



PERFORMANCE PATHWAY PROGRAMME

2026

INTRODUCTION

Sport Ireland (SI) invests in High Performance sports through the annual athlete support scheme. Collectively as a joint programme SI and Athletics Ireland will manage and administer the 2026 senior athlete support scheme.

Additionally, Athletics Ireland provides support from its own resources for u23 & Senior athletes who do not meet the criteria for individual SI support (International, Podium, World Class) to athletes that are, or are likely to be, selected and make an impact at targeted international championships via Development and Discretionary categories of support.

For u20 & u18 athletes, support is through the Performance Pathway Programme.

Athletics Ireland's Performance Pathway Programme aims to support the identification and development of athletes (ages 15-20) who have the potential to progress into successful senior athletes. The programme offers support to the athletes, their personal coaches and their parents.

The **Performance Pathway Programme** aims to:

- Support athletes' **long-term development** and progression towards senior international performance.
- Provide structured **education, training, and competition opportunities** aligned with world-class athlete development principles.
- Foster a strong **performance culture** among Ireland's next generation of elite athletes
- Encourage athletes to attend and develop physically & mentally through a series of workshops and testing and information sessions.

The Performance Pathway programme will complement the work being done by the respective National Event Co-ordinators and work with them to encourage athletes and coaches to develop their technical abilities. Both the Pathway Performance programme and the National Event Co-ordinators provide Mentoring and upskilling opportunities for the Coaches, and help them to develop their own Performance environment.

1. SELECTION PROCESS

1.1 This document describes how athletes are selected for the Performance Pathway Programme and establishes the criteria that will be used to consider athletes for selection.

Performance Pathway Programme Support

Funds will be used to develop young athletes from club level to international level, with targeted educational interventions, Performance Pathway Days, PP Camps, PP Relay Squads, and where budget permits, support to travel to key identified prep meets.

1.2 Individual Support: The Selection Panel will meet each year to consider and review any new and existing athletes for individual support using the relevant selection criteria within the Selection Policy. Athletes can only be added to the programme or moved between levels at the annual selection meeting.

1.3 Application Process: All athletes u18, u20 & first year u23 (for the 2026 programme that is born 2010/2009/2008/2007/2006) must (re)apply for support each year. After selection, athletes will be notified and provided with additional information around available support and other application requirements as needed to avail of Performance Pathway Programme support. The Selectors retain the discretion to consider an athlete for support where an application has inadvertently not been made.

The process for application to the Performance Pathway Programme:

1. Applications should be made here: <https://forms.gle/aVNcBN2d8DRLZWLXA>
2. Clear criteria for each level set forth in this document & athletes apply for ONE level
3. Athletes will submit application for consideration
4. Selectors meeting to consider support applications
5. AAI will notify athletes who have/have not been selected for the PPP
6. AAI will publish the list of Performance Pathway Priority athletes

2. QUALIFICATION PERIODS

2.1 The Performance Pathway Programme will be administered on an annual basis. To be considered as a Priority Athlete for 2026, performance standards and selection criteria used for selection must be achieved during the Qualification Periods as follows: **1 January 2025 to 31 December 2025**

- Please note that qualifying performances achieved after the application deadline but inside the qualification window will be considered.
- For Foundation Level, athletes can apply throughout the year to be added to the programme if they hit criteria, by contacting the Performance Pathway Manager jacqui@athleticsireland.ie

3.SUPPORT CONDITIONS

3.1 General

- Performance Standards used in consideration for support must be achieved during competitions organised or authorised by the World Athletics, its Area Associations or its National Member Federations. Thus, results must be achieved at a Meet that has a World Athletics Permit.
- Results must be legal and will be verified.
- Athletes must sign any applicable paperwork or Athlete Agreement as required by Athletics Ireland, Sport Ireland, and Sport Ireland Institute (SII).
- Athletes must participate in any medical clearance and screening procedure as directed by the Athletics Ireland or SII medical team.
- Athletes must adhere to all anti-doping conditions (e.g. whereabouts, athlete filing, agreements) set by SI anti-doping unit, European Athletics, World Athletics, and Athletics Ireland.
- Athletes must comply with all codes of conduct and conduct themselves in a way that does not bring the sport, their team, or the association into disrepute.
- The athlete must commit to participate in any performance reviews as required by the Pathway Performance Manager
- Acceptance to the Performance Pathway Programme is encouraged but optional. If an athlete chooses to decline the selection for any reason (including failure to sign the "AAI Athlete Agreement") they will not be restricted in selection for major competitions, but there will be no form of preparation support to them.

