

CLUBMARK SHOWS THE WAY AHEAD

England Hockey ClubMark is all about helping hockey clubs across the country reach a minimum operating standard to ensure players, coaches, volunteers and everyone involved is getting the best experience possible. ClubMark is a tool for clubs to check that they have the basics in place and we have updated our accreditation system to be more streamlined and make ClubMark a tool and not a task.

We know that clubs will be doing all they can and going above and beyond this minimum requirement and we encourage you to evidence this through the system. ClubMark is your portal to show a true reflection of your club, the system also allows you to use it as a document storage system. It may also be that your Relationship Manager pushes you to showcase yourself further or think about the next step and bigger picture. This tool is available to all clubs and details can be found on the England Hockey website, alternatively it can be accessed through the Club Portal, if you are interested in starting ClubMark please contact your Relationship Manager. We caught up with Phil Langridge from Sale Hockey Club who have recently completed their ClubMark, here he explains the process from club point of view and the many benefits.

How did you find the new and improved ClubMark?

The ClubMark process was very streamlined and clear with an easy to use web-based portal. The manual did enable delegation of tasks and provided a focus for planning the process out. The links to helpful resources was a great feature from the portal and again gave us a clue about level of detail required. The comments functionality of the portal did facilitate communication with our relationship manager, but did not replace the need for telephone/face-to-face/email correspondence with them. It did have a much stronger focus on child protection/safeguarding issues than we were expecting: fortunately our club have several key personnel who have lots of experience in this field.

Why were you keen to achieve ClubMark?

One of the main drivers behind the immediate submission, apart from the fact the accreditation gives any club

confirmation of good practice to parents and potential new players is that we're in the process of a major club facility development plan.

In addition to hockey, Sale Sports Club also incorporates cricket, tennis, rugby and junior football. In a nutshell we are just about to sign off a land sale contract which will generate funds to demolish the current pavilion and club house, build a new one and build AGP so that hockey comes back to the club rather than playing at other schools - we've not played at the club since the move from grass to astro!

In terms of broader aims for completing ClubMark, we wanted to be able to have an externally recognisable status which defines us as a well-run hockey club, both to appeal to the members of our community and to validate to current members that their hockey experience is in good hands.

Have you seen a benefit for completing ClubMark?

More generally, the benefits of ClubMark are that it identifies areas of strength which can be celebrated together, and offers opportunities to improve on areas in which a club is not so strong. Completing the process has brought the men's and ladies' sections even closer together, improved lines of communication, and solidified our sense of togetherness and purpose moving forward.

Top tip for clubs for completing ClubMark?

- 1 Prepare for lots of communication: e.g. in a 3 month period the club secretary alone had accumulated over 200 emails around ClubMark. We had 4 committee meetings, several coaches meetings, 2 planning meetings, notwithstanding several meetings of smaller groups to ensure tasks were completed/delegated appropriately.
- 2 Don't be scared to talk to your Relationship Manager - the comments part of the website is just one way of interacting, and sometimes it's just good to have a chat the old fashioned way!
- 3 Everyone in the club has the potential to contribute to the process: do not rely on 2 or 3 people to do all the documentation/information uploads (there is a lot, e.g. we generated in excess of 111 MB of documents to support our application).
- 4 It doesn't have to be perfect first time: you will get feedback on where improvements need to be made if necessary.

Did you have to overcome any issues in completing ClubMark?

We had to clarify several issues about appropriate safeguarding training/DBS checks, but these were easily resolved after open communication with our Relationship Manager via telephone/email.

