



RAF CENTRAL FUND

SPORTS ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK



Introduction

RAF Sport is powered by the RAF Central Fund (“the Fund”), the RAF charity for sport and physical activities.

Sport in the military makes a significant contribution to the delivery of operational capability and is therefore recognised as a core activity in the UK Armed Forces. The Fund works to enable serving RAF personnel to access sporting opportunities and physical activities through its grants, programmes, partnerships and properties with the RAF Sports Lottery being the Fund’s principal fundraising tool; a vital lifeline for sport in the RAF. The RAF Sport Associations also provide a key lifeline for sport, creating opportunities for RAF personnel to partake in over 50 different sports at all levels.

Sports Associations are fundamental to the delivery of RAF Sport and hold both Public and charitable responsibilities. They are accountable to the Head of RAF Sport through the Directorate of RAF Sport (“DRS”), who are responsible for providing guidance to volunteer sporting groups in the RAF. DRS work to deliver RAF Sport in order to enhance RAF operational effectiveness, fighting spirit and personal development and contribute to mental and physical health and wellbeing of Service personnel, helping to retain and recruit a diverse and inclusive Whole Force.

Public responsibilities include the development of the RAF Sport Strategy and policy, the governance of day-to-day on duty sport activities and the management and assurance of sport safety.

Charitable responsibilities include charity and financial governance, income generation, legal compliance, marketing and communications and the support of any ‘off duty’ activity falling outside of the remit of DRS.

This handbook, together with the policies and procedures, has been developed to help integrate and inform the former individual RAF Sport Association charities into the Fund, supporting them with the governance and management of their sport. By design, it is intended to compliment rather than replace existing Charity Commission and MOD policy and guidance, and, as the Fund develops, so will the policies. The Fund, being an independent body from the MOD, operates to Charity Commission regulations. However, many of the practices detailed in these policies will be familiar to military personnel.

The word 'must' is used in these policies where there is a specific requirement that you must comply with. 'Should' is used for minimum good practice guidance you should follow unless there is a good reason not to.

The Fund will monitor the effectiveness and review the implementation of these policies considering their suitability, applicability and effectiveness. Where possible, any improvements identified will be made as soon as possible. Formal reviews will be conducted every year. Any recommendations for amendment or inclusion should be submitted in the first instance to governance@rafcf.org.uk.

Volunteers

A volunteer is a person who gives freely their time, skills and experience without expectation of financial reward. The RAF Central Fund recognises that volunteers are the lifeblood of RAF Sport and is committed to their ongoing support and development. RAF Sport Association Committee Members who are supporting with charitable sport activities will be RAF Central Fund Volunteers.

2024.002

The Royal Air Force Central Fund is a Company registered in England and Wales 8555984,
Charity registered in England and Wales 1152560, Charity registered in Scotland SC044299

Roles and responsibilities are determined by the RAF Central Fund and DRS to meet the requirements of their respective policies for the delivery of RAF Sport, however as a minimum, each association will be required to have a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer in post. Any association failing to meet this requirement must notify the Fund as soon as reasonably practicable.

Chairs are required to be appointed by DRS in consultation with the RAF Central Fund, in accordance with AP3415.

For the avoidance of doubt, a volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment. In addition to those roles noted above, any person involved in the volunteering for their sport to support with charitable activities must observe the Fund's Association Regulations, Volunteer Agreement, Volunteer Code of Conduct and policies, found [here](#). The Secretary of the association will be responsible for maintaining a list of all volunteers and a record of all signed Volunteer Agreements.

Association Memberships

Sports Association Committee Members may create classes of membership for the association's participants and beneficiaries. These classes must include serving RAF personnel and may include civilian affiliated members. The committee may determine the obligations of any such members (including payment of membership fees), and the conditions for admission to, and termination of membership of any such class of members.