3.2 Age Criteria

Athletes aged 15 or over on the 31st of December in the year (i.e. **for 2026 support born in 2010**) may be considered for support under the Performance Pathway Programme

- Athletes aged at least 15 years of age and not older than 20 years of age on Dec 31st (i.e. **for 2026 support born in 2010/2009/2008/2007/2006**) will only receive individual support at Performance Pathway level.

3.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for the PPP an athlete must meet with the following requirements:

- Must possess Irish passport and satisfactorily demonstrate that they will be eligible to compete in European u18/u20 or World u20 Championships or EYOF for Ireland
- Must be a registered member of Athletics Ireland.
- Must not be under suspension or other sanction by World Athletics or Athletics Ireland.

Athletes currently in the NCAA system are not considered eligible for admission to the programme.

Athletics Ireland Performance Pathway Programme (2026)

The **Athletics Ireland Performance Pathway Programme** is designed to identify, support, and develop talented young athletes who are progressing towards success at **European U18**, **European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF)**, **European U20**, and **World U20** level competitions.

For the **2026 programme**, eligibility extends to athletes **born between 2006 and 2010** who are demonstrating the potential to perform at these international standards.

The programme provides progressive levels of support across three tiers — **Foundation**, **Emerging**, and **Priority** — reflecting each athlete's stage of development within the national performance pathway.

Athletes who meet the relevant criteria should apply to be part of the Performance Pathway Programme (PPP) at **one of** the following levels:

- Performance Pathway Foundation
- Performance Pathway Emerging
- Performance Pathway Priority
- Transitioning athlete support (born 2006 & meet criteria as set forth)

1. Performance Pathway Foundation

The **Foundation** tier supports athletes who are beginning to show strong potential and commitment to long-term performance development.

Support includes:

- ✓ Invitations to Performance Pathway events in Ireland
- ✓ Performance Pathway T-shirt
- ✓ Performance Pathway Diary

The Performance Pathway Foundation Standards are as follows:

2026 Performance Pathway Foundation Standards

	Born 2007	Born 2008	Born 2009	Born 2010		Born 2007	Born 2008	Born 2009	Born 2010
	PP standard	PP standard	PP standard	PP standard		PP standard	PP standard	PP standard	PP standard
BOYS:					GIRLS:				
100m	10.75	10.80	10.90	11.00	100m	12.00	12.10	12.15	12.20
200m	21.60	21.70	21.90	22.00	200m	24.40	24.60	24.80	25.00
400m	48.60	49.10	49.60	50.50	400m	56.20	56.60	57.10	58.00
110mh (*100mh)	14.20	14.40	14.50	13.70*	100mh *	14.20	14.40	14.60	14.80
400mh	53.30	54.00	55.00	56.00	400mh (**300mh)	60.50	61.50	62.50	63.00 43.50**
800m	01:53.00	01:54.00	01:55.00	01:56.50	800m	02:10.00	02:11.00	02:12.00	02:13.00
1500m	03:54.00	03:56.00	04:00.00	04:02.00	1500m	04:29.00	04:32.00	04:34.00	04:36.50
3000m	08:35.00	08:45.00	08:48.00	08:52.00	3000m	09:49.50	09:55.00	10:00.00	10:05.00
5000m	14:50.00	15:00.00			5000m	17:15.00	17:25.00		
s/c *	09:20.00	09:30.00	00:06:15*	00:06:20*	3k s/c (2k)*	10:42.00	10:48.00	07:05*	07:15*
HJ	2.05	2.00	1.90	1.85	HJ	1.75	1.70	1.66	1.63
LJ	7.10	7.00	6.90	6.70	LJ	6.00	5.90	5.70	5.60
TJ	15.00	14.50	13.50	13.00	TJ	12.75	12.50	12.00	11.50
PV	5.00	4.80	4.50	4.10	PV	4.00	3.70	3.50	3.40
SP *	18.00	17.50	16.00*	15.50*	SP *	14.50	14.00	14.20*	13.50*
DT *	55.50	53.00	50.50*	49.50*	DT *	48.00	46.00	39.50*	38.00*
JT *	65.00	63.00	60.00*	58.00*	JT *	48.00	46.00	43.00*	40.00*
HT *	67.00	66.00	65.00*	60.00*	HT *	57.00	55.00	56.00*	52.00*
RW	23:00.0	24:00.0	24:30.0	25:00.0	5k RW	26:00.0	27:00.0	27:40.0	28:00.0
CE *	6700	6400	6000*	5600*	CE *	5000	4800	4600*	4400*

* denotes appropriate heights & weights

2. Performance Pathway Emerging

The **Emerging** tier supports athletes who are further along the pathway and beginning to train and compete at, or close to, international standards.

