



The Veterans' Foundation & Invictus Games Birmingham 2027

Access Unconquered: Adaptive Sport Grants

Guidance

Introduction

Access Unconquered is a UK-wide programme from the Veterans' Foundation and Invictus Games Birmingham 2027, harnessing the power of adaptive sport to create lasting change for wounded, injured and sick (WIS) veterans and serving personnel.

Through Adaptive Sport Grants, the Veterans' Foundation is committing £250,000 to organisations that can make adaptive sport accessible to more WIS veterans and serving personnel, removing barriers to participation and creating opportunities to improve physical and mental health, build confidence and connection.

Grants of between £1,000 and £15,000 are available to eligible organisations across the UK.

Background

The Invictus Games provide a recovery pathway for international Wounded, Injured and Sick veterans and serving personnel, using competitive adaptive sport to aid recovery and rehabilitation.

Founded in 2014 by Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, the Games are a powerful demonstration of the resilience, determination, and camaraderie of the WIS community. The participant's journey is a testament to the transformative power of sport, showing the world that even in the face of adversity, there is always the potential for growth, strength, and new beginnings.

Seven Invictus Games have taken place to date, bringing together 25 nations and approximately 3,000 competitors, supported by more than 6,000 family members and friends, and attracting over 100,000 spectators. The impact of the Games extends well beyond the sporting events themselves, helping to challenge perceptions of disability, strengthening relationships between the Armed Forces community and wider society, raising awareness of the challenges of hidden wounds, and sharing best practice in recovery.

The next Invictus Games will take place in Birmingham between 10th and 17th July 2027. Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 has launched the most ambitious Impact Strategy of any Games to date, with a clear vision '**Through inclusive sport, inspire recovery and resilience**'.



A key part of this strategy is a comprehensive Social Impact programme that will precede the Games. This programme will deliver high-impact activities in the lead-up to the Games, alongside longer-term initiatives designed to create lasting impact beyond Birmingham 2027.

About Access Unconquered

Access Unconquered is focused on enabling more WIS veterans and serving personnel to access and participate in adaptive sport. Through the Adaptive Sport Grants, we will fund organisations whose work supports the wider goals of Invictus Games Birmingham 2027:

- **Inspire Recovery:** Foster holistic pathways that empower and support participants to embrace a new reality, embark on a recovery journey, and reach their full potential through the transformative power of sport and community.
- **Improve Resilience:** Enhance resilience of Armed Forces wounded, injured and sick and their families by understanding and overcoming barriers, preparing for the future and successfully adapting to life after injury or illness.
- **Influence Reconnection:** Positively influence reconnection and social integration of the armed forces wounded, injured and sick, realising mutual benefits and enabling communities to thrive.

The Adaptive Sport Grants Programme will support projects focused entirely on WIS veterans and serving personnel, creating opportunities to access and participate in adaptive sport that support recovery, build resilience and strengthen connection with others.

What do we mean by the term 'Wounded, Injured and Sick' (WIS)?

The Adaptive Sport Grants are designed to open up new opportunities for wounded, injured and sick (WIS) members of the Armed Forces community through adaptive sport. We recognise that definitions of 'wounded, injured and sick' may vary between organisations and service providers, and that each will work within its own established framework.

For the purposes of the Adaptive Sport Grants, we expect projects to focus on serving personnel and veterans who have been most severely impacted by physical and/or psychological illness or injury while in service.

What do we mean by adaptive sport?

'Adaptive sport' is sporting activity that has been modified through equipment, coaching, rules or delivery methods to enable WIS members of the Armed Forces community to participate.



To be eligible for an Adaptive Sport Grant, there must be a clear adaptation to the sporting activity that helps overcome physical, sensory, cognitive or mental health barriers to participation. This can enable disabled and non-disabled participants to take part together on a more equal basis.

Grant amount and eligibility

How much funding can you apply for?

Grants are available for between £1,000 and £15,000 and must be spent by 31st May 2027.

Who is eligible to apply?

Registered charities and other not-for-profit organisations that support WIS beneficiaries may apply. Applicants should complete the eligibility checker to confirm that all criteria can be met.

We cannot accept applications from:

- Individuals
- Organisations with an annual income above £1,000,000
- Unincorporated organisations
- Statutory organisations – Local Authorities, NHS, Educational Institutions
- Private Limited Companies
- Community Interest Companies (CICs) Limited by Shares
- Charities or CICs which are based outside the UK
- Charities or CICs which do not have substantial recent experience of supporting the Armed Forces community
- Organisations who do not have a minimum of 12 months independently examined or audited accounts.

Project requirements

What types of projects are we looking for?

