

# The Future of Player Pathway: Development Centre and Academy Centre Delivery



## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a proposal about future County (Sub-Area) hockey from September 2021.

## Definitions

For the purposes of this document the terms DC (Development Centre) and AC (Academy Centre) are used for continuity of understanding.

## Context

There are currently two major projects underway led by England Hockey that will have an impact on the current delivery by county associations, these being the 'A Structure Fit for the Future' proposal (the 'AGM Resolution') and the 'Talent Development: A New Way Forward' proposal.

County hockey will remain an important part of the overall opportunities available for young people to play hockey and improve their skill level. However, its position within the talent system will evolve.

### ***Implications of A Structure Fit for the Future (AGM resolution)***

The proposed changes set out the in AGM Resolution are here:

[www.englishhockey.co.uk/agmresolution](http://www.englishhockey.co.uk/agmresolution).

The current regional and county structures will be realigned into Area and Sub-Area structures with more consistent constitutions and governance. In the vast majority of cases the 'Sub Area' will continue to be county organisations that exist with the primary focus being junior hockey. For the many counties that do not run adult leagues this means the amount of change in focus is relatively small.

### ***Talent Development – A new way forward***

More details about the future direction for talent development in England can be found here:

<http://www.englishhockey.co.uk/page.asp?section=2652&sectionTitle=Talent+Strategy+2021>

Talent develops at different rates, in different ways in different places through different experiences.

There is no one size fits all approach, so the talent system needs to provide many routes and opportunities for players to shine. Talent will develop if there are lots of opportunities to build good skills and an understanding of hockey through enjoyable experiences.

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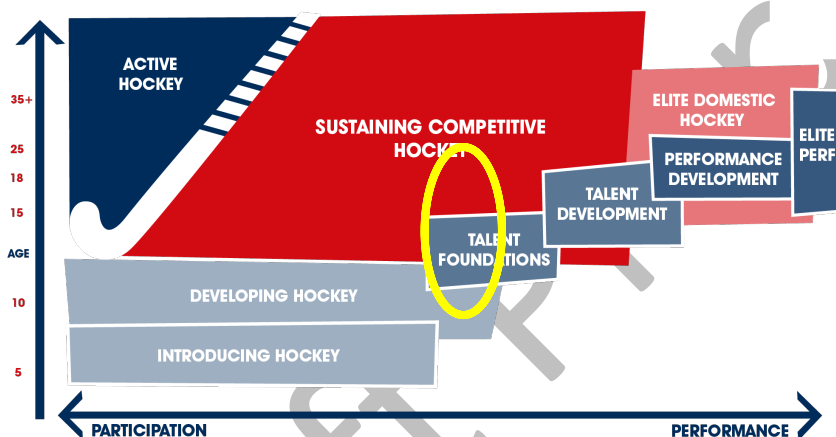


From 2021 the current Player Pathway will evolve to embrace this philosophy, and multiple environments will be engaged to provide early talent development opportunities.

## Position of County (Sub-Area) activity within the Great Britain and England Player Development Model

The Player Development model identifies nine participant segments and shows how participants develop within and through the sport. It is age and stage related, not age and stage dependent, acknowledging participants develop at different rates and have different needs.

The yellow oval illustrates where AC/DC is positioned in the Player Development Model



**Developing Hockey:** at this stage the focus is to provide fun and inspiring environments that develop fundamental hockey skills. **U13-U15 Development Centres fall into this stage.**

**Talent Foundations:** this refers to the stage when young people are involved in 'competitive' sport on a regular and progressive basis during their teenage years. These young people may be involved in several sporting activities and will not yet have made a commitment to any one sport. The focus at this stage is to provide multiple environments and high-quality experiences and opportunities. **U13-U15 Academy Centres cater for players at this stage.**

**Talent Development:** players at this stage will identify as hockey players and be ready for a more intense and focused approach to their hockey development. At the top end of this stage players will have their first sight of international hockey at U16 or U18 level and be making lifestyle choices to

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support their hockey aspirations. **In most case players at this stage of development will not be involved in Academy Centre or Development Centre activity.**

**Sustaining Competitive Hockey:** aimed at maintaining fitness/skill development, health promotion, self-satisfaction, social interaction and relaxation, particularly during the later teenage years and into adulthood. **U16-U17 Development Centre and Academy Centre typically sits at this stage.**

## County (Sub-Area) hockey Proposal

This proposal is for discussion. The positive and negatives of the proposal should be considered alongside the unintended consequences of delivering in this way.

