

Club Support Programme

Guidance notes

Sport for life

sportscotland
the national agency for sport

1. Introduction

The Scottish Government's 2026/27 budget includes £40 million of new investment into the sport sector. In line with our commitment to prioritise our support to the club and community environment, we have boldly allocated £5 million of this new investment to help sports clubs and sporting organisations thrive and continue to play a pivotal role in the fabric of Scottish communities.

The Club Support Programme (CSP) will provide targeted investment into sports clubs and community organisations, creating more paid posts that will have a role to support them in key areas such as coaching, governance, and administration.

These posts will help build much needed capacity within clubs, support - not replace - volunteers, and create more sustainable structures that enable clubs to grow participation, sustain or grow their membership, and put them in a stronger position to better serve their communities.

At the heart of the programme there is a simple aim to have stronger, safer, sustainable, and more inclusive sports clubs and community organisations—**so that more, and more diverse, people can participate, progress and achieve in sport.**

2. Objectives

The objectives of the programme are to have a clear impact on:

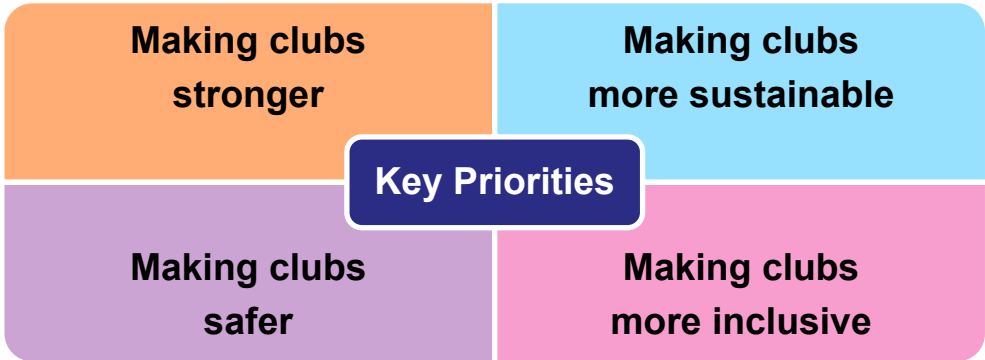
- The growth of membership in clubs and community organisations in Scotland.
- Improved member retention and sustained participation in clubs and community sport.
- Stronger volunteer and workforce structures in clubs and community organisations.
- Increasing the diversity of both participants and volunteers involved in club and community organisations in Scotland.

3. What will we fund?

The Club Support Programme aims to ensure a spread of supported clubs across Scotland, balancing club specific needs with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) outcomes, and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) considerations.

sportscotland is also committed to ensuring a spread of investment into a variety of different posts across a range of sports, and as such, will weight assessment accordingly to ensure that the funding achieves this balance.

Funding will support the employment of paid part-time or full-time posts that will contribute to the above objectives through the delivery of work against the identified priorities of:



Clubs and Community Organisations will be asked to develop a business case with support from Scottish Governing Bodies (SGBs), Local Authorities/Leisure Trusts and Invested National Partners that deliver against **at least one of the following priorities**:

Key Priority	Examples of recommended practice
Making clubs stronger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening organisational governance ➤ Strengthening operating and delivery structures ➤ Improving financial sustainability ➤ Strengthening organisational communication for members and non-members
Making clubs more sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sustaining or growing their membership. ➤ Developing and growing their youth sections ➤ Developing more progressive coaching structures ➤ Supporting volunteers better ➤ Creating and putting into action a future-focused sustainability plan
Making clubs safer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Improving wellbeing & protection practices ➤ Ensuring that the club or organisation is fully PVG compliant ➤ Ensuring that qualified coaches are central to the delivery of activity
Making clubs more inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensuring that the club or organisation has in place clear inclusion policies ➤ Ensuring that members and volunteers receive training and education and training ➤ Delivering a clear programme that focusses on increasing the diversity of membership, volunteers, and leaders

Examples of posts

Part-time or full-time posts should be based on identified club needs. The posts set out below are not an exhaustive list, there may be a post that is not listed but will still be considered.

