

# Ice hockey to receive £2.7 million in latest round of Sport Winter Survival Package funding

The support will be formed of £2.3 million in loans and grants provided to four English clubs within the Elite Ice Hockey League: the Sheffield Steelers, Nottingham Panthers, Manchester Storm and Coventry Blaze.

£400,000 in grants will also be provided to the English Ice Hockey Association and English clubs in the National Ice Hockey League.

For the past 20 years ice hockey has been the biggest attended indoor sport in the UK, and is the third most regularly attended sport in terms of spectators. However as a result of the public health measures necessary to contain the coronavirus pandemic and the financial uncertainty these have caused, the Elite Ice Hockey League opted not to run the 2020/21 season.

The funding will cover essential costs necessary for the sport's survival and to get back playing, including the launch of the [2021 Elite Series](#).

Formed of the four aforementioned clubs and taking place from 3 April – 3 May in Nottingham, the mini-series – which will be streamed online – will allow fans to support their team and help the Great Britain men's national ice hockey team in their preparations for the IIHF World Championship later this year.

The funding has already allowed some National Ice Hockey League clubs to also resume action, supporting local ice rinks in the process.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

This unprecedented support for ice hockey will act as a lifeline for the sport and ice rinks across the country. The reality is that without stepping in, it would have meant 18 months of no live action.

Visibility is important to inspire the next generation, so I'm delighted that we've been able to work with the relevant bodies to develop a new proposal that supports the highest level of the sport through the Elite Series, and has also given clubs at regional level the confidence to return to the ice.

Tony Smith, Chairman of the Elite Ice Hockey League, said:

The UK's top professional ice hockey league – the Elite Ice Hockey League – is thrilled to be able to get back on the ice with the

backing from amongst others: the teams, the government and (when the action starts) the massive army of fans that follow us.

In an ever changing landscape caused by the pandemic it is testament to the collective power that everyone pulling together can bring that we are going to stage a four team top flight event which will give fans something to cheer. At the same time the best players in the country will get a chance to compete for a place on the 'plane to the World Championships. Without this series the GB players could have landed badly underprepared for games against the world's elite.

A tremendous amount of work and commitment is going on to make this event happen and we thank everyone for their support.

This is the fourth tranche of funding to be announced from the Government's [£300 million Sport Winter Survival Package](#) that is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter.

It follows the Government announcing [more than £40 million provided to support grassroots rugby union clubs, up to £5.5 million to support the launch of the men's Championship competition and £1.1 million for professional women's rugby](#), including the Premier 15s and covid-19 related costs for the Red Roses' Women's Six Nations campaign.

In February the Government announced [a major boost for women's sport](#), with an initial £2.25 million for women's football, £4.2 million to netball, a combined £4 million for badminton and basketball, and that women's sport would be prioritised for 250,000 free Covid-19 testing kits being made available to elite sports, worth £1.5 million. It was also announced that an initial 19 National League Step 1-2 clubs would be offered loans worth up to £5.4 million.

[The first announcement in January confirmed that Steps 3-6 of the National League system will receive up to £10 million to protect the immediate future of approximately 850 clubs over the winter period.](#)

Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board](#), supported by Sport England.

The Sport Winter Survival Package is the most generous of any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world. It comes on top of the sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Earlier this month [the Chancellor announced a further £300 million of support](#) that is expected to benefit major summer spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and horse racing, as the path out of lockdown continues and sports stadia initially open at reduced capacities. Further details, including how

cash will be distributed, how organisations can apply and timeframes, will be announced by Sport England in the coming weeks.

Further confirmations of funding from the Sports Winter Survival Package will be made in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

A detailed factsheet on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been published by Sport England. [Read it here](#).

Grassroots sports and the physical activity sector are also benefiting from £220 million in emergency funding delivered by Sport England, and the recipients of a £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund to support publicly owned leisure facilities in England during the pandemic are due to be announced in the coming weeks.

At the Budget on 3 March, the Chancellor also announced that the Government will provide:

- An initial £25 million to support the growth of grassroots football, which will be enough to build around 700 new pitches across the UK;
- £2.8 million to continue undertaking feasibility work to assess the viability of a UK and Ireland bid for the 2030 FIFA Men's World Cup before Fifa formally opens the process in 2022;
- £1.2 million to mitigate the financial effects of COVID-19 on the UEFA Women's Euro football competition and deliver a successful tournament in England in 2022, supporting the sport to grow and thrive. This money will go towards extending contracts of the delivery teams, host city resource costs and the opening ceremony.