



Cheshire Cricket Board Player Pathway: Financial Assistance Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

Cheshire Cricket Board (CCB) is committed to ensuring that no young cricketer across the county is prevented from accessing or participating in our development pathways because of their financial circumstances or socio-economic background.

We recognise that participation in the Player Pathway can involve financial commitments for families and that these costs may present a barrier for some players. This policy sets out the circumstances in which financial assistance may be available, while also recognising the need for programme costs to remain financially sustainable.

The policy applies to all programmes and courses delivered as part of the Cheshire Cricket Board Player Pathway. A full list of current Pathway programmes can be found on the **CCB website**.

2. Principles

CCB's approach to financial assistance is underpinned by the following principles:

- **Accessibility:** No young player should be prevented from participating in CCB programmes because of genuine financial hardship.
- **Fairness and Consistency:** Applications will be assessed against clear eligibility criteria, with individual circumstances considered consistently and sensitively.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Families are expected to contribute towards programme costs where they reasonably can. Assistance is intended to reduce financial barriers rather than automatically remove all costs.
- **Transparency:** Eligibility criteria, application procedures and the levels of support available will be clearly communicated to families.
- **Confidentiality:** Applications will be handled sensitively, with access to personal and financial information restricted to those who need it to assess or administer support.

- **Financial Sustainability:** Assistance will be provided within the funding available, balancing the needs of families with the long-term sustainability of CCB's programmes.

3. Existing Provision and Types of Support

CCB provides free taster and observation sessions for players across Cheshire, ensuring that financial circumstances do not prevent young cricketers from accessing initial Player Pathway opportunities.

For players selected to represent Cheshire in Pathway teams, there are no training or match fees, with these costs covered by CCB.

However, we recognise that financial barriers may arise at different stages of a player's development. Subject to eligibility and available funding, financial assistance may therefore include:

- **Programme Fee Reduction:** A reduction in eligible programme fees, based on the family's circumstances and the outcome of the application.
- **Flexible Payment Arrangements:** Interest-free instalments or an agreed payment schedule to spread the cost of remaining fees.
- **Equipment Loan Scheme:** Access to essential playing kit and protective equipment, subject to availability and eligibility.

Travel expenses are not eligible for assistance under this policy.

Financial assistance is not guaranteed. All applications will be assessed individually, taking account of the eligibility criteria, the family's circumstances and the funding available at the time of application.

4. Eligibility and Levels of Support

4.1 Eligibility Criteria

Families may apply for financial assistance where they can demonstrate genuine financial need and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- The household receives Universal Credit or Working Tax Credit, where applicable.
- The player is eligible for Free School Meals (Year 3 upwards) or Pupil Premium at their state school.
- The player is a Looked After Child (LAC) or is otherwise in local authority care.
- The family is experiencing exceptional circumstances that demonstrate financial hardship

Other circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Financial Assistance Panel. Meeting one or more of these criteria does not automatically guarantee assistance. Each application will be assessed on its individual merits.

4.2 Levels of Support

CCB will normally consider a reduction of around 50% in eligible programme fees as a starting point for assessing financial assistance, with the level of support adjusted according to the family's circumstances and available funding.

The Financial Assistance Panel will determine the appropriate level of support in consultation with the family.

Tier 1 – Significant Support

For families experiencing substantial financial hardship, support may include:

- A reduction of up to 75% in eligible programme fees.
- Access to kit and equipment through the equipment loan scheme, where available.
- Flexible, interest-free instalment arrangements for any remaining balance.

Tier 2 – Moderate Support

For families experiencing financial difficulty who can contribute towards programme costs, support may include:

- A reduction of 25–50% in eligible programme fees.
- Potential access to kit and equipment support, subject to availability.
- Flexible, interest-free instalment arrangements where appropriate.

Tier 3 – Payment Support

For families who can meet the overall cost but require assistance with the timing of payments, support may include:

- No reduction in programme fees.
- An agreed, interest-free payment or instalment arrangement.

The tier awarded, level of assistance and duration of any support will be determined by the Financial Assistance Panel, taking account of the information provided, the family's ability to contribute and the financial resources available.

Support arrangements will be communicated clearly to the family before registration or payment wherever practicable.

5. Operational Arrangements: Removing Upfront Financial Barriers

CCB recognises that requiring families to pay full programme fees before receiving a refund can create an additional barrier for those experiencing financial hardship.

Where financial assistance has been approved, CCB will therefore seek to arrange the appropriate reduction or payment support before the relevant fees become payable, wherever practicable.

