



GENERAL INFORMATION GUIDE

**SCOTTISH BORDERS
ATHLETE SUPPORT
PROGRAMME**



WHAT IS THE ASP?

The Borders Athlete Support Programme (ASP) is a grant-aided support programme which provides and pays for sports-related services for developing Borders athletes who have the potential to achieve, and are progressing towards, “high performance level” within their sport.

The ASP was established by Scottish Borders Council (SBC) in October 2007 with funding allocated “to help maximise the potential of Borders athletes and coaches with a view to their participation in the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, and the Commonwealth Games”. Since 2011, the annual grant to the ASP has been disbursed through Live Borders and its predecessor trust Borders Sport and Leisure Trust.

Since it was established by SBC, the programme has evolved and although the primary focus remains on Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports, applications from other sports have been and can be considered.

The ASP is overseen by a Management Group comprising representatives from three partner organisations – Live Borders, Scottish Borders Council and sportScotland, along with various invited individuals who have expertise in performance sport. The key consideration for the Management Group is **how do we best make a difference to increase progression in performance sport in the Scottish Borders?** The aim is to deliver services professionally to improve the opportunity for performance level athletes from the Scottish Borders to progress and achieve their potential in their sport.

The Management Group is assisted in the day-to-day running of the ASP by a part-time Programme Manager.



WHAT LEVEL OF ATHLETE QUALIFIES FOR THE ASP?

The ASP is aligned with the sportScotland Institute of Sport and for most sports we are trying to identify and help Borders athletes who are progressing towards qualification for support from the Institute, but who are maybe one or two levels away from that stage of their own sport’s performance pathway. Each sport is different and we liaise with the performance personnel at the relevant Scottish governing body (including non-Institute sports) to determine the appropriate level of athlete who can be considered for ASP support. For some sports, mainly those which previously have provided the majority of ASP athletes, we have **published entry criteria** on our web page at www.liveborders.org.uk/athlete_support_programme

WHAT IF THERE ARE NO ENTRY CRITERIA AGREED FOR MY SPORT?

Subject to whether or not your sport is an Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth sport, the same principle applies of trying to identify athletes who are closing in on qualification for Institute support (or the equivalent). We would discuss this with the Institute and the relevant governing body performance personnel in making an initial judgement on whether a formal application could be considered.



WHAT IF MY SPORT IS NOT AN OLYMPIC, PARALYMPIC OR COMMONWEALTH SPORT?

Certain parameters would require to be met before an application would be considered, such as:

- a well established International Federation, NGB and SGB with good governance;
- an established international and national competition programme;
- a sport of significance to Scotland and promoting Scotland on the international sporting stage;
- good club and coaching structures nationally and locally;
- strong or progressive participation levels at international, national and local levels;
- an attainable athlete development pathway with no foreseeable hurdles to senior high performance level.

The level at which the athlete competes would also be relevant.



HOW DO YOU DEFINE A “BORDERS” ATHLETE?

There needs to be a strong evidential link with the Scottish Borders. Normally we would expect applicants to be currently permanently resident in the Scottish Borders local authority area but we will also consider athletes schooled and brought up in the Borders, but who now reside outside the area for further education or work. Incoming students who still have their permanent residence outside the Scottish Borders, or athletes who have no link with the Borders other than membership of a Borders club, would not normally qualify.

WHAT AGE DO I HAVE TO BE TO APPLY?

We do not have set age limits, lower or upper. What is appropriate is the level at which you are performing, the stage you are at on the performance pathway for you sport, and your potential to make further progress towards high performance level.





IF I MEET THE AGREED ENTRY LEVEL, DO I AUTOMATICALLY QUALIFY FOR ASP SUPPORT?

No. The entry criteria are a guide to who might qualify for ASP support. It is sometimes the case that an athlete who is currently highly ranked in their event or position is less likely to progress to high performance level than others. We take account of the governing body performance personnel's assessment of each applicant's potential to make further progress and ultimately it is the ASP Management Group which decides which applications to approve. In doing so they will also take account of that sport's success, or otherwise, in having ASP athletes progress to the next level of their performance pathway. Unfortunately there is a limit to the number of athletes we can support.

