

AGM Resolution FAQ's

The AGM Resolution Roadshows held during June/July 2019 resulted in feedback, via post-it notes, and questions both on the evening and subsequently. The questions have been grouped into themes to help organisations understand some of the nuance and background to the proposals that couldn't be fully covered during the evening.

If you didn't attend a roadshow it is recommended that, before reading these FAQ's, you review the background to the AGM Resolution by visiting www.Englandhockey.co.uk/agmresolution. There are two particularly useful documents available here – the booklet that summarises the proposal ([here](#)) and a short version of the presentation given at the roadshows [here](#).

Alongside this England Hockey will release further details later in 2019 including:

- a summary of the survey that closes on **27 October** (you can respond [here](#))
- an update proposal following on from the initial proposal (you can find the initial proposal [here](#))
- a more detailed implementation plan
- more details of league structures and implications for clubs

The AGM will be held on **17 March 2020** and organisations with the right to vote will receive information on how to do so by early February 2020.

CONTEXT

Why are you recommending these changes?

- At the 2017 AGM clubs and associations voted strongly in favour of England Hockey, as governing body of the sport, exploring the current structure and administration of the sport. Since then there has been considerable research and consultation in coming up with the proposal that we believe is the best opportunity to deliver structure that is fit for the future.
- Some of the benefits will include; a simplified system with fewer bodies to deal with, more equal opportunities for teams and clubs to succeed, a much clearer and consistent junior competition structure, common rules and regulations across genders leading to more consistency and slicker administration processes and clubs become voting members of all bodies that they are part of.
- Some of the benefits for associations; more expectations in terms of good governance, more economies of scale, fewer connections to be made between organisations and clearer areas of engagement, clearer approach to engagement with both England Hockey and clubs.

What should I do next?

- We recommend reading the resources and watching the video and, if you still have questions, you might find the answers below.
- You can get in touch with us at agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk if your query hasn't been answered.
- Complete the survey [here](#)
- Vote at the AGM!

PLAYING

Will I have to travel further for away games?

- In designing the structure, we used an external logistics company called Llamasoft (www.llamasoft.com) who kindly offered to undertake some pro-bono work for England Hockey. Llamasoft helped us map all the affiliated clubs and, using weekend google maps travel times, calculate the optimal travel routes for matches. Using this approach, the proposed structure has created significant improvements in travel times/distances in many areas of the country depending on the scale of change proposed. We will share more details of this in the Autumn of 2019.

Will the level of competition that I play in drop?

- Overall the same teams will be playing in the proposed structure so the standard of hockey won't change. The proposed structure aims to balance travel times with standard and, depending on your specific circumstances, your league could therefore be marginally stronger or very marginally weaker. Promotions and relegations would resolve this and, with two seasons until any changes are made, your teams could be in different divisions by then anyway.

Will I get the same number of games?

- Currently not all leagues play the same number of games with most leagues having either 10 or 12 teams. The proposed structure is based on leagues of 12 but more consultation with clubs and leagues will be undertaken before a final decision is made.

Can we still get promoted/relegated?

- One of the key principles of the proposal is more equal opportunities to progress. Hence a structure that is more consistent and equal in terms of the size of the area and the number of sub-divisions of areas. In the proposal the winners of leagues would be promoted and the teams finishing bottom demoted.

Will there be a transition period for teams to settle into the league they are placed in?

- The proposal is that the new structure would start in season 2021-22. By the end of the summer of 2020 clubs would have to confirm what structure they wish their team to play in and the stakes for finishing positions in the 2020-21 league season would be made clear before the season starts. As almost all leagues around the country are now 'open' this makes ranking the relative levels of teams easier than it would have been previously.

How did you decide on the Areas you are proposing?

- This is covered in the AGM Resolution Proposal and presentation including the work undertaken by Llamasoft.

Can clubs have the data that sits behind where clubs might be placed in leagues?

- The intention is to release this in the autumn of 2019 in more detail. In the meantime, we are happy to share individual information via your local England Hockey Relationship Manager or agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk.

Can we choose which area to be in?

- Clubs that are on the borders of proposed Areas (and sub-divisions of the Areas where leagues/competitions divide) will be given the opportunity to choose their Area. Clubs in the middle of the proposed Areas are unlikely to need to make a choice.
- At this stage clubs are likely to be invited to choose during the summer of 2020.

