**Staffordshire County Council**

**Staffordshire’s Talented Athlete Fund 2016-17**

**What is STAF?**

The Staffordshire Talented Athlete Fund (STAF) uses County Council funding to provide financial support to Staffordshire’s most talented young sportsmen and women. The fund has been created to help cover the costs associated with training and competition, including such expenses as travel and sports equipment. STAF funding is divided into three tiers (Gold, Silver and Bronze) according to athlete’s performance standards and the value of the award.

**Who can apply?**

STAF is looking for athletes who are committed, motivated and proud to represent Staffordshire. Athletes must meet the following criteria:

**1**. You must either attend school/college or be a resident in one of the areas below. If you live outside the County because of training commitments or higher education, your parent/guardian must live in one the districts below:

Cannock, East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, South Staffordshire, Tamworth

**N.B. Athletes from the City of Stoke-on-Trent are not eligible to apply for the grant. If you are from the City and wish to find out more about local funding opportunities, please contact Stoke-On-Trent City Council.**

**2.** You must have a date of birth that falls between 1st September 1995 and 31st August 2004. Athletes with a disability must have a date of birth that falls between 1st September 1988 and 31st August 2004.

**3.** You must be able to demonstrate the performance criteria necessary for the tier of award you are applying for.

**4.** You must participate in a Paralympic or Olympic sport or, alternatively, one of the 46 Sport England-funded sports listed on their website [here](http://www.sportengland.org/our-work/national-work/national-governing-bodies/sports-we-invest-in/)

**5**. You must **not** be in receipt of UK Sport Athlete Personal Awards

**How do I apply?**

Firstly, check that you are eligible for STAF using the criteria above. Having read these guidance notes thoroughly, complete the application form with all the necessary supporting information. Please note that Gold applicants MUST include a letter of reference (on headed

paper) from the participating sport’s governing body, confirming you meet the performance criteria. This could be your regional or county development officer or someone from the talent team, but not a personal coach. Silver and Bronze applicants should provide a letter of reference from their club, coach or school.

Copies of press coverage of your achievements and relevant certificates or results may also be enclosed to support your application.

**How will the successful athletes be selected?**

The panel will score all eligible applicants against the following criteria:

* Current performance standard (weighted as a priority)
* Evidence of progression in performance over the last 12 months.
* Intended use of funding and how this will contribute to performance.
* Commitment and desire to achieve.

The highest scoring athletes in each category will be awarded grants. The panel will ensure that there is an equitable representation from a gender, disability and sports perspective.

**Tips on your application.**

Having reviewed last year’s applications, the panel make the following recommendations:

* Athletes must complete their own applications. No marks are given for spelling and grammar, but it’s vital that we get a sense of you as athlete and as a young person, we can’t do that if mum or dad writes your application! To help bring you answers to life you could include a short video (no more than five minutes) and send us the link to YouTube or Vimeo. **Please note that videos cannot be used to replace your written answers as we still require the application to be filled in.**
* Make sure you provide an adequate explanation of how you fulfil all four of the above selection criteria - awards are not just given on talent alone.
* Last year the intended use of funding question was answered poorly; you must set out clear intended use for funding, including costs.
* We can only consider you for one award category, think carefully about the tier you choose. Applying in a lower category than you are eligible for **will not** improve your chances. **Athletes who apply for more than one category will not be considered for an award.**
* Make sure the necessary evidence is provided and if applying for a gold award, ensure the reference letter is on headed paper.

**What are the timescales involved?**

* STAF opens for applications on 8th February 2016 and closes at midnight on 20th March 2016
* The selection panel will meet during the week commencing 29th March 2016.
* Successful applicants will be notified during the week commencing 11th April 2016

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **Criteria** | **Award** |
| Gold | Athletes to have represented Great Britain or England within 12 months of STAF’s closing date.  **OR**  Have won a medal at a National Championship(s) within 12 months of STAF’s closing date.  **OR**  To have achieved a national ranking of 5 or above within 12 months of STAF’s closing date.  **For athletes with a disability**  Any of the above OR achieved top 20 national ranking | £750  6 awards available. |
| Silver | Athletes to have represented the Region (West Midlands, Midlands, England Central)  **OR**  Be a member of a team that competes in a national league.  **OR**  To have achieved a national ranking of 20 or above within 12 months of STAF’s closing date.  **For athletes with a disability**  Any of the above OR form part of an inform/formal talent programme managed by the National Governing Body or Club | £500  10 awards available. |
| Bronze | Athletes to have represented Staffordshire County on three or more occasions.  **OR**  Be a member of a County training squad.  **&**  Regularly represent school/college/university teams.  **For athletes with a disability**  Regularly represent school/college/university teams. | £300  15 awards available. |

**Athletes competing in Special Olympics classified sports**

Should contact Ben Hollands (details below) for advice regarding the most appropriate award category to apply for.

**Conditions of selection**

Staffordshire County Council would ask that athletes agree to the following:

The award or grant must be used only for the purpose(s) specified.

* The award-holder should seek to credit Staffordshire County Council in future publicity.
* Athletes receiving Gold awards will be invited to attend an event to support relevant initiatives in Staffordshire developed through the Sportshire strategy and Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent’s delivery plan.
* The award-holder will commit to participate in a social media campaign
* Staffordshire County Council reserves the right to request proof of expenditure relating to any grants awarded.

**Finally**

Please note the award was massively oversubscribed last year; the vast majority of applicants did not receive an award. We take the selection process very seriously and every endeavour is made to make sure the process is fair and transparent.

**If you have any questions regarding the scheme please contact:**

Leigh Morton, Sport Across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

**Telephone:** 01785 619349

Ben Hollands, Staffordshire County Council

Telephone: 01785 276637 or 01785 619693

**E-mail:** [**STAF@staffordbc.gov.uk**](mailto:STAF@staffordbc.gov.uk)