



HBLB Non-Fixture Related Grants

Guidance Notes for 2026 Grant Applications

(for projects commencing 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026)

Introduction

The Horserace Betting Levy Board (HBLB), operating in accordance with the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 (as amended), is required to assess and collect monetary contributions from bookmakers and betting exchange providers and to apply them for the purposes conducive to any one or more of:

- The improvement of breeds of horses
- The advancement or encouragement of veterinary science or veterinary education
- The improvement of horseracing.

Proposals for grants for the period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026 are now invited. This process **excludes** racing fixture-related items such as prize money, raceday services grants or items falling within HBLB's veterinary science or veterinary education budget, which have their own processes. This document provides guidance on making a grant application and how those applications are assessed by HBLB, with final decisions taken by the HBLB Board.

The HBLB strives to achieve good practice in grant management including reference, where appropriate, to the Government Functional Standards for Grants.

Eligibility Criteria

HBLB requires information on the applicant's governance structure, financial and operational history and geographical location. HBLB grants are only available for projects which can demonstrate an impact on Great British racing.

Grants are typically for a period of 12 months, although shorter periods may be considered.

HBLB typically funds organisations. If you are an individual considering applying for funding, please contact the Grant Team for an initial discussion about your project at grants.admin@hblb.org.uk.

Salary Guidelines

HBLB typically awards grants for project activity and not for direct payment of salaries. Please see the following guidance on salary funding:

- HBLB expects salary costs to be met by the applicant from its own or from non-HBLB resources and, where this is not possible, an explanation is sought as to why. Where salary costs are being sought for new roles, a benchmarking report for the suggested salary is supplied by the applicant.
- Where HBLB agrees to meet salary costs, HBLB will provide a fixed sum towards administration from which agreed salary costs are itemised.
- In the event of support of a pilot project where staff costs are a necessary resource cost, the salary is agreed at the outset, with no annual review, and any uplift is met by the applicant, until an agreed review date e.g. 3 years.
- Where any salary rise is agreed by HBLB from year to year, it is capped at the average applicable to HBLB staff for that year

Timeline for 2026 Applications

The 2026 grant application, evaluation and decision process will run as follows, although the decision date remains subject to amendment and is at the discretion of the HBLB Board:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Grant application window | 14 July 2025 – 22 August 2025 |
| Assessment of grant applications | 26 August 2025 – 3 October 2025 |
| HBLB Board decisions | Mid-October |
| Notification to grant applicants by | Early-November |

All applications **must** be received by 5pm on **22 August 2025**.

HBLB Funding Priorities

HBLB has published its next three-year business plan, with a focus on a set of Racing Outcomes. The Board supports the advancement of these through its grant funding. How the grant application contributes, in a tangible way, towards these Outcomes will form part of the assessment process. They are grouped into four themes:

- Generate interest in Racing:
 - Horserace betting turnover from UK regulated bookmakers
 - Crowd numbers at racecourses & TV viewing numbers
 - Number of owners
 - Number of horses in training
- Sustain valued employment and investment in relevant skills in Racing:
 - Number of British-bred foals
 - Number of vacancies filled in Racing's key roles
 - Racing's diversity & inclusion
 - People wellbeing and engagement

- Drive high quality care and support for the horse in Racing:
 - Horse welfare perception rating
 - Impact of investment in completed research projects
- Continually enhance the reputation of Racing:
 - Racing's integrity perception rating
 - Racing's contribution to environmental impacts
 - Racing's favourability perception rating

Format and Content of Grant Applications

Grant applications must be made online using the HBLB Funding Gateway (<https://funding.hblb.org.uk>). The funding gateway is HBLB's platform dedicated to Non-Fixture Related Grant applications.

Once registered with the HBLB Funding Gateway you will be able to apply for a Non-Fixture Related Grant. The Grant application process consists of a three-part task list; Before you apply; Prepare your application; Apply; which must all be completed. **Each distinct project requires an individual application.**

In the Apply section of the task list, the **Review Application** page allows applicants to view all of the questions in the application process. In addition, when text has been added and saved to a specific question, applicants can edit answers through this page. It is recommended the **Review Application** page is used as the main navigation tool when editing and reviewing applications.

Please refer to the following notes when completing the application. The sub-headings below correspond to the different sections in the application task list. Where the process is self-explanatory, no notes are given.

Applicants should have regard to the fact that a grant application will be evaluated on the evidence provided.

Project Details: Project Summary

Applicants must provide a concise summary of the project. Please include specific detail on key activities that will take place during the funding period and what successful delivery of the project aims to achieve.

Project Details: Project Objectives

Applications must clearly state what the project plans to achieve by the end of the projects term. Bullet points are recommended.

Project Details: Evidenced Need

Applications must describe a strong and reasoned case that demonstrates specific need for the project.

Project Details: Project Impact

Please outline the long-term effects you expect the project to achieve including any complementary changes, resulting from the project meeting its objectives.

Project Details: Racing Outcomes

Applications must indicate which of the 13 HBLB Racing Outcomes will be significantly impacted upon the successful delivery of the project. There is no minimum number of Racing Outcomes to which a project must contribute in order to be eligible to apply, and it is not necessarily the case that the more Racing Outcomes impacted, the more likely it is to receive funding. It is quality, not quantity of the impact that will be assessed during the evaluation process.

Project Details: List the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of this project.

For each grant application a minimum of five KPIs are required. These will be used to measure grant performance and will form part of the quarterly reporting process.

KPIs should contain:

- The expected outputs and outcomes of the activity, with milestone dates for expected achievement of each.
An outcome is what the project/activity wants to achieve. Outputs are the activities or products/items that contribute to achieving the outcome – the steps on the way.
- How progress will be measured (including baseline data).