In creating classes of membership, Sport Association Committee Members must remain mindful that their primary purpose is to promote military efficiency. Therefore, it is important to limit the use of charitable funds by non-qualifying civilian personnel and it is therefore useful for committees to think in terms of qualifying and non-qualifying membership. All serving military personnel, together with civilian personnel who promote military efficiency² can be regarded as qualifying users of RAF sports association charitable organisations, subject to the following general provisos:

- Service personnel must have preferential access to the club/activity.
- Non-qualifying civilian membership must not exceed 25% of the total membership/usage of the activity.
- Non-qualifying civilians must be charged the going commercial rate (ie. Non-qualifying personnel should not benefit from discounted rates or be subsidised by the association) for use of any facilities. The proceeds should be used for the support of RAF Sport activities.

In specific circumstances determined by the Fund's Grants and Programmes Manager the following groups may additionally be regarded as qualifying members:

- Dependants of qualifying users;
- Instructors/facilitators of sports association activities;
- Retired regular service personnel of the RAF, PMRAFNS and Commonwealth Air Forces and certain categories of retired RAF Reserve Forces³ (subject to any limits on numbers imposed by the associations themselves).
- Members of the Air Cadet Organisation.

² defined as being those employed by the MOD or a station contractor, or those who contribute significantly to the primary purpose.

³ Categories of reserve forces listed in JSP660 as being eligible to represent their Service at Inter Services competition.

Whatever the activity, before civilian personnel are permitted to use facilities or partake in activities, appropriate insurance cover should be in place.

RAF Sports Associations are under no obligation to extend the use of association sports and facilities to any category of civilian, qualifying or otherwise.

While the trustees of the RAF Central Fund acknowledge that civilian personnel may at times use equipment and facilities, civilian usage cannot be used to justify funding requests and civilian costs cannot be covered with sponsorship funding (unless set out in the sponsorship agreement). Any such bid must stand or fall solely on the basis of RAF personnel usage.

Anti-Bribery

The Fund is committed to conducting all of its activities fairly, honestly and with integrity. The Fund takes a zero-tolerance approach to bribery and corruption. The Fund's Trustees, management, employees and volunteers must be dedicated to high ethical standards and recognise and support the Fund's commitment to compliance with these standards.

Volunteers must comply with the Fund's Anti-Bribery policy found [here](#).

Backroom / Non-Playing Staff

(eg. Coaches, Umpires, Referees, Medics and Physiotherapists)

It is recognised that Associations may need to use both internal and external individuals to facilitate their sport. Where such roles are supported by an external party, the Association must liaise with the Fund as noted in the Contracts and Agreements section below.

For any individuals who are self-employed, the Association must request a copy of their UTR number and send this to finance@rafcf.org.uk.

Where such roles are provided by internal parties (members of the Association), if the Association agrees to provide funds and expenses for the services, the individual will be able to submit an expense claim. In order for this to be processed, the Association should direct the individual to email finance@rafcf.org.uk with their name, email address and bank account details. The Fund's Finance team will update the finance system with the individual's details and forward an expense form for the individual to complete and submit via the Fund's system (details will be provided). The Association should make the individuals aware of HMRC's trading income tax allowances and assessment requirements, details can be found [here](#).

Branding

RAF Sport is powered by the RAF Central Fund ("the Fund"), the RAF charity for sport and physical activities.

When using branding, whether for kit or other requirements, Committee Members must review the RAF Sport Brand Marketing Pack found [here](#). The Fund's Marketing team will be happy to support with any queries – Marketing@rafcf.org.uk.

Central Fund Grant Awards and Expenditure

RAF Central Fund grant allocations to the Sports Associations is based on the charitable funds available as well as the strategic objectives of the Fund and the Directorate of Sport.

Associations are permitted to spend their grant awards as they see fit providing it is in line with our [Sports Association Funding Policy](#). Associations are also asked to consider our strategic objective of increasing participation in sport when spending their grants.

The RAF Central Fund is committed to ensuring that all charitable funds are used solely to support the delivery of sporting activities. Expenditure is focused on providing opportunities, equipment, and resources for sporting activity, alongside essential administration, safety, and welfare provisions.

We do not permit the use of charitable funds for any activity that could bring the Central Fund or the wider RAF into disrepute. This includes, but is not limited to, expenditures related to alcohol, gambling, or any inappropriate entertainment or events that fall outside of core sporting objectives.

By maintaining a strict focus on our charitable aims, we ensure that all funds are used responsibly and transparently to support and enhance the sporting experience for beneficiaries.