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

The core services which are offered are:

- Medical and physio profile with a basic functional movement assessment;
- Injury assessment and treatment by chartered physiotherapists;
- Medical care, with justification (eg podiatry, blood tests, scans);
- Strength and conditioning with a specialist coach;
- Sport psychology – introduction and initial assessment; thereafter if justified;
- Sport nutrition – introduction and initial assessment; thereafter if justified;
- Skills coaching – where the athlete will benefit from local delivery of additional individualised skills sessions;
- Facilities access – general access to BSLT facilities or special access if justified;

In addition, subject to the ongoing availability of funding, additional service provision can be considered, for example:

- an annual general massage allowance (limited);
- assistance with the purchase of specialist equipment;

All service provision must be agreed and authorised by the Programme Manager in advance.

WILL I HAVE TO TRAVEL TO GET ASP SERVICES?

We try to deliver the agreed services as close as possible to your home. We have a network of approved service providers across the Scottish Borders so accessing ASP services should not mean excessive travel. Some service providers will even see you at home. We are also happy to assess any local service providers who you wish to use to see if they can be added to the ASP network.



WHAT IF I, OR MY COACH, DON'T WANT SOME OF THE ASP SERVICES ON OFFER?

The ASP will not dictate to athletes what particular support services they should be using. All service provision is discussed and agreed with you and your coach at an induction meeting. Apart from the medical and physio profiling, which we ask all new athletes to undertake, no ASP service provision is obligatory. We aim to provide services which are appropriate for each individual athlete and which add value or compliment your overall development programme, as agreed with your principal coach. You can also defer a service provision and then access it at a later stage if that is what is best for you.

FOR HOW LONG IS ASP SUPPORT PROVIDED?

There is no set minimum or maximum period of support, although for some sports we do agree certain targets which should be reached by a certain stage. ASP athletes are reviewed regularly but we recognise that athletes develop at different rates and there are many influencing factors which can impact on an athlete's progress. We try to be as fair as possible when reviewing each athlete's progress and not just look at the black and white of results or selections. For example, in conjunction with the athlete's coach and governing body performance personnel, we will assess the athlete's progress in training, their commitment and dedication, and ultimately their potential to make further progress to high performance level before determining whether to continue to provide support. Other factors, such as the athlete's role in promoting Borders sport and their direct influence on other young Borders athletes may also come into play.



DOES THE ASP GIVE FUNDING TO ATHLETES?

No. The ASP provides and pays for the agreed specific support services for athletes rather than giving them direct financial aid. Occasionally some ancillary services can be provided on a reimbursement basis but only if agreed in advance with the Programme Manager.

ARE COACHES SUPPORTED AS WELL AS ATHLETES?

Only in exceptional circumstances and where the ASP athlete will benefit directly. We would usually expect coaches seeking CPD assistance to go through their governing body or the Live Borders Coach Scholarship Scheme.

www.liveborders.org.uk/coach_scholarship_scheme

HOW DO I APPLY?

All applications must be endorsed by the sport's relevant performance personnel before being submitted. There is a distinct section for this on the application form which is available to download as an interactive pdf on the ASP page on the Live Borders website. Follow the tabs for Sport, then Athlete Support Programme. Applications should be completed and submitted electronically. (Please do not submit an application without the governing body endorsement section having been completed.)

For the principal supported sports, an annual end-of-season review is held with the relevant performance personnel which is when potential applicants from that sport are identified for an annual intake. However that does not exclude consideration of a distinct application at other times of the year if there is good justification.

MORE INFORMATION

More information, including previous annual reports, the agreed sport-specific entry criteria, a list of the current supported athletes, photos of our graduates, are available on the ASP page on the Live Borders website. Follow the tabs for Sport, then Athlete Support Programme.

Or email asp@liveborders.org.uk with your enquiry.

