

**From: The Minister**

20 May 2026

Eoin Tennyson MLA  
Parliament Buildings  
Ballymiscaw, Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3XX

Dear Eoin

**AQW 45597/22-27 INFORMATION TO BE PLACED IN THE ASSEMBLY LIBRARY**

Due to the volume of detail required to answer AQW 45597/22-27, the information attached at Annex A has been placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely



**Gordon Lyons MLA**  
**Minister for Communities**

## **AQW 45597/22-27 – Annex A**

Sport NI have provided the following information regarding funding and support for high performance athletes:-

### **Assessment of the adequacy of existing funding and support structures for talent identification and high-performance athletes**

Investment in performance sport is a complex area, with identifiable outcomes at athlete level often requiring multiple cycles to materialise. Sport NI, in partnership with UK Sport and Sport Ireland regularly reviews the performance sport landscape and the associated measurement data available to it, to ensure that the public funds being invested are both targeted at the areas where greatest return can be achieved and demonstrate value for money.

Northern Ireland experienced unprecedented success at the 2024 Olympic Games, and Commonwealth Games performances from Team NI in the last 3 Games have been some of the best ever results both for a UK or away Commonwealth Games. These positive signals indicate the impact of recent investment and systematic changes within the Performance system in NI.

Sport NI provides funding to recognised National Governing Bodies (NGBs) annually, with £13.8m committed over the last four years towards Performance development across 27 sports. This enables the creation of systems to identify and develop athletes and coaches with the potential to compete at the highest levels of their sport.

Sport NI supports athletes that are less well supported by national programmes through the Athlete Award programme. In the last 4 years this has provided £1.7m to support 516 athletes. This investment is intended to elevate athletes and enable their transition onto national funding from UK Sport or Sport Ireland. Sport NI has recently reviewed Athlete Awards and included clearer criteria to ensure athletes at appropriate levels are being supported.

Sport NI supports athlete and coach development with sports science and sports medicine provision through the Sport Northern Ireland Sports Institute.

The Sports Institute provides practitioner-led support and closely collaborates with the Sports Institutes across the UK and Ireland.

Sport NI also invests in Commonwealth Games NI, in preparation for Commonwealth Games and the NI athletes competing at this event. This multi-year investment will be reviewed post the Glasgow 2026 Games.

**Table1: Performance Funding 2023-2027**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Governing Body Investment – Performance</b>	£3,551,671	£3,537,056	£3,567,760	£3,121,488	<b>£ 13,777,975</b>
<b>Athlete Awards</b>	£ 470,150	£ 398,100	£ 420,050	£449,600	<b>£ 1,731,900</b>
<b>Commonwealth Games NI</b>	£ 190,000	£ 276,000	£ 331,000	£310,000	<b>£ 1,107,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 4,211,821</b>	<b>£ 4,211,156</b>	<b>£ 4,318,810</b>	<b>£ 3,881,088</b>	<b>£ 16,622,875</b>

As part of the 2026/27 System Partner Investment, Sport NI is reviewing Performance investment, with a view to ensure that an appropriate resource is being allocated and that is fully aligned towards making the most meaningful impact.

**Consideration given to strengthening pathways and financial support to retain and develop elite sporting talent**

Through preliminary analysis and engagement with sports, and as part of the review of Performance investment for the System Partner Investment, an increased focus on Pathway Development is likely in future performance investment.

This is in part because of the critical role played by UK Sport and Sport Ireland in supporting National Performance Programmes, which many NI athletes are part of when competing internationally.

In seeking to maximise the impact of Sport NI's resources, a focus on supporting the development of the next generation of world class performers will be explored.