Do the sub-areas have to match the league pyramid (8/16/32) proposal

- No, the sub-Areas are largely about lower level representative hockey and therefore more linked to logical areas. In the majority of cases these are likely to be counties but in some Areas there will be more discussion about the right approach for that Area. Examples of this are often large urban conurbations where county boundaries are less relevant.

Will this affect England Hockey Championship competitions (cup/mixed/masters etc)?

- EH Championships will continue, hopefully with the momentum we have seen build year on year. The opportunity to get to National Finals and play on a big stage is being well supported by entries.
- How local rounds of the EH Championships work will be further considered with the new Areas and Sub-Areas as the new structure embeds.

Can we still play friendlies?

- Yes, the proposal will not affect how clubs organise their non-competitive hockey

Will the new Areas be able to run their own competitions as well?

- Yes. Over time we expect that the Areas will come together to agree a more common competition framework with the right amount of local flexibility aligned to a common national approach.

Will there still be a winter break?

- Dates will continue to be scheduled to allow for weather and other unforeseen situations affecting ability for fixtures to be fulfilled. In the National Leagues, Indoor and European competitions will be accommodated.

How will the system allow for maximum participation?

- The feedback from clubs surveyed through the research to develop these proposals strongly referenced a number of challenges for clubs in increasing participation. These included the following:
 - A lack of structure in junior competition limiting opportunities to play for some young players. This also included difficulties in finding the right competition level for teams and entering multiple teams.
 - Inconsistency in league rules as a barrier to participation. Many clubs indicated that participation is discouraged by some overly strict league rules at lower levels that prevent people playing even when they are available.

RULES

Will any of the league rules change?

- One of the key recommendations of the review is to create a consistent framework of league rules. In due course we will share some principles related to these before working up a full set of rules based on good practice we have found across the country. The aim is for the rules to be appropriate and proportionate to the level of hockey being played i.e. strictest at the top levels and appropriately relaxed at the lowest levels.

How will consistency of rules be enforced?

- The governance of the 8 Areas will include commitment to align to nationally agreed (and not nationally dictated) approaches. The common framework of league rules will be in place

in the first season of operation of the new structure. With only 8 leagues (jointly run for men and women's teams) in the future, creating consistency will be considerably easier than with the current 50+ organisations.

Whilst the idea of consolidating rules is liked, which rules will be taken?

- To begin with we will start by agreeing the principles and taking the best practice we have found across the existing leagues. From this we will work with the new Areas to finalise the detailed rules and how they are adapted according to the level of structure.

Why don't we introduce uniformity within rules before there are big changes?

- There have been a number of attempts to unify rules in the existing leagues in the past but never with agreement achieved. Ultimately, we feel the governance changes we are proposing will provide the consistent accountability to clubs and England Hockey that will allow changes like this to be delivered.

What will my Area look like?

- A more detailed map of the proposed Areas, including the clubs on the borders who will be given the opportunity to select their Area to play in, will be provided later in the autumn of 2019. Alongside this a 'model' league structure will be shared showing the potential shape/depth of each Area and sub-divisions within it.

Until all clubs have selected their Area, being able to say exactly which teams are in which league division will not be possible. There are also two seasons of promotions and relegations which will change things before exact league make-ups can be known.

What about other competitions for example local indoor leagues, Masters Leagues or the Surrey Grass League – What happens?

- The proposal clearly references Adult Leagues and Competitions and Junior Leagues and Competitions as Area level responsibilities. This means that the leadership for competitions will sit at this level. It is fully expected that smaller locally required competitions will remain as long as they align in an appropriate way to broader structures.

FINANCIAL

Will my subs/match fees go up?

- A big part of this is down to your club. We anticipate team affiliation fees to England Hockey will remain steady (usually 1.5% increase pa) and intend to seek board approval to confirm this for a number of years.
- Affiliation fees to Area and Sub-Area associations will be voted on by clubs (as England Hockey fees are). The financial work done behind this proposal has not assumed any increase in fees.

Where does our affiliation fees go?

- Fees are currently paid by clubs in a number of directions:
 - Affiliation fees

- To England Hockey
 - To Regions (often via County fees)
 - To Counties
- Entry fees
 - To leagues (at all levels the club plays at)
 - To competitions (EH and local ones e.g. indoor)
- Expenses and costs
 - To umpiring associations
- In future there should be an opportunity to reduce the number of organisations and payments that are made as well as improve the systems/administration on behalf of clubs. The details of this are not confirmed and will be explored, initially with Areas, once the new structure is in place. A key principle of the proposal is to try and make the role of the club administrator easier.

