with little or no proven track record of success, or non-licensed competitions not sanctioned by England Athletics or UK Athletics. Our focus remains on initiatives that demonstrably contribute to athlete development and align with national performance priorities.



How Much Can I Apply For?

Depending on the type and scale of competition being delivered, providers may apply for varying levels of support as outlined in the funding criteria in this document. We encourage applicants to be realistic in their submissions and to be prepared to share financial accounts to demonstrate where funding would have the greatest impact on the delivery and sustainability of their competition.

While we recognise the value of each competition provider's contribution to the athletics landscape, it is unlikely that full funding requests will be met. Instead, investment should be viewed as an opportunity to enhance existing events, particularly in ways that improve athlete experience through greater inclusiveness, accessibility, and long-term sustainability.

Before You Apply

Please consider the information below before submitting an application.

Project planning

Competitions should have a clear and appropriately detailed project plan specific to the scale of their event that outlines strategic priorities, purpose, target athlete participant groups, and a long-term vision for establishing the event as a financially sustainable fixture.

Competition providers should ensure their plans include appropriate risk assessments, communication and promotional plans, consider where their event sits within the wider season calendar, and outline how they will recruit and support the welfare of officials and volunteers throughout the event.

Budgets

We encourage all competition providers to prepare detailed budgets that reflect the full cost of event delivery, and to clearly articulate how any additional funding would enhance the athlete experience, particularly in relation to inclusiveness, accessibility, and the long-term sustainability of the event.

Competition providers operating as limited companies will be expected to submit annual accounts and clearly demonstrate the need for additional funding, outlining how the support would enhance the delivery and impact of their event.

Consider different sources of funding

The application process for competition funding is highly competitive, and unfortunately, we are not able to award funding to every provider who applies. We strongly encourage organisers to explore additional revenue streams to help sustain and grow their events. Potential options include securing sponsorships, implementing tiered entry fees, offering value-added services (such as refreshments, entertainment and merchandise), partnering with local businesses or councils, applying for other grant opportunities, and developing supporter schemes, and crowd funding initiatives. Diversifying income sources can strengthen the long-term success of your competition and enhance its appeal to athlete participants.



Submitting an application

Once applicants have reviewed all the information and believe they have a strong case for competition funding support, they should carefully read through the criteria below and ensure they can demonstrate each area clearly throughout the application form.

If additional guidance or support is needed during the process, applicants are encouraged to contact the team at eventsupport@englandathletics.org.

ENGLAND ATHLETICS FUNDING MATRIX

The table below outlines the criteria for each of the grant streams which can be applied for.

	National	Regional	Local	Specialist Project
Age	Senior and / or Junior Athletes	Senior and / or Junior Athletes	Senior and / or Junior Athletes	Senior Athletes
Club	✓	✓	✓	✓
School	✓	N/A	✓	N/A
Format	Championships / League / Open	Championships / League / Open	FMC / Championships / League / Open	Flexible
Technology	Chip Timing / EDM / Photo finish	Chip Timing / EDM / Photo finish	Flexible	Chip Timing / EDM / Photo finish
Licence	All	All	Level 1	World Athletics
Experience	2 years	2 years	1 year	2 years
Maximum Range	£25,000 - £100,000	£10,000 - £50,000	£500 - £5,000	Up to £10,000
Maximum grant duration	2-3 years	2-3 years	1 year	1 year



Definitions

Local Competition: A competition typically held within a city or small county boundary, designed to be easily accessible for the majority of participants, ideally within a 45-minute journey. In more rural areas, this travel time may be slightly longer due to geographic considerations.

Regional Competition: A competition that draws participants from a broader geographic area, such as multiple counties or a defined region or area. Travel times may range from 45 minutes to a few hours, and events should be planned with accessibility and travel considerations in mind.

National Competition: A competition that attracts participants from across the country, often acting as a championships for national titles or qualification opportunity. These events typically require longer travel and may involve overnight stays, with a focus on national standards, visibility, and strategic importance within the athlete development pathway.

