

Client: Freedom Leisure
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Page: 5
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Training grant boost for young athletes

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TALENTED young athletes from Woking are to be backed by a £750,000 grant scheme.

The funding pot is designed to help developing talent and 75% of awards are made to athletes aged under 21.

The money has become available due to a partnership between **Freedom Leisure** – which operates Woking Leisure Centre – and the GLL Sport Foundation – an independent athlete support programme.

A total of 16 athletes in Woking are being supported by the project with sports including archery, rowing, ice hockey, synchronised swimming and fencing.

Oliver Thompson, a 15-year-old badminton player, said: "My aim is to train hard and be the best I possibly can. I want to carry on playing for my country, travel, play in the Olympics and crack the domination of the Chinese."

"This award will pay for travel and sports physiotherapy treatments aiding my ongoing development."

Jamie Lewis, 12, is an aspiring rhythmic gymnast from Woking.

He added: "The funding from GLL and Freedom Leisure will help me train hard for the British Championship in Glasgow at the end of the year."

"My goal is to compete and win a medal at the Junior Europeans for Great Britain in 2016. The support will help with my equipment, travel and physiotherapy costs, which are essential for me to achieve my targets."

Supported athletes will benefit from financial training grants of up to £1,250 as well as training memberships enabling wider facility access across GLL and partner-operated venues.

Further support opportunities targeted towards sports science, performance sport and coaching qualifications will be launched later this year.

Peter Bunday, chairman of the GLL Sport

Foundation, paid tribute to the many people and organisations helping the foundation.

He said: "There has never been a more exciting time to be involved in helping young sporting talent. I would like to thank SportsAid, who work in partnership with us to provide direct links to sport governing body talent pathways and our support network including numerous local authority, university and sporting partners."

"In tough economic times we must also express our huge debt of gratitude to all our fantastic sponsors and supporters who fund the programme and finance hundreds of sporting dreams."

"We are continuing to expand the Foundation and during 2013 we will be working with several exciting new partners including the London Legacy Development Corporation, Rugby Borough Council, Swindon Borough Council and the London Borough of Islington."



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