Depending on the programme and registration arrangements, this may include:

- **Pre-registration Discount Codes:** Approved applicants may receive a unique, single-use discount code before registration opens. The code can be applied during online registration to reduce the upfront payment to the approved amount.
- **Deferred or Instalment Payments:** Where a balance remains outstanding, an agreed, interest-free payment schedule may be offered over a period determined by CCB and the family.
- **Alternative Registration Arrangements:** Where a discount code or online payment arrangement is not possible, CCB will seek to agree an alternative process that avoids unnecessary upfront financial pressure.

The specific arrangements available will depend on the programme's registration system and the level of assistance approved. Families will be informed of the agreed arrangements before completing registration wherever possible.

6. Application and Review Process

6.1 Applying for Assistance

Families wishing to apply for financial assistance should email info@cheshirecricketboard.co.uk. The communication should provide sufficient information for the Financial Assistance Panel to understand the family's circumstances and determine an appropriate level of support.

Following an initial review, applicants may be asked to provide proportionate supporting evidence, which may include:

- Recent documentation confirming eligibility for Universal Credit or another relevant benefit.
- Confirmation of Free School Meals or Pupil Premium eligibility, where appropriate.
- A short supporting statement explaining exceptional circumstances.

- Supporting information from a school, professional or recognised community organisation, where relevant and appropriate.

Only information necessary to assess the application will be requested.

6.2 Assessment and Decision-Making

Applications will be reviewed by a designated **Financial Assistance Panel**, which may include three representatives from pathway programme leadership, finance and welfare or safeguarding.

The Panel will consider each application individually, taking account of:

- The eligibility criteria and supporting information provided.
- The nature and extent of the family's financial difficulty.
- The family's ability to contribute towards programme costs.
- The appropriate type and level of assistance.
- The funding available and the financial sustainability of the programme.

Applications will be considered as promptly and discreetly as possible. CCB will aim to notify families of the outcome before programme fees become due, wherever practicable.

The outcome will confirm the level of assistance awarded, any agreed payment arrangements and the period for which the support applies.

6.3 Changes in Circumstances

Families experiencing a significant change in their financial circumstances during a pathway programme may submit a further application or request a review of their existing arrangements.

Any revised support will be subject to reassessment by the Financial Assistance Panel and the funding available.

6.4 Appeals

Where an application is unsuccessful, the family may appeal the decision to a further CCB Panel. The membership of the Appeal Panel will consist of three representatives independent from the initial Financial Assistance Panel.

Appeals will be considered through a secondary, independent review of the original decision and the information provided. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the family.

7. Proactive Identification and Engagement

CCB recognises that some families who would benefit from financial assistance may not come forward independently. We will therefore take a proactive approach to raising awareness of the support available and identifying potential barriers to participation.

This will include:

- **Registration Process:** Using appropriate questions during course registration to help identify families who may benefit from financial assistance.
- **A Game for All Survey:** Using relevant information from the survey to better understand financial barriers and inform the provision of support.
- **CCB Website Access:** this policy and the accompanying application form will be available for review and accessible via the CCB website.
- **Communication with Parents and Guardians:** Ensuring families are aware of this policy, the eligibility criteria and how to apply.
- **Parent Inductions:** Including information about financial assistance within Pathway parent induction sessions, alongside an overview of programme content and expectations.
- **Initial Support Discussions:** Where an application is approved, offering an initial discussion with the family to confirm the agreed arrangements and explain how support will be administered.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All information provided as part of a financial assistance application will be treated confidentially and stored securely in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and CCB's data protection policies.

Access to financial information will be restricted to authorised individuals who require it to assess, approve or administer assistance.

Pathway coaches and talent scouts will not have access to applicants' financial records or application details. Financial assistance decisions will be managed separately from player identification, assessment and selection processes to protect players from potential bias, stigma or disadvantage.

Information will not be shared with coaches or other programme participants unless there is a legitimate and specific operational need, and any sharing will be limited to the minimum information necessary.

9. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains:

- Fair, accessible and consistently applied.

- Clear and transparent for families.
- Responsive to the financial circumstances of families and the barriers they may face.
- Effective in supporting participation across the Player Pathway.
- Financially sustainable for Cheshire Cricket Board and its programmes.

CCB will monitor applications, decisions and the types of support provided to help assess the policy's effectiveness and identify opportunities for improvement.

Eligibility criteria, levels of assistance and operational arrangements may be amended following an annual review to reflect changes in programme costs, available funding and wider economic circumstances.

Any changes will be communicated clearly to families and applied consistently.

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