What will happen to all the money currently held by the various organisations?

- This will depend on whether the organisation is continuing, being absorbed by another or being dissolved. If dissolved, then the articles of association will determine how and where the current funds will be distributed. England Hockey will issue advice on appropriate approaches to dissolving organisations.
- If absorbed, it will be up to the members to approve movement of funds. It is intended that funds will be used and retained locally in the appropriate new Area or Sub-Area. For absolutely clarity there is no element of this proposal that recommends funds are passed to England Hockey.

Will some Areas end up charging different amounts for participating than others?

- Currently costs vary significantly across the country
- It's likely there will always be some national variation because of local factors in terms of operating some elements of competition or travel implications varying in areas. England Hockey will work with Areas to achieve greater transparency and consistency and potentially a more streamlined approach.

Will there be any financial support?

- Given the collective reserves in many of our governance organisations England Hockey feels that the new Areas should be well set to deliver what is required in the new approach. England Hockey will aim to provide leadership and direction where necessary and support the delivery of work that is shared across the country where common approaches are agreed. England Hockey will also commit the necessary staff time and associated resource to support the new structure on an ongoing basis.

What standard financial controls and policies are envisaged for Areas and Sub-Areas?

- We will help develop models of good governance for Areas and sub- Areas which would extend to principles of good financial controls.

With less committees will England Hockey income reduce?

- No. We don't foresee these changes to impact on England Hockey income either positively or negatively. This isn't being done for financial reasons as regional and county associations pay no money to England Hockey.

Can you guarantee this change will drive efficiency and drive out costs?

- All the feedback and consultation has indicated that reducing the number of committees will be welcomed by most administrators within the sport. Duplication and inefficiency have been a constant theme of the research so far and this next phase of consultation will check whether members believe we have addressed that.
- In addition, the reductions in mileage covered to play matches has been widely welcomed from a cost and environmental perspective.

None of these proposals are costed. What are the costs?

- There will be a cost in terms of volunteer time but the cash cost of the changes will be minimal and England Hockey will minimise these by providing templates and guidance so that each organisation does not have to create them. We have been very open about the scale of change and the AGM vote will indicate whether the membership wish to devote volunteer time to achieving this once in a generation change.

If funding is reduced, will that impact the proposed change programme?

- The international programme is paid for by ring fenced funding from UK Sport and has never been available to support and develop the grassroots of the sport. Even if this is reduced after Tokyo it will have no impact on these proposals.
- Our Sport England funding is largely reliant on the number of people playing hockey and we believe these proposals will make it easier for people to play our sport at the lower levels. Growing the number of people playing hockey will be welcomed by Sport England and relates to participation targets. Sport England recognise the role that efficient governance has in sustaining and increasing participation and improving players and clubs experience.
- The Board has also committed England Hockey to delivering these proposals and is aware of the resources that will need to be allocated to make them happen.

Can there be one fee and insurance, one body to pay?

- This is an idea that has been put forward by clubs several times in this process and there certainly appears to be benefits. It would mean that clubs lose the ability to make their own independent insurance arrangements but previous reviews of this scenario have suggested that the sport could save a significant amount of money overall. It is therefore something to explore further once the initial governance changes are undertaken.

Is England Hockey committed to ringfencing the funding required?

- The England Hockey Board has made a public commitment to provide the resources necessary to support clubs and associations through this process.

Will there be a transparent pay structure for roles within the area organisations?

- Yes. Transparency is one of the key principles underpinning these proposals.

ADMINISTRATION

Who will run the leagues?

- The Areas will run the leagues. We would expect this would be delegated to an appropriate sub-committee or league management structure. This would include ensuring consistency across Men's and Women's hockey (and mixed if appropriate).

In moving from 5 Regions to 8 Areas will you need more volunteers?

- Whilst, in simple terms, this looks like an increase in the number of bodies the proposed streamlining and consolidation of current structures will lead to a significant reduction in the number of separate bodies that currently exist. Linked to this by arranging the functions

clearly at just one level of the structure there should be economies of scale in the approaches to delivering activities. Examples of this would be the need for fewer separate organisations resulting in fewer AGMs, fewer sets of accounts to manage, fewer accountable officer roles (Chair/Secretary/Treasurer roles) and more alignment of work areas. This will make it easier for clubs to make their views known and hold bodies to account.