Club/Membership Administrator	Head Coach	Coaching Coordinator	Community Engagement Officer
Club Development Officer	Club Coach	Project Manager (facilities)	Community Impact Officer
Coach Developers/Mentors	Club Outreach Officer	Facility/Operations Manager	Safeguarding Officer

3.1 Who we will fund

- ✓ We will **prioritise clubs that are affiliated** to a Scottish Governing Body
- ✓ We may, in certain circumstances, invest in local authorities, leisure trusts or national partners as an alternative route for clubs or community organisations that do not have a recognised SGB to affiliate with

3.2 What we will not fund

- ✗ Businesses or profit-making organisations
- ✗ Professional sports clubs or organisations
- ✗ Requests that simply continue existing posts without any clear additionality (new or increased outcomes) or are simply replacing existing posts.

3.3 Investment levels

sportscotland contribution

- **sportscotland** will contribute up to 90% of the eligible cost of the post, up to a maximum of £30,000 per post per year

Partnership funding requirement

- Clubs & Community Organisations must provide 10% partnership funding
- This 10% must cover the total cost of the post across the whole investment period
- Partnership funding can come from multiple sources (local authority, club, trust, sponsorship, etc.)

Important

- The 10% is based on total cost of the post, not on the **sportscotland** contribution
- In no circumstances will the **sportscotland** contribution exceed £30,000 per post per year, therefore any costs above £33,333 per post, per year will require to be met from partnership funding.
- Investment is based on posts being paid at least the Scottish Living Wage
- We can adjust the funding schedule to make startup easier

Example

If a post costs £20,000 per year for a 3-year post:

- 90% of £60,000 = £54,000 (**sportscotland** contribution)
- 10% of £60,000 = £6,000 (Club/Community Organisation contribution)

Example Funding Profile 1:

Total cost of project	Funding partner	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total award
£60,000	sportscotland	£18,000	£18,000	£18,000	£54,000
	Club	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£6,000

Example Funding Profile 2:

Total cost of project	Funding partner	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total award
£60,000	sportscotland	£20,000	£17,000	£17,000	£54,000
	Club	£1,500	£2,000	£2,500	£6,000

4. Principles of investment

- **Post type** – Funding can support **part-time or full-time** posts based on the club and community organisations need and available investment.
- **Club & community organisation led project** – Funding will be used to directly support a club or community organisation to meet an identified need that contributes to achieving the programme objectives.
- **Business case** – Clubs / organisations must present a clear business case showing how the investment delivers stronger, safer, more sustainable, and more inclusive clubs, and contributes to the programme objectives.
- **SGB/Local Partner support** – Clear lines of support from SGBs and Local Authority partners should be identified within the business case.
- **Employment functions** - Clubs / organisations must have appropriate structures in place to employ individuals into the invested posts. Employment functions may be managed in partnership with an SGB, Local Authority or other partner.
- **Increasing diversity** – Business cases should focus on increasing the diversity of club members, volunteers, and leaders (for example, more girls and women, disabled people, people from lower income communities and diverse ethnic communities).
- **Shared posts** – Joint / shared posts across clubs may be considered. Posts may be hosted by an SGB or Local Authority partner, but the focus must remain on club needs.
- **Fair Work First** – All applicants should take note of the Scottish Government’s [Fair Work First](#) principles. All post-holders must be paid at least the Scottish Living Wage (currently £13.45 per hour from 1 April 2026).
- **Minimum contribution** – Clubs / organisations must contribute a minimum of 10% of the cost of the post across the investment period.
- **Funding schedule** – Applications requesting a higher percentage of support in year 1 may be considered to assist with the post startup.
- **Financial sustainability** – Clubs must outline how the post will be financially sustained beyond the initial investment period.

