

**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

A NEW WAY FORWARD

FAQs: JUNE 2021



These FAQs build on the March Update and draft Talent Academy and Talent Centre Frameworks, providing clarification on a number of topics and answering questions we've been asked by many of you.

TALENT STRATEGY - GENERAL

1. Why are England Hockey making changes to the talent development structure?

Talent development is a non-linear and long-term process. Players have traditionally progressed along a linear pathway structure via county, regional, national teams. This involves brief and intermittent opportunities for players to be identified and develop but is constrained by time and is primarily a filtering system, especially at the early stages.

The focus of the new talent system is on talent development and creating more places which provide high quality environments for players to thrive, develop and enjoy playing hockey with multiple ways to progress. Clubs, schools and County Hockey all have a part to play in this as part of a more flexible system with different environments to meet the needs of different players.

2. What consideration has been given to the impact of the strategy on participation and smaller clubs?

England Hockey is not looking to instigate the movement of large numbers of players between clubs or stipulate the combination of club, school and County Hockey for most junior players. Local hockey should be encouraged for most players below the age of 14 and those at the 'Developing Hockey' stage of development.

The Talent Strategy purposely applies an 'elite' lens to hockey. It aspires to increase the strength and depth of talented players across England and support sustained international success. However, it is much wider than that; it is about transforming the opportunities and experiences for young hockey players and will sit alongside wider participation programmes.

The changes can support participation and, because the system is more flexible, it doesn't limit the development of gifted players at smaller clubs if that environment is the right one for them.

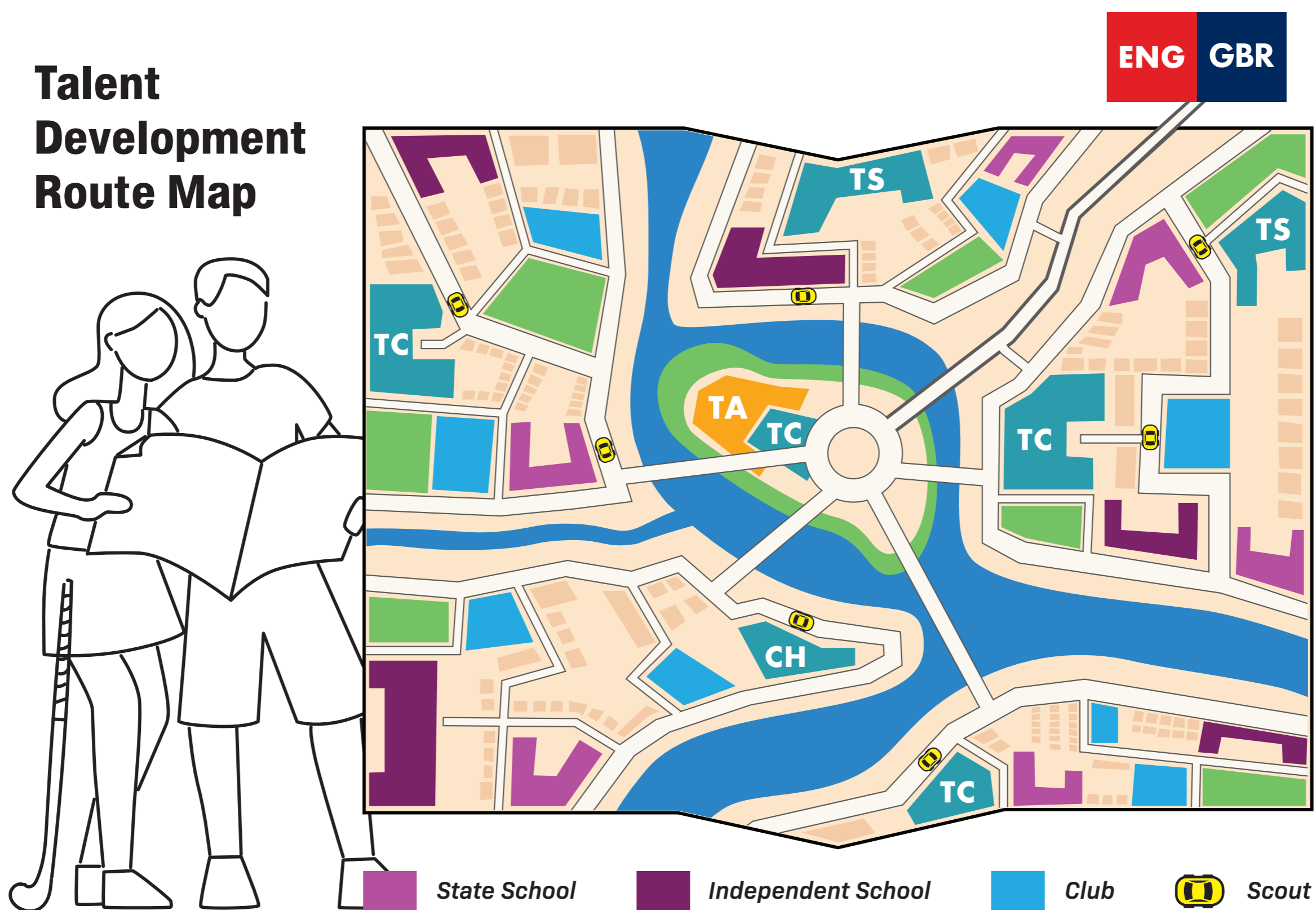
It is also worth noting that growth in junior participation is unlikely to continue without elite role models, profile and success at the highest level. Increased junior participation over the last 10 years can be directly linked to GB success in the London and Rio Olympic Games; future sustained success requires a talent system fit for purpose for today and beyond.