- By having fewer bodies the logistics of agreeing to common approaches nationally, supported by England Hockey, will also be more feasible than currently. Many of these can lead to more efficiency for volunteers including common constitutions, improved communication structures, sharing of information via technology systems. Agreeing approaches here is extremely difficult across 100+ organisations.
- As a result of the proposal there will be at least 50 fewer bodies that will exist nationally and clubs would deal with just 3 – all of which they would be voting members of – their Sub-Area (most of the time this would be a county), their Area, and England Hockey.

How will the Area “organisers” / committees be elected – will they be all new, or just tweaked versions of current groups?

- The new Area committees will be elected by clubs as in the majority of Areas these are new structures serving their clubs. Initially shadow committees are likely to be needed to be set up with key role holders then elected by their club membership. It is hoped that a refreshed and modern approach to governance, the use of technology and a renewed clarity of purpose of organisations will attract new volunteers whilst also retaining the volunteers that are happy to come along with the changes.

Will separate Men’s and Women’s Area League committees be allowed but using the same league template? One league committee would be difficult to manage due to the number of people who would have to be involved.

- We already have leagues that operate a common approach between the Men’s and Women’s leagues (the East has joint leadership across genders and the North has recently aligned rules so there are good precedents for this). Ultimately there needs to be one overarching body which ensures consistency across the Area but the operational delivery may vary in approach.

What is proposed for the Area management structure? Will there be a management committee which appoints Committees for each function with delegated powers? Will the functions be allowed to run their own bank accounts? Who would be on the management committee?

- These needs to be discussed with the new Areas but it would be logical to link it to the functional model with consistency of structure at the top level across all Areas. Lower down the structure may require more flexibility.

Who will be our England Hockey/local/admin contact?

- We will make sure that we communicate who your first point of contact is. In the meantime, please continue to speak to your England Hockey Relationship Manager or email agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk.

Can feedback be given directly to local Relationship Managers, as they understand local geography and so aids interpretation?

- We would strongly recommend that you fill in the survey [here](#) before 27 October as it will help shape the final proposal nationally.
- After the survey closes, Relationship Managers will be happy to receive feedback to share with the Working Group.

Will there be a standard constitution for the Areas based on standard functions undertaken by the Areas and will organisational Articles of Association need to be amended to comply with the standard constitution?

- Yes, we'll work with the 8 new Areas to agree a template constitution that meets the appropriate standards of governance. We are working closely with a number of other sports that are also adapting their Code of Good Governance for local administrative structures (Football and Cricket in particular)

Will there be standard GDPR Data Protection Policy and privacy notice for Areas and Sub- Areas.

- Yes, we will provide a template

What support will be provided by England Hockey to the volunteers when the new Areas are set up?

- England Hockey will do a large amount of work on the detail hopefully with input from committed volunteers. We have a team of Relationship Managers and Development Administrators who will provide support locally, along with specialist roles based at Head Office who will assist with the generation of the required resources.

Will I have to send match team sheets in?

- It depends on the level that you play at. The proposal includes a move towards a single registration for players aimed at reducing the amount of duplication of administrative tasks that clubs face. At the appropriate levels of league hockey this will require team sheets to be submitted. In this area, over time, there are significant administrative benefits that can be realised by a leaner, more aligned governance structure that can better use technology to the benefit of clubs, players and administrators.

Can we have consistency of discipline systems and standards?

- We are planning to introduce changes to the discipline system in line with changes to the structure that will move discipline from county to area level. This will allow greater consistency as we can work with the 8 areas rather than 50+ discipline officials in place at present.

In order to provide enough people to administer discipline, will County Disciplinary Administrators need to transfer to the relevant Area potentially resulting in people giving up a role in Discipline?

- Potentially but we believe fewer will be needed. The current picture is very mixed at county level and with around 250 red cards nationally per year and 50+ Discipline Administrators we believe there are economies of scale and a chance to create greater consistency. At Area level we would envisage a small discipline structure of a few people working together to consistently manage the very periodic and variable workload associated with discipline issues. We hope this will retain those that want to continue their support for discipline matters.

Can volunteers make the changes? (Are they suitable to make them? Is this going to be paid posts?)

- England Hockey will work with and support volunteers to make the changes. We believe that local autonomy within an agreed framework is still critical as the sport will continue to be run locally, led by volunteers.