Support includes:

- ✓ Access to Performance Pathway **training camps abroad**
- ✓ Invitations to Performance Pathway events in Ireland
- ✓ Performance Pathway T-shirt
- ✓ Performance Pathway Diary

The Performance Pathway Emerging Standards are as follows:

Performance Pathway Emerging Standards 2026

BOYS	U20 (2007/2008)	U18 (2009/2010)	GIRLS	U20 (2007/2008)	U18 (2009/2010)
100m	10.63	10.82	100m	11.84	11.98
200m	21.42	21.75	200m	24.18	24.60
400m	48.08	49.39	400m	55.23	56.51
110mH (.914)		13.76	100mH (.762)		14.21
110mH (.991)	14.06		100mH	13.98	
400mH (.838)		54.75	400mH (.762)		60.25
400H	53.08		400H	61.77	
800m	01:51.44	01:54.31	800m	02:08.00	02:10.60
1500m	03:50.17	03:57.09	1500m	04:24.55	04:30.97
3000m	08:27.52	08:38.31	3000m	09:39.22	09:52.65
5000m	14:37.95		5000m	16:59.35	
2000mSC*		06:08.05	2000mSC		07:03.03
3000mSC	09:16.36		3000mSC	10:41.49	
5k RW	22:45.74	24:01.22	5k RW	25:25.96	26:22.96
10k RW	44:29.46		10k RW		
HJ	2.06	1.95	HJ	1.76	1.70
PV	4.99	4.45	PV	3.90	3.63
LJ	7.28	6.97	LJ	6.08	5.83
TJ	14.92	13.85	TJ	12.79	12.06
SP (5kg)		16.86	SP (3kg)		14.54
SP (6kg)	17.75		SP	14.31	
DT (1.5kg)		52.58	DT	47.62	41.42
DT (1.75kg)	54.58		DT		
HT (5kg)		63.27	HT (3kg)		57.10
HT (6kg)	66.24		HT	57.09	
JT (700g)		60.50	JT (500g)		45.05
JT	67.32		JT	47.99	
Decathlon (U18)		6224	Heptathlon (U18)		4806
Decathlon (U20)	6853		Heptathlon	5103	

3. Performance Pathway Priority

The **Priority** tier supports athletes with clear potential and/or proven performance at international level.

Support includes:

- ✓ Access to **training camps abroad**
- ✓ Access to **targeted competition opportunities abroad** (subject to meeting any required qualification standards)
- ✓ Invitations to Performance Pathway events in Ireland
- ✓ Performance support services as agreed & appropriate on submission of Annual Plan
- ✓ Performance Pathway T-shirt
- ✓ Performance Pathway Diary

To qualify as a PP Priority athlete:

The first consideration:

Any new or existing athlete will automatically be considered for selection as a PP Priority athlete if they achieve the criteria in the Championship Performance Matrix below together with performances inside the PP Priority standards (on following page) listed during the Qualification Period.

The second consideration:

Any new and existing athletes that do not achieve the criteria in the Championship Performance Matrix below may be considered for selection as a PP Priority athlete if they attain the **Performance Pathway Priority Standard** (on following page) at least twice during the Qualification Period.

Championship Performance Matrix:

PP Priority	Top 12 World U20 Championships Top 8 European U20 Championships Top 8 European U18 Championships Top 8 World Youth Olympic Games Top 16 World U20 Race Walking Cup Top 8 European U20 Cross Country + no Perf Std Top 8 European U20 Race Walking Cup Top 6 European Youth Olympic Festival	Performance Pathway Priority Standard x 2 (by age)	Realistic Olympic potential for 2028 or 2032
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Performance Pathway Priority Standards 2026 (based on performances in 2025):

BOYS	u20 in 2025	u18 in 2025	GIRLS	u20 in 2025	u18 in 2025
100m	10.45	10.65	100m	11.59	11.76
200m	21.13	21.51	200m	23.75	24.20
400m	47.06	48.29	400m	53.86	55.01
110mH (.914)		13.81	100mH (.762)		13.62
110mH (.991)	13.72		100mH	13.55	
400mH (.838)		53.49	400mH (.762)		60.54
400H	51.91		400H	58.99	
800m	01:48.88	01:52.11	800m	02:06.00	02:08.19
1500m	03:44.34	03:52.18	1500m	04:20.09	04:25.43
3000m	08:10.05	08:24.62	3000m	09:28.94	09:40.30
5000m	14:15.91		5000m	16:43.70	
2000mSC*		05:56.09	2000mSC		06:51.05
3000mSC	09:02.71		3000mSC	10:34.98	
5k RW	21:31.5	23:02.45	5k RW	23:51.83	24:45.93
10k RW	43:58.93		10k RW	49:04.04	
HJ	2.12	2.05	HJ	1.82	1.78
PV	5.19	4.80	PV	4.09	3.86
LJ	7.56	7.24	LJ	6.27	6.05
TJ	15.33	14.70	TJ	13.08	12.61
SP (5kg)		18.22	SP (3kg)		15.58
SP (6kg)	18.00		SP	14.62	
DT (1.5kg)		55.66	DT	49.25	44.85
DT (1.75kg)	56.16				
HT (5kg)		68.54	HT (3kg)		62.20
HT (6kg)	69.48		HT	59.17	
JT (700g)		67.08	JT (500g)		50.10
JT	68.63		JT	49.98	
Decathlon (U18)		6847	Heptathlon (U18)		5212
Decathlon (U20)	7305		Heptathlon	5405	11.76