Commercial/Sponsorship

Before considering commercial, sponsorship and funding options, RAF Sports Associations must liaise with the Fund's Commercial team (Commercial@rafcf.org.uk); the team will support the Association to ensure that value and opportunities are maximised and provide the necessary authorisation for any contracts and agreements.

Contracts and Agreements

(including agreements with external backroom staff)

Sports Associations who have merged into the Fund do not have legal independent identities and they are therefore legally unable to enter into any form of contract or agreement for, or on behalf of their association. Merged Sports Associations wishing to engage in any agreements, including the engagement of external coaches or officials, must contact the Fund in the first instance in order that any agreements can be suitably set-up under the Fund for the Association. Please contact Governance@rafcf.org.uk.

Complaints Procedure

We want to surpass the expectations of our beneficiaries and stakeholders, however we know that there may be times when we do not meet our own high standards. When this does happen we want to hear about it, deal with the situation as quickly as possible and put measures in place to stop it happening again. We take complaints very seriously and treat them as an opportunity to develop.

The Complaints Procedure found [here](#); this details how volunteers and staff should record, acknowledge and review complaints. Volunteers should contact their Association's Fund Ambassador if they have any queries.

Confidentiality

To protect the interests of the RAF Central Fund, its Trustees, staff, volunteers, stakeholders and all Sports Association Members, the RAF Sports Associations must adhere to the Confidentiality Policy found [here](#).

Data Protection

The Fund is committed to protecting the data and privacy of our beneficiaries and volunteers. Individuals can view our Privacy Policy on our website (www.rafcf.org.uk) to understand our practices.

Personal data is required to conduct the public and charitable activities of the RAF Sport and, going forward, the Fund will work with the Associations and the RAF to review the systems and services currently used to collect and process personal data. It is anticipated that new systems will be developed where it is necessary that changes are required, e.g. for improved functionality and security of data. In the interim, to enable the continuation of the Association sport activity, use of the systems currently employed by the Associations will continue.

Volunteers who process or have access to personal data must, along with the Association, ensure that all data complies with the [data protection principles](#) of Article 5 of UK GDPR and comply with the requirements of JSP440 for public sport activities and the Fund's Data Protection Policy found [here](#) for charitable sport activities.

Environmental, Social and Governance

Due to human activities, our planet is on the brink of a climate and ecological collapse. The Fund is committed to supporting the transition to a sustainable future alongside its work to support the health and wellbeing of RAF personnel. With consideration of activities and purchases, the RAF Sports Associations and the Fund can significantly develop the sustainability of RAF Sport.

Ethical procurement, reduction in waste and consideration to running costs and implications must be considered by all sports. Products should be sustainably sourced and any old equipment re-purposed, donated, recycled or disposed of in a way that is considerate to the environment.

As part of the RAF and the Fund's mission to reduce carbon emissions and achieve Net Zero by 2040, the Fund will support the Associations with any improvements required. The Fund's ESG Policy can be found [here](#).

Equality and Diversity

The Fund is committed to valuing diversity, reducing inequality, and ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect. The Fund encourages diversity amongst staff and volunteers and is committed to eliminating all aspects of discrimination, ensuring that no one who is in contact with the Fund in any capacity will receive a less favourable response on the grounds of age, race, ethnicity, faith, marital status, gender, sexual orientation and physical and mental impairment.

Volunteers must observe the Fund's Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Policy found [here](#).

Health and Safety

Health and safety is important, and the standard of care imposed by legislation is pretty much the same regardless of the size of the organisation. All organisations must carry out a risk assessment identifying the risks to employees, other workers, volunteers, clients, members of the public and anyone who comes onto the organisation's premises or uses its services. They must then draw up a health and safety scheme setting out a programme to reduce the risks, or to minimise the negative impact if they do happen. An organisation has a duty to provide all individuals with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

As the public body with primacy over sport delivery in the RAF, DRS is responsible for ensuring that all sporting activity undertaken by the RAF Sport Associations is undertaken safely; Sports Associations must comply with AP3415. AOC 22(Trg) Gp has directed DRS to ensure that the appropriate Safety Management Systems are in place, risk assessments are conducted, risks identified and recorded, RIDDOR⁵ is undertaken, and a robust system of assurance is implemented. The RAF Central Fund therefore takes no responsibility for the governance of safety of sporting activity undertaken at association level although participant wellbeing is our highest priority and we are committed to regularly reviewing the RAF Sport Safety plans, ensuring the highest level of care and protection for all participants. For risks such as head injuries, we review the RAF Sport Safety plans to ensure:

- 1. Compliance with NGB Guidelines:**

We advocate the head injury and concussion protocols set by each sport's NGB, ensuring these minimum standards are met across all activities.