3. The talent system structure shows three different types of entity at Talent Foundations level; County (Sub-Area) Hockey, Talent Schools and Talent Centres. What are the relationships between these and how do these link to Talent Academies?

Many clubs and schools offer excellent training and competitive opportunities for these age groups. To encompass all these development opportunities within the talent system, a player will be able to choose which ones they attend, with each providing equal opportunity to progress. This is why County Hockey, Talent Schools and Talent Centres in clubs are all shown at Talent Foundations level.

We've created an illustration of a map showing the territory around each Talent Academy and the many different routes to progress to national programmes.

We would like Talent Academies to become centres of excellence in their locality, to attract talented players and high-quality coaches and be a source of expertise and support to their catchment areas. Each catchment area will consist of accredited and non-accredited clubs and schools and County Hockey programmes.



4. How will England Hockey quality assure and audit entities to ensure standards are maintained?

The frameworks set out some of the governance requirements for Talent Centres and Talent Academies. There will be a partnership agreement between the Talent Academy host/ Talent Centre club and England Hockey which will expand further on respective roles and responsibilities.

5. The Talent Centre and Talent Academy Frameworks refer to having coaching provision in place in line with England Hockey guidance on appropriate coaching workforce. What is this guidance?

England Hockey strongly recommends that coaches who are responsible for leading sessions are qualified at UKCC Level 2, England Hockey Session Coach, England Hockey Coach or above.

Lead coaches who are not yet qualified will need to evidence their suitability to lead sessions. They should be working towards an England Hockey Sessional or Coach course and have attended relevant learning for the audience they are coaching (i.e., Children, Club players, etc).

For people who are supporting (assistant coach / parent helper / young leader) England Hockey recommends that they have attended relevant learning for the audience they are coaching.

All coaches who are directly responsible for U18s (typically lead coaches) are required to complete face to face safeguarding education.

All safeguarding training is valid for 3 years and then must be renewed if the coach is still responsible for U18s. All assistant coaches/ helpers are required to complete England Hockey's basic online safeguarding training, found on the Hockey Hub.

Coaches in 'regulated activity' who are directly responsible for U18s will be required to complete a DBS check.

Please refer to the Planning Safe Hockey guide on the England Hockey website, [here](#).



**TALENT
CENTRE**

TALENT CENTRES & TALENT CENTRE ACCREDITATION

1. What is a Talent Centre?

A Talent Centre club is a club which provides high quality provision for players at early talent development level (Talent Foundations). This provision will be embedded within the club's junior programme.