### Overview

Overall, there remains a strong appetite for Development Centre/ Academy Centre activity amongst counties and no objection to it continuing from England Hockey.

For Development Centres and Academy Centres there is a much stronger demand at the younger ages of provision (U13-U15) than in the older age groups (U16-U17).

In future the primary purpose of the County (Sub-Area) hockey programme will be to provide a development and competitive environment for U13, U14 and U15 hockey players across the country. For players that do not have access to enough school or club hockey this will be an important aspect of a rounded provision for the sport. For the thousands of young players that will not progress to the top of the talent system it will provide an opportunity for them to aspire to play representative hockey at a lower level with the aim to developing a lifelong attachment to the sport.

County (Sub-Area) hockey for U16-U17 age groups is of secondary importance and continuing this activity, will be at the discretion of local organisers. Many players will already have significant club commitments by this age as well as broader academic commitments. Players in higher tiers of talent activity are unlikely to be asked to prioritise County (Sub-Area) hockey over club or talent commitments. Therefore, U16 and U17 activity will be targeted towards the 'Sustaining Competitive Hockey' segment of the Player Development model rather than those progressing in the talent system.

### Calendar

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Sub Area (County) hockey will take place on up to 10 dates specified in the England Hockey centralised calendar, between September and April. The split between training and competition dates is to be confirmed but in the region of seven training dates and three competition dates. This would include assessment dates.

## **Eligibility**

Programmes will be delivered for girls and boys in individual age bands based on either ages at 1<sup>st</sup> January or 1<sup>st</sup> September which will be decided through the consultation phase taking account of the relative merits of aligning with school age categories or club and national team age categories.

## **Equality**

Organisers are encouraged to deliver plans that encourage players who attend County (Sub-Area) hockey delivery to increasingly reflect the diversity and demographic of the local area.

## **Training**

England Hockey will provide guidance for minimum standards of delivery.

Coach development support and resources can be accessed via England Hockey coaching department.

## **Competition**

County (Sub-Area) hockey competition for each gender/age group will take place on the designated competition dates and will determine the Area winners. Rules and regulations to be determined by England Hockey.

Where Areas have fewer County (Sub-Area) teams, or entries, then joint Area competitions would be allowed if travel can be managed effectively to encourage journey times/costs to be as little as possible.

National competitions are not encouraged for County (Sub-Area) hockey as they are likely to encourage an environment that is outcome and results focussed rather than on player development and creating positive experiences.

## **Selection for County (Sub-Area) hockey**

Sub Areas to determine entry points and selection processes and criteria for County (Sub Area) programme. This may be in the form of the current Development Centres if they wish.

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## **Talent Identification**

County (Sub Area) hockey will not be the single point of selection for players to progress into the next level of the talent system. However, they will be able to engage with the national Scouting process, details of which are still to be determined.

## **Administration**

The Player Pathway System will be available to administer, communicate and manage finance for County (Sub Area) programme. Individual player development can also be supported via this system.

## **Governance**

The proposals in A Structure Fit for the Future include an updated governance approach nationally.

Sub-Areas will remain separate bodies. The focus of counties will be largely on junior development and junior club and school competition working with the new Area bodies.

Nationally the Sub-Areas will feed into a Sub-Area Working Group that will ensure the views and needs of these organisations are fed into England Hockey.

## **Finance**

Individual Sub Areas will determine player fees for the activity delivered.

## **Umpiring**

The England Hockey junior umpire development programme will be aligned with County (Sub Area) hockey competition.

## **Branding**

The current England Hockey Player Pathway will be replaced by a new structure as part of the Talent Development – A New Way Forward Strategy. This means that the Player Pathway branding and naming convention will no longer be appropriate and new branding will be developed. A discussion is welcome on future branding / naming conventions.

We welcome feedback on this proposal so please email any comments to [talent@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:talent@englandhockey.co.uk) by 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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