5. Support for Transitioning U20 Athletes (Born 2006)

For the 2026 programme, **athletes born in 2006** — who were part of the U20 age group in 2025 — will be provided with **individually tailored support** as they transition towards **U23 and senior competition levels**, provided they meet the performance standards set forth by Athletics Ireland*

This transitional support recognises the importance of continuity and guidance for athletes progressing from the junior to senior performance environment, ensuring they remain connected to the national pathway while adapting to the demands of higher-level competition.

***Performance Pathway Priority Standards** for relevant standards for 2006 born (who were U20 in 2025)

SELECTION PANEL

The Selection Panel under this Selection Policy is composed of:

Chair of Selection Panel	Selection Panel Members:
Performance Director	Athletics Ireland Performance Pathway Manager Athletics Ireland National Event Leads

At the discretion of the Performance Director, Selection Panel Members may be added or replaced for selection purposes (as needed or as deemed necessary).

Selection Panel Meeting

The manner in which the Selection Panel will conduct the annual selection meeting(s) is at the sole discretion of the Selection Panel.

By consensus using the Criteria set out within this document the Selection Panel will have sole discretion to:

- Consider and confirm the status and selection(s) of existing and new PPP athletes
- Consider and confirm the transitioning out of existing athletes in the PPP

As each athlete is considered, the Selection Panel will declare any conflict of interest and the High Performance Director will decide if that panel member should contribute to the discussion.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

The purpose of the Appeals Procedure is to enable dispute resolution around PPP support decisions to be dealt with fairly, expeditiously and affordably, within Athletics Ireland without recourse to external legal procedures.

Appeals Panel

The Appeals Panel shall be composed of one (1) Chair of the Appeals Panel and five (5) members each approved by the Board of Athletics Ireland for a renewable term of two (2) years.

Chairperson	Pool Members:
Name: Gerry Dunne	Name: Iognáid G. Ó Muircheartaigh Name: Niall Moyna Name: Brian Dowling Name: Cyril Smyth Name: Derval O'Rourke

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No fewer than three (3) members of the Appeals Panel must declare that they have no conflict of interest in a particular appeal for the appeal to be heard. In exceptional circumstances if there are less than 3 members available for any one appeal, the board or CEO of Athletics Ireland will appoint an additional member(s) to the Appeals Panel.

Grounds for Appeal

The Appeal Procedures shall only apply to PPP selection decisions and not to any grievances or grounds in relation to Athletics Ireland in general or an appeal against the published content of the PPP Selection Policy.

The Appeals Procedure is provided on limited grounds and must not be seen as an opportunity to dispute the opinion of the Selection Panel where they have followed the proper procedure. In reaching their decision the Selection Panel are acting as experts and will exercise judgment and sole discretion.

The **Grounds for Appeal** upon which an PPP selection decision may be appealed are limited to the following:

- There has been an alleged failure by Selection Panel to follow or apply the relevant Selection Procedure and/or criteria (e.g. there has been a procedural defect), or
- The Selection Panel and the decision for support for the PPP has been reached on the basis of an error of fact.

How to Appeal

The Appeals Procedure is commenced when an athlete affected by a selection decision submits an appeal against their non-selection via online Notice of Appeals Form ([Notice of Appeal form is here](#)). The Notice of Appeal Form is submitted to the Chair of the Appeals Panel and the CEO of Athletics Ireland. This must be done within seven (7) days of the support selections being announced or communicated (sent by email) to the athlete, whichever is first. If the athlete fails to submit the Notice within the time limit set out in this Appeals Procedure s/he will automatically lose their right of Appeal under this Procedure, unless in the opinion of the Chairman (acting reasonably) that there was an exceptional circumstance or other good reasons for the submission to be made outside of the time limit. The Performance Director shall inform the Chair of the Appeals Panel of the dates of the relevant Support Decision being announced or communicated and of the Decision itself.