Talent Centre accreditation recognises the quality of a club's talent development environment and provision, not individual players. However, we expect a Talent Centre club to have the capacity to support a minimum of 100 players (50 per gender) who are at early talent development level, and be able to compete in England Hockey tier 1 U14 and U16 competitions in both genders.

For clarity, we acknowledge that the language in the March 2021 update may have been a little unclear and we will amend this in future publications.

2. Does a club need to meet all of the criteria in the Talent Centre Framework to achieve accredited status?

The majority of the criteria will need to be in place to achieve accredited status as achieving the criteria demonstrates that the club is operating at Talent Centre level. We will publish an updated version of the Talent Centre Framework by the end of June which will indicate which criteria need to be in place to achieve accredited status initially, and which can be achieved over a longer period.

3. The March update mentioned a £600 registration fee and then an ongoing membership fee once a club achieves accreditation. What is the £600 fee for and how much will the membership fee be?

A club will be required to pay a £600 registration fee to formally begin the Talent Accreditation process. This will be payable once England Hockey confirm that it has capacity to support the club to attain accredited status in a specific accreditation window. This £600 will contribute to the cost of support from the England Hockey Talent and Coaching teams and include talent development resources and access for club members to the four compulsory Talent Centre training modules, a coaching analysis, an evaluation and post evaluation report.

This is additional support to that available as part of the England Hockey affiliation which includes support to achieve ClubMark. More information about the cost of affiliation and the benefits package is available on the England Hockey website, [here](#).

The £600 registration fee is non-refundable, even if a club doesn't meet the criteria to be awarded Talent Centre status by the end of the accreditation window. However, it will be able to re-apply within 12 months without paying another registration fee. There will be an on-going subscription of circa £50 per month (circa £600 per annum) to retain Talent Centre Accreditation to cover the cost of ongoing support and quality assurance.

4. Can clubs combine to form a Talent Centre?

No, the purpose of Talent Centre accreditation is to support and recognise the provision available at individual clubs for players at early talent development level (Talent Foundations). Talent Centre accreditation relates to the club, its environment and its coaching, it is not about providing a bespoke programme for identified players.

5. Can a County (sub-area) become a Talent Centre?

No, counties (sub-areas) are part of the England Hockey governance structure and clubs affiliate to counties. County (sub-area) representative hockey is another opportunity for players alongside Talent Centre and Talent Schools with specific dates for County activity identified in the England Hockey Centralised Calendar. Further details can be found [here](#).

The focus for counties is participation by supporting local club competition, school's competition provision and hockey development activities as well as representative activity. Within this remit we would love to see counties supporting clubs to develop their provision at Talent Foundations level, rather than doing it themselves.

6. Is Talent Centre accreditation a pre-requisite to host a Talent Academy?

Many of the Talent Centre accreditation criteria including England Hockey ClubMark are also part of the Minimum Viable Criteria for Talent Academies. Therefore, the expectation is that in most circumstances clubs applying to become a Talent Academy, especially those who have a full junior pathway, will have already become accredited as a Talent Centre.

However, we recognise there are some entities, particularly universities, which will have the desire, capacity and capability to host a Talent Academy but it isn't appropriate or possible to have a full junior pathway. In these cases, we will expect hosts to be able to demonstrate strong links to clubs and schools in their local area.

Importantly, Talent Centre status should not be seen as a stepping stone to hosting a Talent Academy. They serve different purposes, one being a quality mark to recognise the provision at Talent Foundations level and one being a licence to deliver a programme of activity to an identified group of players at Talent Development level.

7. As a small club, not yet sure if we should pursue Talent Centre accreditation, what will happen to us if we decide not too? We are also concerned that the strategy may create 'super-clubs' and lead to the migration of players to Talent Centre clubs and Talent Academies hosted by clubs.

Talent Centre accreditation is designed to recognise and support clubs with the aspiration and capability to provide high quality environments for players at Talent Foundations level. This will not be right for all clubs.