The Adaptive Sport Grants will fund projects that open up opportunities for WIS veterans and serving personnel to participate in adaptive sport. Projects must improve access to adaptive sport and include a clear adaptation, such as modified equipment, coaching, rules or delivery methods.

Projects can be part of an established programme or a standalone project. Where an existing programme is being expanded, we can only fund the costs of additional places that increase participation or enable new participants to take part.

All projects must have WIS veterans and serving personnel as their exclusive, direct beneficiaries and contribute to the following outcome:



- Improved physical and mental health

Applicants must identify at least one activity linked to this outcome. For example:

- Outcome: Improved physical and mental health a
- Activity: 15 WIS participants engage in five wheelchair rugby sessions

We welcome projects that **build on or expand existing services**, for example by:

- Providing additional places for WIS veterans or serving personnel to participate in adaptive sport
- Providing specialist or additional equipment to enable participation
- Funding staff, resources or other costs that enable more participants to take part in adaptive sport
- Delivering event days, taster sessions or 'have a go' opportunities to introduce participants to new adaptive sports
- Covering reasonable travel and related costs that enable participants to take part in adaptive sport
- Providing group staff training to safely offer, and improve accessibility for, adapted sports opportunities.

We particularly welcome projects that build the capacity of organisations to be more accessible and inclusive, including training for staff in the use of newly purchased adaptive equipment, inclusive delivery practices, and approaches that reduce barriers to participation for the WIS community.

We also welcome projects that address the needs of under-represented groups within the WIS community, including people who may face additional barriers to participation, recognition or support. These barriers could include, but are not limited to gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, neurodiversity, mental health, socioeconomic background, geographic isolation, or service role.

These groups are often less visible within existing recovery programmes and may face additional barriers that require targeted outreach and inclusive approaches.

What we will fund

The Adaptive Sport Grants will fund activities that inspire and support recovery for the WIS community through adaptive sport.

1. Staffing

- Fixed-term staff time (delivery, administration, volunteer management)



- Freelancers or sessional staff
- Professional Coaching

2. Equipment

- Activity materials (e.g., sports/games/outdoor equipment)
- Delivery tools, such as phones, laptops and IT equipment
- Essential equipment hire or purchase for project delivery

3. Delivery and travel

- Costs associated in providing additional places for WIS serving personnel and veterans to take part in UK-based adaptive sport
- Costs for organising and delivering event days or taster sessions
- Costs to support access to and inclusion in events and trips
- Reasonable travel costs for project staff, volunteers or beneficiaries to enable participation in the project.

4. Training

- Training for staff or volunteers on the safe and effective use of newly purchased adaptive equipment.
- Specialist training to support inclusive delivery of activities, programmes, or services for WIS serving personnel and veterans.
- Individual training or training that is not directly related to project delivery is not eligible.

5. Reasonable overheads

- Reasonable overheads that reflect the cost to your organisation of delivering this project, taking account of recent cost increases.
- Reasonable costs for storing and transporting items, including wear and tear on private vehicles.
- Activity may be delivered by a third party; however, the grant recipient remains responsible for the delivery and management of the grant.

Showing the change your grant will make

We want to understand the difference your project will make to the people who take part. By the end of the funded project, we would expect participants to have experienced a positive change as a result of taking part.

When describing the change you expect to achieve, consider:

- What will be different for participants as a result of the project?



- How will the project improve their physical and or/mental health, or access to adaptive sport?
- What evidence will show that the project has made a difference?
- How will you track progress throughout the project?

Measuring impact

The Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 Social Impact Programme will be independently evaluated by the University of Birmingham. The evaluation will help us understand the impact of the Pre-Games Social Impact Programme on the wounded, injured and sick community, and identify opportunities to strengthen impact further so that future Invictus Games can deliver even greater benefits. More information is available here: [Impact Strategy](#)

If your application is successful, you may be invited to participate in a case study coordinated by the University of Birmingham. This will help showcase your project as part of the final evaluation report.

We strongly encourage grant holders to take part in the evaluation on an informed and voluntary basis. The research team will work with each grant holder to agree suitable timelines for data collection, which may include interviews, focus group discussions and/or surveys. The approach may vary depending on the scope and scale of each project.

Some data collection may also take place after project completion in order to assess the longer-term impact of delivery, potentially continuing until June 2027.

Timeline

The key dates for the Adaptive Sport Grants are set out below.