- We do believe that existing precedents for paid roles can also be more widely adopted if there is appetite from Areas (and clubs who would have the right vote on any proposed changes); England Hockey will help with this process to ensure consistency.

Have we considered the use of technology in administration, reporting etc?

- Yes, all the advice from IT experts suggests that one "top to bottom" big IT system for the sport is not the best option so we are working with the companies that most frequently provide our members with club admin systems. England Hockey will facilitate the transfer of data between leagues, associations and clubs who use approved systems so that the flow of data across the sport can be made much more efficient.
- As the new areas establish, a more aligned approach to technology can be developed but improved alignment in governance and more alignment of rules and approach will significantly improve the chances of successful delivery of IT systems so this will take some time to develop.

How is it envisaged the communications between the Areas and England Hockey will be structured and controlled? If a standardised framework is envisaged for such communications who will be responsible for, and how will the "standardised" framework be drawn up.

- Yes, we would look to adopt a standardised model so that we can achieve consistency of communications. Further consultation will be needed with the Areas. on the best approach.

Will we get appointed umpires?

- If you get them now you are likely to get them in the future. Currently more than 85% of adult league matches do not receive appointed umpires. The higher leagues will continue to have appointed neutral umpires. Our ambition is to improve the number and quality of officials throughout the club competition structure; you can help with this by encouraging players to support with umpiring both in clubs and joining HUA's where they have the appetite to progress.

Where does Coach Development fit into this new system?

- Coach Development will continue to be England Hockey led and accessed by all the relevant bodies.

YOUTH HOCKEY

Does this affect Player Pathway areas/regions?

- The Player Pathway was set up in 2005 (as the Single System) and is overseen by a joint committee of the current Regions with England Hockey. It was reviewed in 2013 and will continue to be reviewed periodically. The current Player Pathway structure would be aligned to the new structure with Sub-Areas having responsibility for Development Centres and Academy Centres and the Area having responsibility for the Performance Centres.

Are schools included in this consultation and proposal?

- The future governance structure for school's hockey is outside the initial scope of the AGM resolution, as the resolution was raised and put to England Hockey by its member clubs. However it is recognised that school hockey is critical to the health and the wider development of the sport and, having recently tiered the competition structure to increase accessibility, England Hockey does recognise the need to nurture and develop the schools competitions structure in a way that aligns with the new governance structure for the sport

as a whole. The alignment of the structure for organising school hockey will therefore be considered and developed as part of the overall implementation plan.

PROCESS/IMPLEMENTATION

When will the changes take place?

- With changes on this scale, it is necessary to allow enough time to manage the transition. As such, we anticipate the new structure will be in place and operational for the beginning of the 2021/22 season with a planned series of improvements delivered over the following 2-3 seasons.

What will the review process be? I.e. listening to and responding to club/team feedback

- Full details are in the AGM update document booklet. England Hockey will review feedback once the current phase of consultation closes on 27 October 2019. A finalised proposal and wider information will then be put forward for England Hockey AGM on 17 March 2020.
- In the meantime, please continue to speak to your England Hockey Relationship Manager or email agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk

Will the implementation be “big bang” or gradual?

- The proposals identify the 2021/22 season as the date of implementation but England Hockey will review the feedback from the current consultation. There will need to be a significant shift between seasons given the nature of the changes. Some more detailed elements may not need to be in place on 1st September 2021. The implementation plan will set out a more detailed and considered approach.

What happens to Umpiring Associations?

- The proposal is for 8 Umpiring Associations aligned to the areas with a national body appointing to the top tiers of competition. If the resolution is passed local bodies that exist would be expected to become part of the 8 Area bodies. How these bodies then operate to support local umpiring will be up to them and the approach may vary in different areas according to the breadth of geography, resources available and local issues.

At voting, how does the weighting change between clubs?

- The voting arrangements for the 2020 AGM are set out in the England Hockey [Articles](#) (Clauses 36 and 37). It depends on the number of teams that are affiliated with the number of votes ranging from 1-5.

How are answers to questions returned to those that asked them?

- These FAQ's cover the questions that were asked at the roadshows via the post-it notes and questions from the floor. As per the introduction some have been merged to help provide a digestible summary.
- We will share the headlines from the survey and revise the proposals in light of the feedback we receive.
- If your question hasn't been answered please email agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk

How quickly will answers to questions be given?

- We will endeavour to respond to questions as soon as possible but this will depend on the nature of the question, and the volume of questions we receive.
- We will also update this FAQ document with the most common queries.