We cannot underestimate the value that we place on clubs that provide safe, enjoyable and inspirational environments for our young hockey players. The work that they do is the bedrock for initiating a lifelong love of the game and providing strong development opportunities. Whether small or large, we need these environments to continue doing a great job. We encourage clubs like this to achieve ClubMark status as this is a formal recognition that the club is well run and provides a safe, enjoyable environment for young people.

There is no desire or intent to create ‘super-clubs’. We want to support and work with more clubs who aspire to excel in junior talent development. Players move clubs for a variety of reasons and there may come a point that a smaller club may not be able to provide the best environment for an individual. However, for most young players a small local club is absolutely the right place for them to play hockey. We will be publishing some ‘right athlete right environment’ (RARE) guidelines soon which will emphasise this.

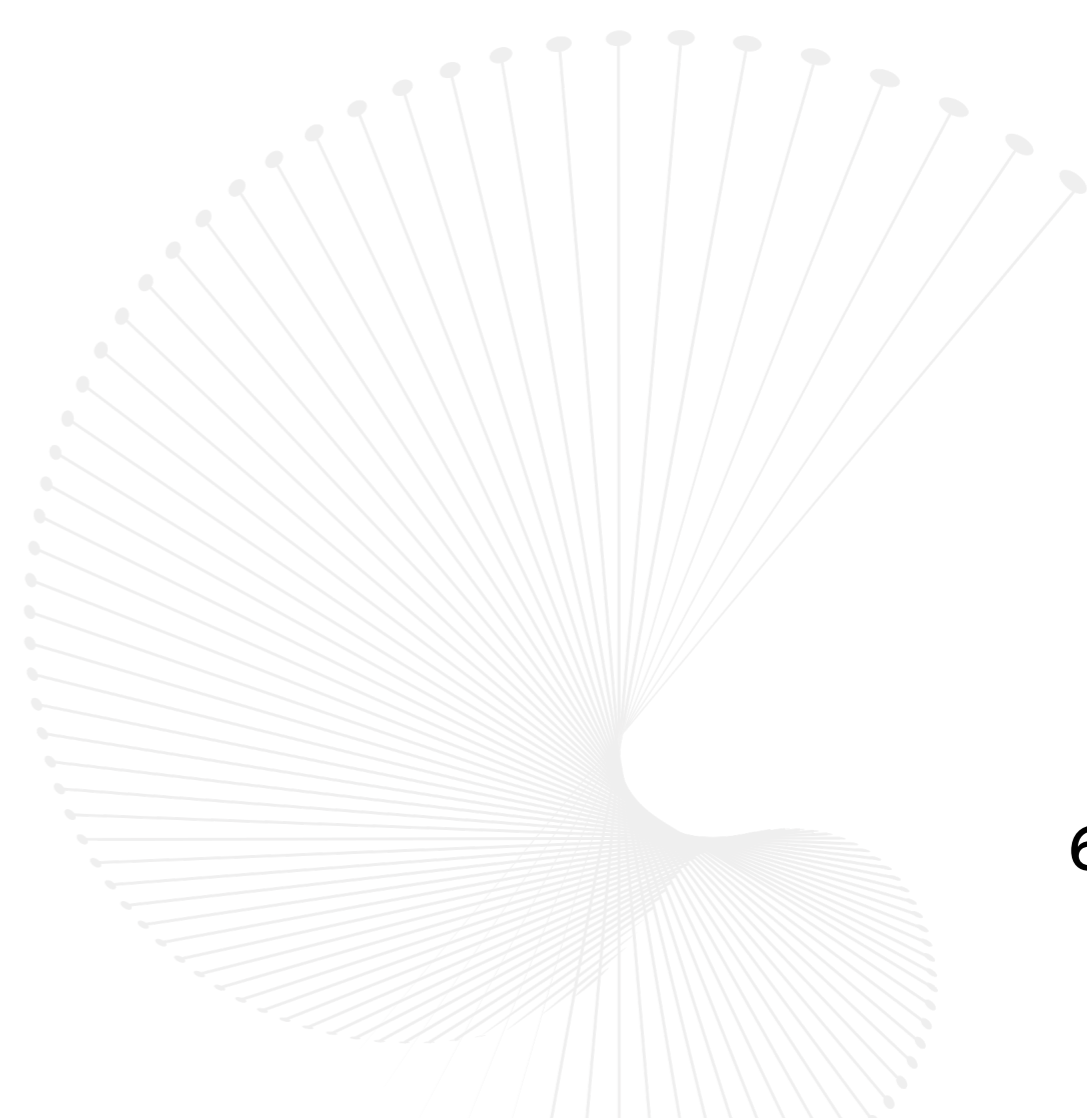
Accreditation and licensing will come with high expectations about behaviours connected to player movement based on the ‘right athlete right environment’ (RARE) guidelines. This will be supported by resources to help players, parents, coaches and clubs make the best decision for each young person.