5. Approach

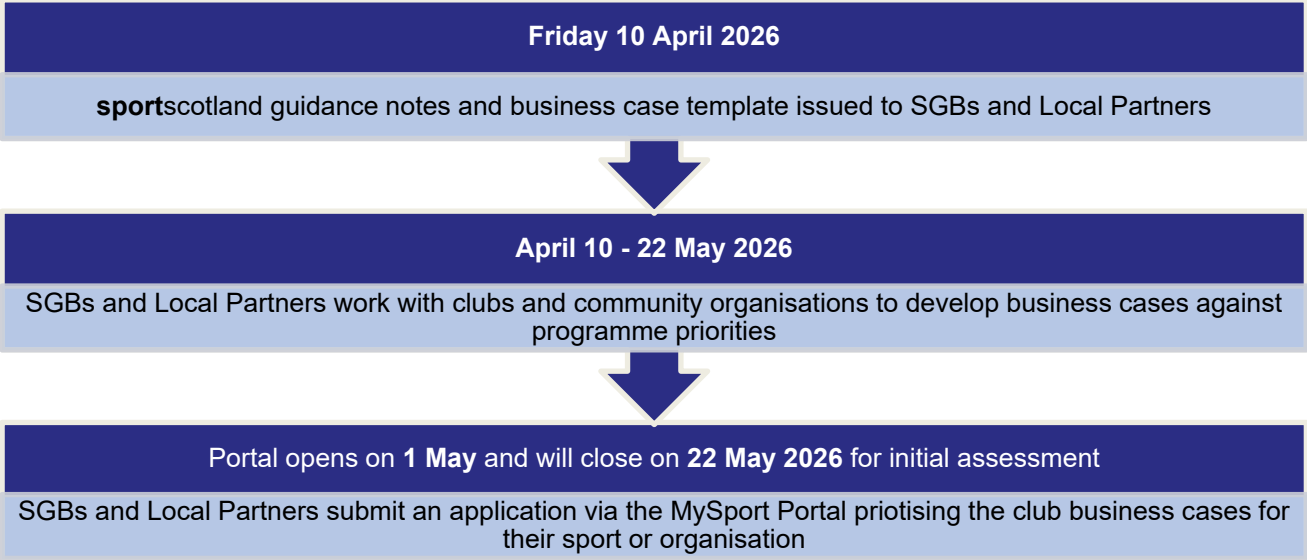
sportscotland is committed to supporting clubs of all sizes, recognising the distinct contributions and needs of both smaller and larger clubs.

Given the requirement to distribute funding across the system, some clubs may not receive the full amount requested. As a result, prioritisation at the application stage will be necessary.

sportscotland will take a partnership-led, geographical approach to support the development of business cases and subsequent applications. Our aim is that we work together as a sector with local and national partners to identify clubs most in need, connect club plans with local strategies, and coordinate support efficiently.

We want to see business cases that are club-led in their development with support from others.

6. Application Process



- Step 1 -** Identify, at club or community organisation level, a clear need for a paid post
- Step 2 -** Using the template provided, the club or community organisation must prepare a business case that sets out the identified need and explains how funding support will help achieve the programme’s objectives
- Step 3 -** SGB or Local Partner will collate their business cases and submit them through the **sportscotland** MySport portal for assessment
- Step 4 -** If successful, funding will be distributed to clubs or community organisations via a SGB or Local Partner

7. Timeline

Key dates	Key actions
10 April 2026	Club Support Programme guidance notes sent out to partners
10 April – 22 May 2026	Development of club & community business cases
1 May – 22 May 2026	sportscotland MySport application portal available for SGB/Local Partner submissions – Closing date 22 May 2026
25 May – 15 June 2026	Application collation and initial scoring
15 – 19 June 2026	Assessment panel
Week beginning 29 June 2026	Confirmation of outcome of submission
On receipt of signed letter - July 2026	Payment released
25 September 2026	Deadline for application submission – Round 2 (If required)

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Baseline data will be gathered through the business cases developed and submitted alongside the applications
- Clubs/Organisations will provide regular monitoring reports
- SGBs/Local Partners will participate in evaluation activity and contribute to system learning outputs
- **sportscotland** reserves the right to audit funded activity and to request additional information where required

9. Key Contacts

sportscotland – For further information or advice please email

newmonies@sportscotland.org.uk