All KPIs and objectives/goals should be SMART. **SMART** means:

- Specific (clear, well defined)
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Timebound (i.e. within a clearly defined timeline).

KPIs provided in the application may be subject to further discussion with HBLB should funding be granted. In providing KPIs, the applicant must consider:

- the specific points during the activities that lend themselves to assessment;
- the key milestones that will clearly define ongoing success;
- the likely data and results that will be available at those points of assessment;
- and

- the points at which the applicant may be required to make payments for the activities.

The number of KPIs in total should be adequate to measure progress and impact but not excessive.

There are a number of useful guides to setting KPIs and SMART objectives/targets on the internet, for example:

[Key performance indicators \(KPIs\): What they are and how to use them \(microsoft.com\)](https://microsoft.com)

[What is a KPI? Definition, Best Practices, and Examples | Klipfolio](#)

[How to Set SMART Objectives – SMART Goals and Targets \(revolutionlearning.co.uk\)](https://revolutionlearning.co.uk)

[What are SMART objectives and how do I apply them? \(professionalacademy.com\)](https://professionalacademy.com)

There is also guidance on how to define and measure impact, for example:

[3 examples of brilliant impact reporting | The Fundraiser \(charitychoice.co.uk\)](https://charitychoice.co.uk)

[How To Measure Impact \(mulagofoundation.org\)](https://mulagofoundation.org)

Project Details: List the risks and mitigations of this project

A risk assessment must be carried out and a list of the key strategic and operational risks to the successful implementation of the project must be provided along with proposed mitigation measures.

Project Details: Supporting Documentation

Up to five documents supporting the project can be uploaded as part of the application process.

Project Management: Project Manager's Details

Applications must provide details of who (individuals and/or organisations) will be responsible for the management and delivery of the specified activities, including any partner organisations.

Previous / Other Funding: Will you apply to other funders for this project?

Applications must provide details of any funding received or applied for from other funding sources for the same or similar activities.

Should a grant application be successful, the applicant will be asked to make a declaration that the same project work is **NOT**, in part or fully, being double funded by HBLB and any other entity.

Financial Budget

Applicants must upload a financial budget spreadsheet for each application providing a detailed expenditure breakdown. A budget for the whole project must be provided, broken down by month/quarter and by expenditure type. The financial budget spreadsheet must also contain a proposed schedule for the drawdown of HBLB grant funding.

HBLB wishes to link payment of funding to the achievement of project milestones. Using the milestones and KPIs set out in the application please provide a proposed payment

schedule with dates and amounts. A small amount of the funding (usually not exceeding 10% of the total requested) can be requested on signature of the grant agreement to provide funds to initiate the project. The final grant payment (usually not exceeding 10% of the total requested) will not be payable until HBLB are in receipt of the final grant report and any other required documentation.

The payment schedule will be agreed on an individual project by project basis.

Note: HBLB is not registered for VAT. HBLB expects that all grants issued will be outside the scope of VAT as the amounts granted are given freely and HBLB neither derives any benefit from the grant nor receives any services as part of the arrangement. If you are unsure if VAT applies it is recommended you consult your tax adviser. Please provide all financials net of VAT, or gross if applicable.

Referee Details

Applications must include details of two referees that **may** be approached by HBLB to evaluate the applicants' ability to deliver the outcomes and outputs set out in the application.

Submission of Applications

Once the task list is complete, applicants will be able to agree and submit applications online in the HBLB Funding Gateway.

Any questions about the application process should be sent to the following email address: grants.admin@hblb.org.uk.

Assessment of Grant Applications

HBLB is committed to ensuring that the assessment process is carried out in an evidence-based, non-discriminatory and timely manner. Grant applications will be assessed by the HBLB Executive and, where appropriate, relevant bodies and interested parties may be consulted with copies of an application provided to them as necessary. A set of recommendations will be made to the HBLB Board for decision.

HBLB may examine recent published and audited accounts of any applicant organisation whilst assessing eligibility.

Awarding of Grant Funding

If the application is approved for funding, a Grant Agreement Letter will be issued to the successful applicant. Funding is subject to the acceptance of the terms of the Grant Agreement Letter, including the grant terms and conditions and that:

- The project continues to make satisfactory progress
- The applicant provides quarterly update reports (including financial updates) in a timely manner

Rejected Applications

In the event that the HBLB Board rejects the application, HBLB undertakes to provide a reasonable explanation of the decision to the applicant.

Within two weeks of this, if the applicant considers that HBLB has not followed an appropriate process in reaching its decision, the applicant may notify this in writing to HBLB and the Board will decide whether the application, unchanged from the original application, needs to be reassessed.

If, as a separate consideration to this, the applicant has new information that was not available at the time of assessment of the application by HBLB, this should also be provided to HBLB within two weeks and the Executive will consider on a case by case basis whether to bring forward a revised application to the Board.

Performance Reporting

All approved grants are required to provide quarterly update reports. A template will be provided by HBLB for the grant manager to complete and return. Reports will focus on progress made against the stated KPIs with specific reference to targets and milestone dates; identification of any new issues or risks as the work progresses; and a financial reconciliation of expenditure for the reporting period and expenditure against budget/forecast for the grant term. Quarterly reports are required to be submitted to HBLB by the 15th day of the month following the quarterly period i.e. by 15 April for the period 1 January to 31 March.

A final report is required on completion of the funded activities. A template will be provided by HBLB for the grant manager to complete and return. The final report will focus on the extent to which objectives were met, the impact achieved by the activities and a financial reconciliation. This report can be produced internally by the organisation applying for the grant or by external parties. Any costs for an external evaluation must be met by the applying organisation or included within the project budget.

More details will be provided to grantees within the Grant Agreement Letter and Terms and Conditions.