8. Does my child need to move to a Talent Centre?

Thousands of young people who take part in hockey progress at different rates and in different ways in different places. Therefore, there are many factors to consider in deciding the best environment for each individual. Matching the environment to their physical, mental and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop and enjoy their time playing hockey.

England Hockey will recognise club, school and County Hockey environments within the Talent System which provide high quality talent development environments through accreditation and licensing. Every child should have reasonable access to one or more of these early development talent opportunities.

However, England Hockey is not looking to instigate the movement of large numbers of players between clubs or stipulate the combination of club, school and county hockey for most junior players. Local hockey should be encouraged for most players below the age of 14 and those at the ‘Developing Hockey’ stage of development.





TALENT ACADEMIES

TALENT ACADEMY

1. What is a Talent Academy?

Talent Academies are intended for approximately 500 of the highest potential players, per gender, aged 15-18 years to develop. There will be multiple opportunities most weeks for high-quality coaching and training through a combination of dedicated sessions and integration with other activity delivered by the host. Each Talent Academy will have a squad of players selected through a robust process based on the England Hockey player profile.

2. Can entities combine to host a Talent Academy?

Possibly yes. We are very open to hear from clubs in a locality who feel that they can do this in partnership. It would require careful governance structures, but absolutely we want to encourage an entrepreneurial and creative approach to getting the best possible Talent Academy provision in place for young players.

3. Can a school become a Talent Academy?

No, a school alone does offer the integration with adult hockey and cannot provide the appropriate stretch for the highest potential players. However, we will encourage potential Talent Academy hosts and schools to work closely together. We are aware already of some schools discussing and planning with clubs how sharing of resources and expertise could work well to put the Talent Academy in place.

4. How many Talent Academies will there be?

We haven't stated a maximum, however we envisage around about 24 to strike a balance between accessibility and ensuring a critical mass of high-quality players in each. The design of Talent Academies is based on offering the best possible talent development environment - ensuring best with best in training, and best v best in competition, and stretching the highest potential young players.

We estimate that our current talent pool means that around 500 players per gender are ready for the intensity and commitment of a Talent Academy. Over time if we develop the depth and breadth of the talent pool then it may be appropriate to have more Talent Academies. We may not reach 24 in the first year; if this is the case, we will ensure there is suitable alternative provision in places without a Talent Academy in reasonable travelling distance.

5. Will each Talent Academy have a catchment area?

Yes, there will be defined areas to create clarity about which Talent Academy a player should be nominated to. This will be defined by England Hockey once the Talent Academy locations are known; they will not necessarily be mapped to the eight England Hockey governance areas.

There will be flexibility to accommodate individual player circumstances as with the current Performance Centre programme.

6. How will players be selected into a Talent Academy?

The process in year 1 will be different to future years and is summarised in the March update. We will publish a more detailed paper about the scouting process from year 2 onward shortly. In summary, Talent Academy head coaches will lead a process of collating player profiles across the preceding season, through an open system, so anyone could be observed and profiled. The Talent Academy will run events 'festivals' to see nominated players from clubs and schools and will also invite nominations via County Hockey. The Talent Academy coaching team may decide to visit certain activity / specific players as they see fit in their local setting.

