

Young and Talented Grants 2026

Guidance Notes

Please read the guidance below carefully. If you have questions or struggle with the length of this document please give me a call and I will talk you through it and do my best to help. You will also need to give me a call to tell me about the young person you wish to support and to request an application form. Call Leah on 07724 832982.

Purpose of the Young and Talented Fund:

Woodsmith Foundation recognises that talented young people can often face barriers to reaching their potential due to lacking the money they need to progress in their specialist subject. We know the more a young person advances the greater the financial pressure upon families and caregivers.

For many, these costs can be difficult to keep up with and can result in the young person being unable to pursue their goals and ambitions. We also know that there are a great deal of other challenges and sacrifices a talented young person must contend with once a dedication to a subject is made; including balancing their activities with school work and attendance, a huge commitment of time and energy, and missing out on other important experiences and friendships at the cost of pursuing these aspirations.

In response, Woodsmith Foundation are pleased to re-open for applications for Young and Talented grants from February 2026 to the end of October 2026. The funding will **focus on supporting individual children and young people across our area of benefit, who can demonstrate exceptional skill in their chosen subject. We would like to hear from those who intend to continue to use this skill in their future and who will struggle to do this because of financial restrictions.** The Foundation believes passionately that all children and young people should have the same chances, regardless of their background and postcode. We are delighted to be able to invest in inspirational local young people, by helping to remove barriers to their future success.

The children and young people we will support:

We will accept applications to support **children and young people up to the age of 18 who have already demonstrated exceptional talent in their chosen subject.** Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, would be eligible up to the age of 25. You can also apply for funding for care leavers up to the age of 25.

Young and Talented grants are aimed at essential funding needed for a young person to progress in **any chosen subject.** We do not have a prescriptive list of subjects we will support (as long as the activity is safe and legal). We like to think of talents in the widest possible way. Examples could include: an academic subject, chess, dance, art, writing, music, drama and sports of all kinds - from skateboarding and surfing to horse riding and athletics. We would stress that this is by no means an exhaustive list. The focus is on the fact that **the young person is already operating at a high level and excelling in their subject.**

Applications to the fund can be made by either: **parents/guardians** of the young person themselves or **trusted adults.**

Trusted adults may include: sports coaches, trainers, youth workers, music leaders, mentors, teachers/tutors or any other professional experienced at working with children and young people. We believe that trusted adults working alongside young people are ideally placed to be able to identify individuals who would benefit from this fund and to assess that they are sufficiently motivated and have the demonstrated talent to make

the most of the opportunity. Trusted adults will be fundamental in working with the young person to encourage them to take the steps needed to achieve their goals.

For all applications, we require written evidence of the young person's capabilities and potential progression route. You will need to attach to your application an independent reference to be provided by a subject expert who is able to directly comment on the level of ability of the young person e.g. tutor, coach, teacher etc. This must be from someone who is not related to them and who does not work for the trusted adult's organisation. Please use the Independent Reference Form sent out with the application form.

We are keen to **fund anything that is essential for the young person to progress to the next level in their chosen subject and to help them to reach their personal best.** The types of things we may be able to fund include:

- **Competition fees and associated costs** – this includes entry fees for the right to compete at a local, national or European level. Academic subjects are included here e.g. a teacher might champion an individual student to attend a science competition which may help to support a future application to a specialist college. Applications are also welcome to cover costs associated with participation in any competition, including membership to a national body or specialist insurance.
- **Transport costs** – these include attendance at competitions, training sessions, talent camps, centres of excellence or any other essential travel involved. You may choose to apply for a set amount of funding to cover travel to a specific one-off specific, or for a travel bursary, which can be used flexibly for transport as and when required within an agreed time period.
- **Accommodation costs** – this would cover essential accommodation for individuals and their families needed whilst attending a competition, training camp or other essential event.
- **Specialist coaching and training costs** – we understand that in order to progress to elite level or to hone a particular skill, specialist coaching or training is often required e.g. as part of a progression route for a particular sport to graduate along a pathway system.
- **Lessons and tuition** – this would cover subjects where the young person would benefit from very specialist tuition from a professional expert e.g. a young musician who has reached a high standard on their instrument and requires lessons from a specialist to improve their skills.
- **Exam fees and qualification costs** – this would cover advanced level exams and qualifications e.g. grade 8 music or dance grading exams. It may also be a qualification required for the young person to start a career in their specialist topic e.g. a coaching qualification.
- **Essential equipment/clothing** – this would cover kit, clothing and specialist equipment essential to progression e.g. professional grade musical instruments which would enable a young person to take their skills to another level or a laptop for an exceptional student whose progress in their chosen subject is being hindered without the use of one at their disposal. All kit purchased must display the Woodsmith Foundation logo.
- **Extra-curricular academic support** – this could cover the travel costs to go to an interview at university if you would struggle to otherwise attend. It might be funding to attend a science competition or similar. Please note that we are unlikely to be able to fund a contribution to college or university fees.

This list aims to cover what we understand to be some of the most common costs associated with getting the best from a talented young person. If there are any other essential items you require funding for in order to support a young person with reaching their potential, please don't hesitate to give us a call and we will discuss whether your request will qualify.

Please note – We are unlikely to fund costs towards football academies until the young person is 15 as we have seen a number of younger grant holders in this category leave the club as they chose to prioritise local

sport instead. For performing artists we are unlikely to fund costs for local competitions – but would consider national competitions. We are also looking at funding older performing artists, for example, to attend auditions for jobs or higher education. We have had a high demand to support swimmers and will now only consider applications from swimmers over 14 years old or swimming for England. These are hard decisions to make but we want to ensure the widest range of talents are supported across the area. We have also decided to only fund costs to attend international competitions if the young person has had to qualify through a competitive process.

