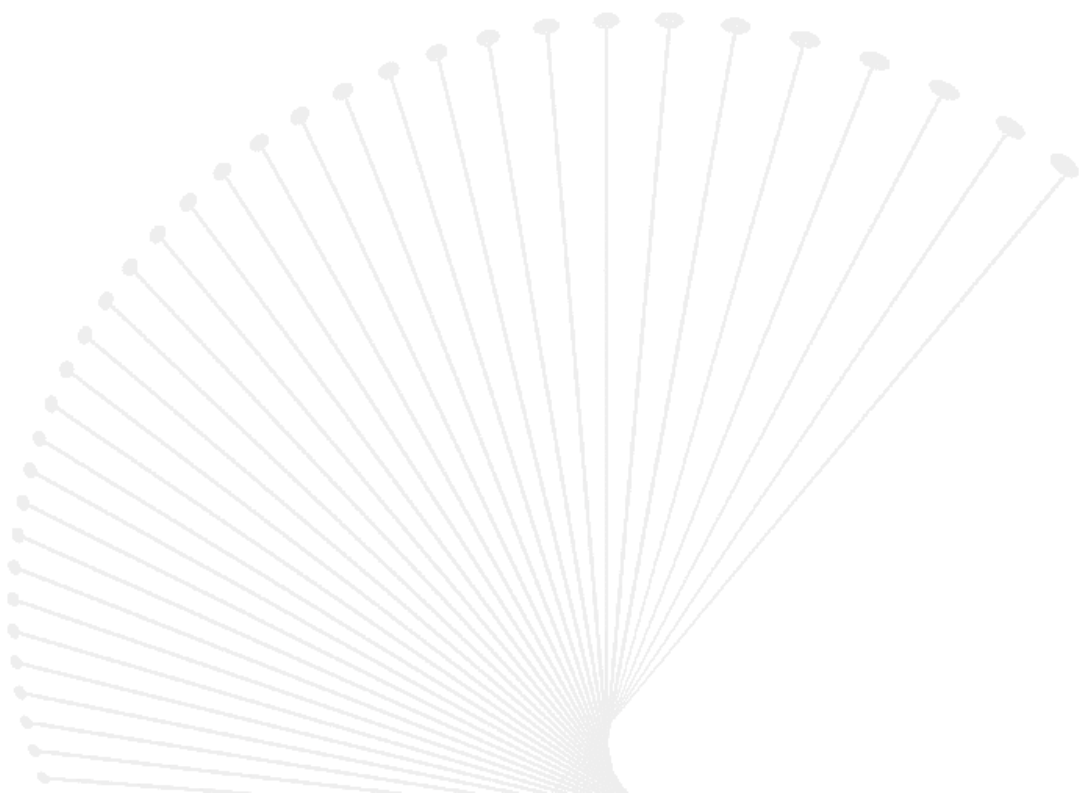




**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
A NEW WAY FORWARD

FAQs: DECEMBER 2021



UPDATED FAQs FOR CLUBS

December 2021

1. You have said that we need a wider, deeper, more diverse talent pool. Can you explain how the new Talent System meets that objective?

One of the six pillars that underpin the new strategy is to focus on 'greater diversity throughout'. To achieve this, our priority is to embed cultural shifts and processes that promote inclusive behaviours and greater diversity in all aspects of the talent system. The criteria for Talent Centres and Talent Academies, coach education and development, selection processes, composition of governance groups and outreach work are all ways in which we will achieve this.

There will be significant expectation on licensed and accredited clubs to contribute to a more diverse talent pool. These include the composition of the management committee, the coaching team and free / reduced price places for those who require financial assistance.

By working closely with these entities, England Hockey will be better placed to leverage resources and opportunities to support players from less privileged and lower socio-economic backgrounds. From January 2023 we will support a cohort of state schools linked to Talent Academies or Talent Centres with the aspiration to develop their hockey provision for high potential players.

This will build on England Hockey's targeted provision to high potential state educated players. The England Hockey DiSE programme (Diploma in Sporting Excellence) provides additional hockey coaching and lifestyle support to over 100 state educated Performance Centre level players every year.

More details about DiSE can be found [here](#).

2. How will the new structure support greater diversity and more inclusive environments?

Multiple routes to progress and encouraging decision making that puts the players at the centre and considers what is right for them are both central to the design of the new talent system. These both place increased focus on individual needs and embracing difference, thereby creating a system which adapts to the player rather than expecting the player to adapt and 'fit in' to the system.

We understand that work is needed to bring this to life and remove barriers that inhibit inclusivity and progression. By creating more environments that provide high quality provision with healthy and inclusive talent development cultures, we will increase the quality, quantity, and diversity of talented players, increase competition for places at higher levels and lead to better performances on the senior stage. This talent strategy is part of a wider England Hockey Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy.