Talent Academies will be required to demonstrate they have a robust process in place and there will be oversight from England Hockey.

7. You have said that we need a wider, deeper, more diverse talent pool, but Talent Academies will have less players than Performance Centres and probably cost more. Can you explain how it meets that objective?

It is key to make a distinction between Talent Academies, sitting towards the top of the Talent System at the Talent Development level, and early talent development (Talent Foundations). Talent Academies will provide a development environment for the highest potential 15-18yr olds.

Talent Academies are intended for fewer players than currently attend Performance Centres. This doesn't mean there will be fewer opportunities for players; the Talent Academy commitment is significant and some players currently attending Performance Centres aren't ready for this step up. Their needs will be well catered for in more local environments, particularly Talent Centres and Talent Schools.

We expect over time, through outreach programmes and more inclusive environments throughout hockey, that Talent Academies will draw players from a more diverse group.

There are many strands to creating a more diverse talent pool, but it starts with culture and ensuring every environment is inclusive and welcoming to people from many different backgrounds and aware of individual needs. The Talent Strategy includes a number of specific tactics to stimulate the development of a more diverse talent pool, but the greatest impact will be by each club, school and hockey association considering what it can do to make a difference.

8. Can you tell me more about the financing of a Talent Academy and also where I can find the financial templates referred to in the March update?

We've developed a set of principles to help ensure that financial decisions related to the Talent Academies create a financially sustainable model which considers both the added value and the financial impact to its multiple stakeholders (Talent Academy squad players, other host club players, workforce, volunteers).

- Clubs will host a Talent Academy because it aligns with the club's purpose and aspirations, not to deliver 'for' England Hockey
- Talent Academies will be 'not-for-profit' programmes and any surplus should be re-invested in the Talent Academy or returned to players
- Talent Academy delivery models will create win:win outcomes for both the Talent Academy and the host
- Player contributions will fall within a range set by England Hockey and consider the % contribution against the cost of running the Talent Academy
- Player contributions will be differentiated and aligned with the different levels of Talent Academy membership identified in the Talent Academy Framework
- Talent Academies will provide discounted places to reduce socio-economic barriers

More guidance about factors to consider when creating a financial model for a Talent Academy will be published soon on the England Hockey website, [here](#).

TIMELINE

When will these changes come into effect and how will they impact the next season (Sept'21 - Aug'22)?

The first window for Talent Centre accreditation will open in the Autumn 2021 and we expect the first clubs to achieve accredited status by the end of March 2022, with around 30 in the first cohort. In the longer term there is no limit to the number of clubs who could achieve Talent Centre accreditation although we anticipate 80-100 over the next three years. This is a long-term strategy to develop the breadth and depth of Talent Foundation provision in clubs so a club should not feel different the day before / day after achieving accreditation.

The Talent School accreditation process will begin in the Summer of 2022, so we anticipate the first schools achieving accredited status during the 2022/3 season.

Talent Academies will be appointed in the first part of 2022 and begin delivery from September 2022. The tender process for these will begin in the Autumn and potential hosts will be assessed on a combination of the Talent Academy Minimum Viable Criteria and geographical location.

There is no reason for either of the above to impact the choices players and parents make for the 2021/2 season. Performance Centres and County Academy & Development Centres will continue to run in very much the same way as they did pre Covid-19 and players are encouraged to continue to maximise these opportunities.

Further information on the 2021/2 programme will be communicated through the current Player Pathway channels.

TERMINOLOGY

A number of concepts and documents were referenced in the March update and the Talent Centre/Talent Academy Frameworks. Where can I find more information about these?

More detailed information will be communicated over the coming weeks and months; however, we have produced a summary and further clarification on terminology used in the frameworks. The glossary is available to download [here](#).

More information

For up-to-date information about the strategy, including all documents please refer to the England Hockey website, [here](#).

If you have further questions, please email them to talent@englandhockey.co.uk.

The Talent Centre Expression of Interest form will be available on the England Hockey website, link above, until 30 June 2021

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