Funding available:

Grants of up to £1,500 are available. Although this funding will not be means tested, we will ask all applicants about other funding options as part of the application process. **This funding is aimed at supporting young people where their family or carer is unable to afford to do so.**

We may consider further support to an individual at a later date, for example if applicants can demonstrate clear progression and a particular barrier is stopping them reach their full potential. This will be dependent upon a number of factors, including general demand for funds. Please note that Woodsmith Foundation reserves the right to decline applications for those who have previously received funding and may prioritise first time applicants.

Eligibility criteria:

Please read the following criteria below carefully before you apply. If you are unsure about your eligibility, please contact us for advice on your application.

We understand you may not be used to applying for grants. Please let us know if you need help with your application.

- **Geographical area of benefit** - The activity funded must only be for young people normally living in the Foundation's area of benefit. Our area of benefit is the Borough of Scarborough, the Borough of Redcar and Cleveland, and the North York Moors National Park.
- **Trusted adults and referees** - Trusted adults must work for an organisation that is already experienced in, and working with, children and young people in some capacity. This can be in any professional capacity and does not have to involve direct delivery of the young person's chosen subject (they must qualify however under the 'Types and sizes of organisation' listed later in this section).
- **Keeping children and young people safe** - It is the responsibility of parents/guardians or organisations submitting applications to ensure that providers of activities have an appropriate safeguarding policy in place and undertake the right level of risk assessment for the proposed activities. They should also check the provider has in place the correct insurances, health and safety policies, and has suitably qualified staff.
- **Types of applicants**

We **will accept** applications from the following:

- Parents/guardians of individual young people.
- 18 year olds may apply themselves.
- Local authority staff.
- Schools.

- Local, voluntary groups that are constituted. That means you have a brief, written set of rules explaining how you will run your organisation and are governed by a committee of at least three unrelated members. You will have a bank account (or a relationship with a community organisation that is willing to hold the grant money for you).
- Charities or Charitable Incorporated Organisations registered with the Charity Commission.
- Social enterprises, such as Community Interest Companies limited by guarantee. These types of organisations must have at least two unrelated bank signatories to be eligible for funding from the Foundation.
- Parish and Town Councils.
- Sole traders and private businesses where they are acting as the trusted adult and are the specialist support for the young person e.g. coach or tutor.

We will seek to ensure a good geographic spread of funding across our area of benefit. If a number of applications come from one team/club/school/other setting we will ask the coach to work with the families to prioritise those who would struggle most to support the young person with financial assistance or select which young person has the most potential to progress to an elite level.

What we will not fund:

For these grants **we will not fund** the following:

- General applications from sports/other clubs (e.g. for equipment, other capital costs, , coaching or kit). A club could apply for funding, however this must be for the benefit of an individual and not for the general benefit of the club itself.
- Unreasonable costs for adults who may be supporting a young person to take part/compete. We will cover essential costs to allow a family member to accompany a young person to an event, or where the young person has specific support needs that will require a carer or other family member to attend to allow them to participate.
- Activities which have already started or retrospective funding.
- Enrichment opportunities and general participation e.g. chances for children to try out a new sport or arts activity.
- Activities which are funded by another organisation. If, having applied to the Foundation, you find that you have been successful with an alternative application for funding, please contact us to discuss whether you need to withdraw your application.

Supporting Information:

The following documents will need to be included with your completed application form when you make your submission. These can be sent electronically or in hard copy.

- **For trusted adult applicants:** Your organisation's most recent, audited/examined statement of accounts and balance sheet (where applicable). If you are a new group and do not have these, please send a copy of your most recent bank statement with a brief note about your financial position.
- **For trusted adult applicants:** Your organisation's terms of reference or constitution.
- **For all applicants:** An independent reference provided by a professional expert who can comment on the young person's level of ability and potential to progress. Please use the form provided.

Please check through your completed application form before you submit it to ensure you have completed all the required boxes.

How grant applications will be assessed:

We are looking for applications that clearly explain the exceptional talent of the young person. These skills will be validated by an independent referee. We would like to **fund individuals who have a clearly defined onward development path to reach their potential**. The Trustees' decision is final and we are not obliged to enter into correspondence with regard to their decision. We will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Monitoring your grant:

We will ask you to complete a simple form when you have finished spending your grant and we will make a copy of this available on our website when you apply so you can see what information you will be asked to provide. This will include receipts for funds spent and copies of any certificates/qualifications gained as a result. We would also welcome a short write up (including photos with consent for use) to evidence the young person's journey and would love to hear about what difference the funding has made for the young person.

How to apply for funding:

We have two separate grant application forms for this fund – one for trusted adult organisations and one for parents and guardian applications. We do not put the application forms on our website, instead we ask that you contact Leah Swain on 07724 832982 to talk through your application and request an application form. We can then ensure you receive the right application and that your request is eligible under this grant fund. If you are unable to contact us by telephone please email grants@woodsmithfoundation.org.uk with details of your funding request and a contact telephone number and a member of our team will call you back.

Timescales:

We are open to grant applications at any time between February 2026 and the end of October 2026.

We will collate applications at the end of each month and then start the assessment process. We aim to let you know the outcome of your application within 1 month from the start of the assessment process. If your application is successful you will need to sign and return a grant offer letter which will detail what the funding can be used for and the agreed timescales for spending the grant. Once the grant offer letter is returned we will pay the grant.

If you are unsure if you meet the criteria, please get in touch to discuss your application. If in doubt, please give us a call.

Call Leah Swain on 07724 832982 or email grants@woodsmithfoundation.org.uk