We recognise that some may see more targeted support at talent development level (Talent Academies) as contrary to creating a more inclusive and diverse talent system. Creating better opportunities for the highest potential players currently in the system must go hand in hand with creating more opportunities to broaden the diversity of future high potential players. We need to do both simultaneously.



**TALENT
CENTRE**

TALENT CENTRES

1. What is a Talent Centre?

A Talent Centre club is a club that 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.

England Hockey will recognise, through accreditation, environments within the Talent System that provide high quality talent development. In time, we envisage the operation of around 100-120 Talent Centres so that every child should have reasonable access to one or more of these opportunities if they wish to and if it is right for them.

2. What consideration has been given to the impact of the strategy on participation, smaller clubs or clubs that are not Talent Centre accredited?

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.

A key principle of the new system is that there are NO pre-requisites to progress from one stage to the next. A player does not need to attend a Talent Centre to progress to a Talent Academy and a player does not need to attend a Talent Academy to progress to an England Age Group programme.

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.

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.

Do not 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 invaluable development opportunities. We need these environments to continue doing a great job.

3. There is concern that the strategy may create ‘super-clubs’ and lead to the migration of players to Talent Centre clubs and Talent Academies hosted by clubs. What guidance is in place to educate parents?

Matching the environment to an individual’s physical, mental and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop and enjoy their time playing hockey.

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.

England Hockey’s [Right Athlete, Right Environment \(RARE\)](#) resource provides some guidance about the questions to ask and areas to consider. Accreditation and licensing will come with high expectations about behaviours connected to player movement based on the RARE guidelines.

The vast majority of parental decisions are well intentioned and based on a desire to do the best they can to support their child. A key question to ask if a player is considering moving is ‘Why?’. Clubs, schools, and County Hockey Associations are encouraged to share the RARE document with parents and encourage them to use it as a guide if they are considering moving their child to a different hockey environment.

4. When will we next be able to apply to begin the Talent Centre accreditation process?

England Hockey have just delivered two webinars for clubs interested in being part of the next cohort of clubs working towards Talent Centre Accreditation from September 2022. There will be another series of these in Spring 2022.

We will ask for Expressions of interest for cohort 2 in June 2022.



For more details of the Talent Academy application and appointment process can be found [here](#).

1. What is a Talent Academy?

Talent Academies are intended for the highest potential 15 – 18-year-old players. We estimate that the current talent pool will yield approximately 500 players per gender requiring the intensity and commitment of a Talent Academy. This equates to the top 60% of players who currently attend Performance Centres, plus those who are part of England Age Group squads.

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. Every Talent Academy will have a squad of players selected through a robust process based on the England Hockey Player Profile.

2. How many Talent Academies will there be?

We haven't stated a maximum number, however we envisage approximately 24 to strike a balance between accessibility and ensuring a critical mass of high-quality players in each.

It is unlikely we will reach 24 in the first year and foresee between 10 and 16 from September 2022; if this is the case, we will ensure there is suitable alternative provision in places without a Talent Academy within reasonable travelling distance.

3. How many players are Talent Academies intended to support?

The design of Talent Academies is based on offering the best possible talent development environment - ensuring best with best in training, 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. This equates to around the top 60% of players who currently attend Performance Centres plus those who are part of England Age Group squads. Over time if we develop the depth and breadth of the talent pool then it may be appropriate to have more Talent Academies.

4. When will more information be available to clubs, schools, and counties about how they nominate players for a Talent Academy?

More details about the Talent Academy player selection process will be available in early 2022. Talent Academy players will be selected slightly differently in Year 1 because Talent Academies will not exist long before the start of the 2022-3 cycle.

There will be two ways to be selected:

- Via a 2021-2 Performance Centre: Each Talent Academy and the England Hockey Talent Team will work closely together to select the players based on profiles developed during the 2021-2 Performance Centre cycle and the Performance Centre Challenge Cup
- Through the open nomination process, clubs, schools, and counties may nominate players who are not part of the 2021-2 Performance Programme. The nomination process will open at the end of May 2022

Talent Academy player nominations	May 2022	England Hockey open nominations for players not part of the 2021-2 Performance Centre programme
Performance Centre Challenge Cup (1)	25 th July – 28 th July (U15) 29 th July – 1 st Aug (U17)	Primary selection route for players for the 2022 Talent Academies
Talent Academy assessment (2)	2 nd Aug – 7 th Aug	Local Talent Academy assessment activity
Final Talent Academy assessment	Early September 2022	Final assessment for players identified through (1) or (2) above