The Notice of Appeal should set out the grounds of the appeal which will include full details of the basis of the appeal including the precise manner in which the athlete alleges that the selection decisions have not been applied or followed (as per section on Grounds for Appeal). The Notice of Appeal should be as full as possible (including any supporting documentation) as it will form the basis of the remainder of this procedure. The appeal should be clear and specific.

Screening of Appeal

Within 48 hours of receiving the Notice and grounds of an appeal, the Chair of the Appeals Panel will determine whether there are appropriate grounds for the appeal to proceed as set out above.

The Chair of the Appeals Panel will determine in the first instance, if the appeal is denied on the basis of insufficient grounds, and the athlete will be notified of this decision by email, giving reasons. In the second instance, if the Chair decides there are sufficient grounds for an appeal an Appeal Hearing will be called.

Appeal Hearing Procedure

If the Chair of the Appeals Panel considers the Notice of Appeal was based on an alleged procedural defect or error of fact, the Appeals Panel will proceed by way of an Appeal Hearing. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will decide if the Appeal Hearing will be done solely by Documentation or an Oral Appeal Hearing (including documentation). The Chair may at his discretion consult with all or any of the members of the Appeals Panel in reaching his Decision.

Where the Chair of the Appeals Panel has determined that the appeal will be held by way of documentary submission, the Appeals Panel will govern the appeal by such procedures as it deems appropriate provided that:

- All parties are given a reasonable opportunity to provide written submissions to the Appeals Panel to review written submissions of the other parties, and to provide written rebuttal and argument.

Where the Chair of the Appeals Panel has determined that the appeal will be held by way of oral hearing, the Appeals Panel will govern the hearing by such procedures as it deems appropriate at which the athlete and a member of the Selection Panel may present written evidence and may make oral submissions, provided that:

- The athlete is able to attend the hearing (in person or by way of video conference) and present the case but will not be replaced by any other person who may act as the athlete's representative (athletes 19 and under may be accompanied by a coach or parent), and
- An athlete is not restricted to seek advice, be it legal or otherwise. For example, they may wish to avail of legal advice in preparing written and oral submissions and this option to avail of such advice should not be restricted.
- Athletics Ireland will not be responsible for any such cost incurred.

As soon as reasonably feasible, and in any event within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the Notice of Appeal, the Chair of the Appeals Panel shall give such directions (to both the athlete and the Selection Panel) as are appropriate for consideration of the Appeal Hearing, namely the date and place at which the Appeals Panel will hear the appeal and the timetable for the exchange of written and oral evidence.

Appeal Hearing

The manner in which the Appeals Panel will meet is the decision of the Chair of the Appeals Panel. The Chair may at his discretion consult with all or any of the members of the Appeals Panel in reaching his Decision.

The Appeal Hearing Panel will be comprised of a minimum three (3) individuals (one being the Chair of the Appeals Panel) and the other two drawn from a pool of five (5) who will have no significant relationship with the affected parties, will have had no involvement with the decision being appealed, and will be free from any other actual or perceived bias or conflict. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will decide who from the Appeals Panel will sit on any individual Hearing.

If the Chair of the Appeals Panel is unable to attend a hearing, or declares a conflict of interest with a particular appeal, the Chair of the Appeals Panel will appoint a designate member of the Appeals Panel to Chair the meeting or portion thereof.

Appeal Decision

The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final and binding and may not be appealed again.

The Appeals Panel may decide as follows:

- That the Selection Panels PPP support decision be set aside as it was based on a procedural flaw or an error of fact and the matter of the athlete's inclusion within the PPP remitted for fresh consideration to the Selection Panel to re-consider the matter; or
- That the Selection Panels PPP support decision be upheld and the athlete's appeal be rejected.

The Appeals Panel may also make recommendations for the future revision and/or smoother execution of the PPP support selection and Appeals Process, which should be considered by Athletics Ireland and the Selection Panel.

Procedure for Amendments

Athletics Ireland reserves the right to amend this Selection Policy at its sole discretion at any time and will make the amended version publicly available. An athlete's continuing membership of the PPP shall be deemed as continued acceptance of this Selection Policy being amended when appropriate.

Notifications

Athletes selected for Performance Pathway Emerging, Priority & Transitioning support levels will be notified via email.

The athlete support list will be published by Athletics Ireland on the High Performance section of AAI website:

<http://www.athleticsireland.ie/high-performance/support>

Any queries about the Performance Pathway Programme should be addressed to the Performance Pathway Manager, Jacqui Freyne jacqui@athleticsireland.ie