Junior Athletes: Refers to participants generally aged under 18, typically ranging from U10 to U20 age groups. Competitions targeting junior athletes are specifically designed to cater to this age bracket, focusing on appropriate event formats, development opportunities, and safeguarding considerations tailored to young participants.

Senior Athletes: Refers to participants aged 18 and over, typically competing in U20, senior and masters' age groups. Competitions for senior athletes are designed to support continued development, performance progression, event specific strategies across adult age groups, often serving as key qualifying fixtures within the national competition calendar.

Championships: A structured athletics competition held at county, area, or national level that identifies and recognises an overall winner. These events typically feature a qualification pathway, either through prior performance or preliminary rounds, and culminate in a final stage where top athletes compete for titles. Championships play a key role in athlete development by offering progressive, competitive experiences aligned with the broader performance and competition pathway.

Leagues: A structured series of at least three athletics, cross-country or road race meetings designed to enhance team-based competition and camaraderie. Points are typically awarded based on team performance, with formats also rewarding individual achievements. Leagues offer athletes valuable team experiences and social interaction, often through innovative and inclusive formats. These events should be designed to ease pressure on the fixtures calendar, reduce demands on the officiating community, and help manage costs for participating clubs ensuring a more sustainable and accessible competition environment.

Open Meetings: An athletics meeting open to all eligible athletes, focused on individual performance. Events are typically seeded to group athletes of similar ability and may include pace-making in endurance races or run-with-wind formats in sprints and horizontal jumps to support optimal conditions. They play a vital role in providing flexible, accessible competition opportunities while complementing the broader fixtures calendar.

Specialist Projects: targeted competition meetings designed to meet a specific need within the performance fixtures calendar, such as providing qualification opportunities, supporting underrepresented event groups, or offering access for athletes to gain World Athletics ranking points.



APPLICATION CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed based upon the commitment to delivering competition which are committed to the criteria listed within the headings below, organisational health, leadership and people, and competition delivery.

Organisational Health

Review area	Summary
Mission / Vision	Clear mission or goal for the organisation. Outlining the long-term goal for the organisation, if appropriate.
Affiliation	Organisations must be affiliated to England Athletics to apply.
Governance	Outline of the type of organisation and management structures in place. Including terms of references or constitutions for committees.
Welfare and safeguarding	Outline the commitment to ensuring a safe environment for everyone at the competition.
ED&I and Sustainability	Demonstrate the organisational commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, and Sustainability.
Finance	Evidence of financial controls in place for budgeting, auditing, and management of reserves, if appropriate.
Data protection	Information on how the organisation has considered cyber security and data protection for any personal data stored.

Leadership and People

Review area	Summary
Purpose of the competition	Clear summary of the competition, including age group, event group, type of competition, location, suggested competition date, and where the competition sits in the athlete pathway,
Competition Management	Outline the delivery team for the event and their roles and responsibilities.
Stakeholder engagement	Marketing and communication plan for key competition stakeholders. Information on how complaints are managed or minimised should be included within this section.
People policies and procedures	If there is employed staff, a demonstration that HR policies and procedures has been considered and how this process has been implemented and executed.
Competition workforce	Information on how appropriate volunteers are selected and if appropriate developed through this competition structure. Including evidence of commitment to duty of care for the volunteer workforce.



Competition Delivery

Review area	Summary
Pre – event management	Outline the organisation duties pre-event for the competition, including evidence of effective communication, a commitment to executing a safe environment for everyone involved and ensuring a wonderful experience.
During the event	How the event is executed on event day, including information about site layout, communication, decision making, length of the competition day and so on.
Post – event	Articulate the post event operational duties of the event team. Demonstrate a commitment to post event reviews and outline what is included as part of that process.
Policies and procedures	Evidence of clear policies and procedures for the event.

Application Form

To start your application for funding, please following the link below:

Link

Next Steps

Applicants will receive confirmation once their submission has been received. All applications will be reviewed by the panel in late autumn, with outcomes communicated by the end of November 2025. Successful applicants will be issued an award contract in February 2026, with funding payments scheduled for April 2026.