- 2. Enhanced Protective Measures:**

To provide an extra layer of safety, where appropriate, we support additional safety measures for high-risk activities.

- 3. Return-to-Play Protocols:**

Return-to-play procedures follow advice provided by NGBs and prioritise participant health over competition

The delineation of responsibility is relatively clear; if it is sport delivery related then you should contact DRS, otherwise, please contact the Fund to discuss and agree health and safety management.

⁵ *Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences.*

Harassment and Bullying

It is imperative to the Fund that all staff and volunteers are treated and treat others with dignity and respect, free from harassment and bullying. All individuals should take the time to ensure they understand what types of behaviour are unacceptable by reviewing and complying with the policy found [here](#).

Incident Reporting Procedure

The Charity Commission requires the RAF Central Fund to promptly report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place during the charitable administration of sport, it is important that there is a prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission. The Fund's policy is to report incidents within 72 hours.

Volunteers are required to report serious incidents to the Fund by emailing Governance@rafcf.org.uk. Serious incidents during the charitable administration of sport are adverse events, whether actual or alleged, which result in or risk:

- Harm to people who come into contact with the Fund's work;
- Loss of the Fund's money or assets;
- Damage to the Fund's property;
- Harm to the Fund's work or reputation.

An act of discrimination against any person with a protected characteristic listed in the [Equality Act 2010](#) will also be treated as a serious incident.

The main categories of reportable incident are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering
- large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using the charity's funds
- other significant financial loss
- links to terrorism or extremism, including 'proscribed' (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze, or kidnapping of staff
- other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches/losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect the charity

An incident is less likely to damage a charity's reputation if the charity and its Trustees can show that it was handled well.

To report incidents, please email Governance@rafcf.org.uk and include:

- your name, email address, phone number and RAF Sports Association;
- reference numbers and contact details, if you've reported the incident to other organisations, like the police;
- date of the incident;
- description of what happened;
- date the Sports Association found out about the incident;
- how the Sports Association found out about the incident;
- names and registration numbers of other charities involved in the incident, if relevant.

IT and Systems Use

The Fund's IT and systems must not be used inappropriately. When volunteers use any systems (including email addresses) provided by the Fund (eg. example@rafsport.org.uk), they must ensure that the system:

- policies and procedures are followed;
- are only used for Association volunteer activities and not for personal use or private commercial activities;

The IT policy can be found [here](#). When using Fund systems or any systems to deliver or communicate their RAF Sports Association activities, volunteers must:

- not breach copyrights, data protection, privacy or confidentiality requirements;
- not use the systems maliciously or bring the Fund's reputation into disrepute;
- ensure use is professional manner.

Associations must not use third party systems to support with charitable sport activities unless use as been discussed and agreed with the Fund.

Property

RAF Sports Associations are required to carry out and log an annual kit and equipment inventory and ensure that all property is stored securely and safely with adequate insurance cover.

The Fund will work with the associations to maintain an asset register of all physical and fixed assets. If you have any queries, please email finance@rafsport.org.uk.

Safeguarding

Volunteers may at times work with young people and vulnerable adults as part of the Association's charitable activities, the Fund's safeguarding policy can be found [here](#).

Social Media

Social media provides a wealth of opportunities for promoting sport. In order for Associations to effectively, appropriately and safely utilise social media, the Fund's Social Media Policy can be found [here](#).

Whistleblowers

The Fund encourages individuals, including volunteers supporting with the charitable activities for their sport, to raise their concerns about any incidents of malpractice or mismanagement and it is important that they are able to do so without fear of harassment or victimisation. The Fund's [Whistleblowers Policy](#) sets out the correct procedure to raise concerns.