Applications open	Week commencing 2nd November 2026
Applications close	4th December 2026
Applicants notified of outcome	Mid December 2026
Project delivery	January to May 2027
Final grant monitoring report submitted to the Veterans' Foundation	30th June 2027
University of Birmingham evaluation	Between grant award and June 2027

The application closing date may be brought forward or extended, depending on the level of demand for grant awards. We would encourage applicants to submit their application as soon as it is ready. Projects should be ready for delivery, with the aim of completing the project within 16 weeks of a grant award. Applicants must also submit a

final grant monitoring report to the Veterans' Foundation within four weeks of the project completion.

Application process

- Complete the eligibility quiz. Your answers will determine whether your organisation meets the eligibility criteria and can proceed to the grant application form.
- Complete the application form. You can save your progress at any point by clicking 'Save and Resume' at the bottom of the page.
- Save your return link. Enter your email address when prompted and a link will be emailed to you. You can use this link to return to your application for up to 30 days.

Each time you leave your application, you must use the latest link emailed to you to return to it.

Without this link, your information cannot be retrieved, and you will need to start a new application. Please note that file uploads and signatures will need to be added again when you return.

How applications will be assessed

Applications will be reviewed by the Veterans' Foundation Grants Team and a representative from Invictus Games Birmingham 2027. Funding decisions will be based on the factors below.

Item	Information Required
Governance, Trustees management	<p>We need to be confident that your organisation is well managed and has appropriate operating and risk management procedures in place. Please upload the following documents in support of your application:</p> <p>Constitution or Articles of Association Latest annual approved accounts Safeguarding policy Reference - if you have not previously received a Veterans' Foundation grant, a reference from an organisation that works with the Armed Forces community and is familiar with your work. The reference should cover the outcomes of your</p>

	work, your ability to deliver the project and how you work with other Armed Forces organisations.
What will you spend the grant on?	Tell us exactly what the grant will pay for and provide a breakdown of your project costs. We will consider whether the project is appropriately costed, represents value for money and whether the costs are proportionate. Please also check the 'What will not be funded' section before applying.
What need is your project addressing?	Explain the need for your project, how you identified it and any consultation you have carried out. Tell us about any similar projects or services in your area and any gaps your project will help to address.
Beneficiaries	Tell us how many WIS beneficiaries your project will support, the type of need they have and the level of that need. You should be able to verify beneficiary numbers if asked.
Armed Forces community networks and referrals	Tell us how your organisation works with other service providers in the Armed Forces community. Please include details of your existing networks, partnerships and referral relationships with Service charities and other Armed Forces organisations.
Impact on the WIS community	Explain how your project will contribute to the outcome set out above and the positive difference it will make to the WIS community. Tell us how you expect the benefits of the project to continue in the short and medium term beyond the funded project.

Once you have completed your application, you can upload up to three additional documents to support it, if needed. The Veterans' Foundation Grants Team may also ask you for further information or documents during the assessment process.

Application outcome

We will let you know the outcome of your application within the timescales set out above.



If your application is successful, the main contact will also receive details of how to accept the grant and the terms and conditions that apply.

Applicants who are unsuccessful will be advised by e-mail.

Frequently asked questions

I currently have a grant from the Veterans' Foundation, can I apply?

Yes. We want to encourage as many eligible organisations as possible to apply. Holding an existing grant from the Veterans' Foundation does not affect your ability to apply to this funding programme or to apply to any Veterans' Foundation grant programmes in the future.

I have previously worked with or am currently working with the Invictus Games Foundation of Invictus Games Birmingham 2027 on another project, can I apply?

Yes. We want to encourage as many eligible organisations as possible to apply. You will need to demonstrate how the project using this grant funding is distinct from any project you're already delivering or have delivered with the Invictus Games Foundation or Invictus Games Birmingham 2027.

I'm an 'Exempt Charity'. Can I apply?

Yes. Exempt Charities can apply for an Adaptive Sport Grant. You will need to provide additional information to confirm your exempt status, including details of your Principal Regulator and a copy of your governing documents. You must also meet our Minimum Eligibility Standards.

What will not be funded?

The following types of projects and costs will not be considered for funding through the Adaptive Sport Grants:

- Projects that are not focused on the WIS of the Armed Forces community
- Individual bursaries or trip fees
- Personal mobility equipment for an individual's personal use, such as wheelchairs
- Training for individuals or single staff members
- Activities that take place overseas
- Organisations' core work or existing services
- Projects providing holidays, short breaks or respite care
- Clinical interventions
- Projects that duplicate;
- existing MOD provision during the transition to civilian life.
- existing provision from the Naval Service Recovery Centre, Personal Recovery



Units or Personnel Recovery Centres.

This list is not exhaustive. The majority of costs must relate directly to the proposed project.

Contact

If you have any questions after reading this guidance, please contact the VF Grants Team at grants@veteransfoundation.org.uk

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