

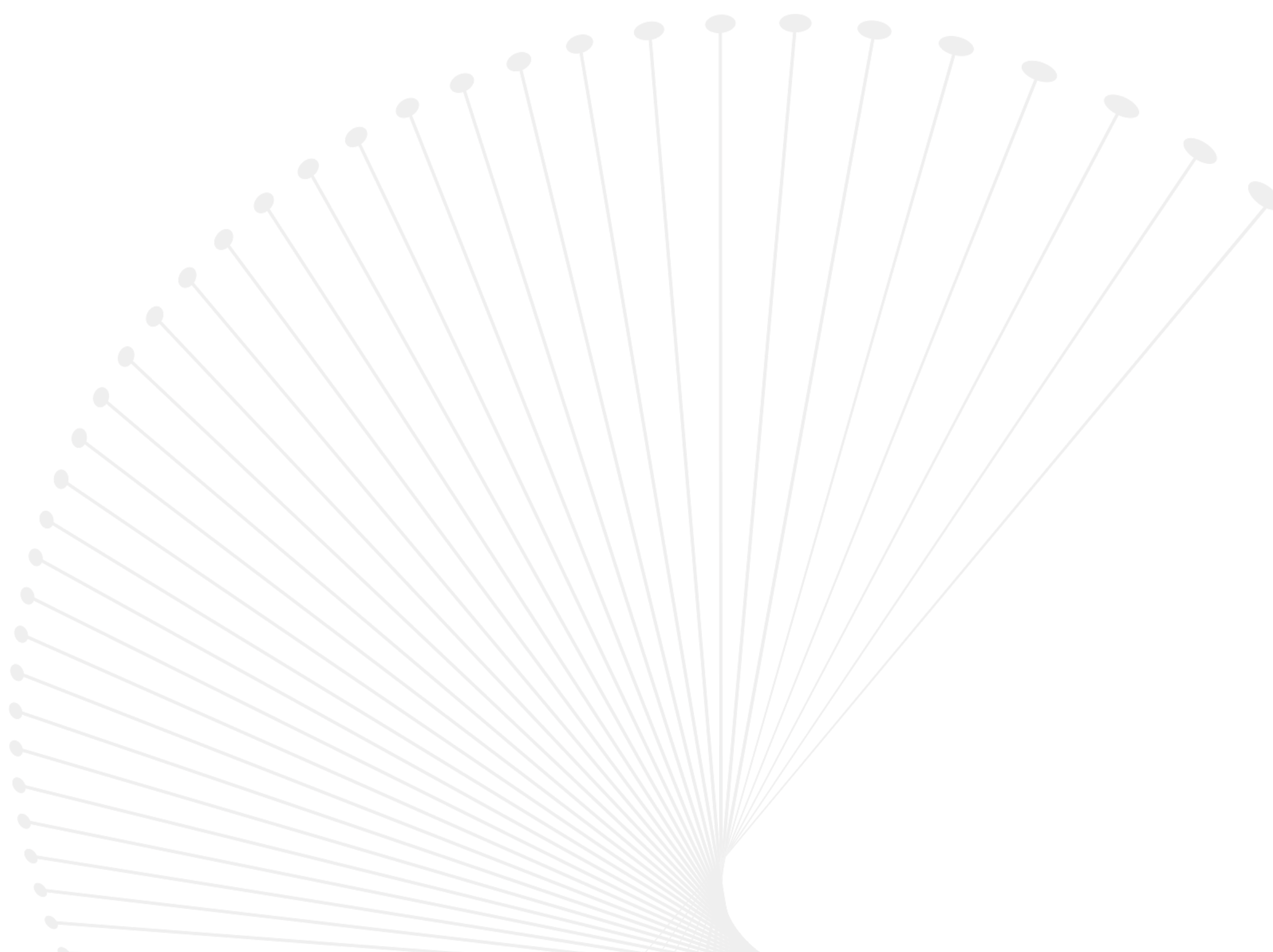


**ENGLAND  
HOCKEY**

# **TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

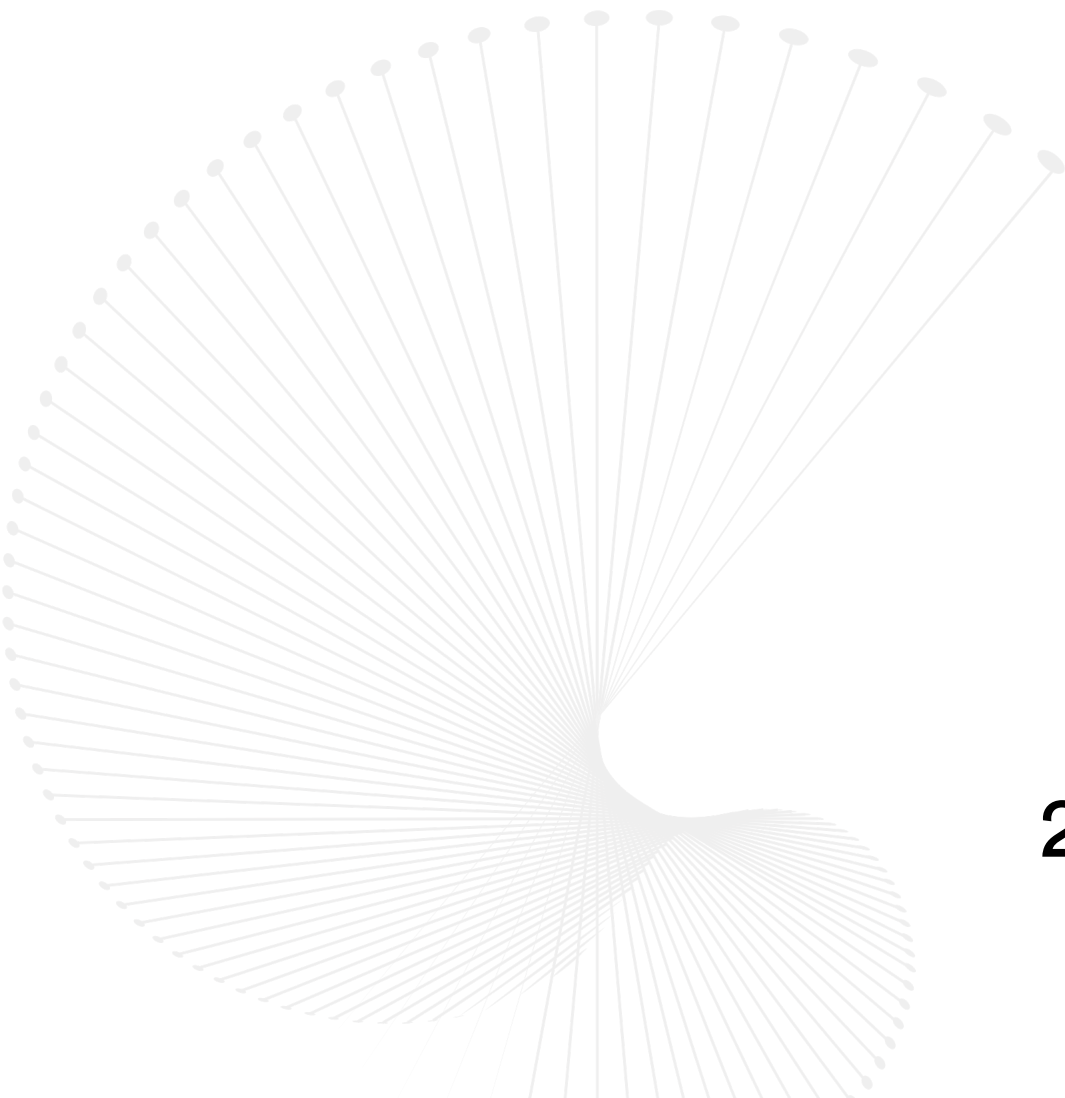
## **A NEW WAY FORWARD**

**MARCH 2021 UPDATE**



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last six months, we have published documents and communicated our aspirations and vision for talent development in England. You can find previous iterations of the documents [here](#).

Our aim has been to listen, reflect, and adapt, based on the feedback from so many of you who took time to attend one of the forums or write to us directly.

This engagement with you has reassured us that there is a shared vision, and the hockey community is closely aligned to our priorities and for a talent system embedded in clubs and schools. The questions, queries, and, sometimes apprehension were primarily and understandably related to how we will do this and also the speed, timing and practicalities of change.

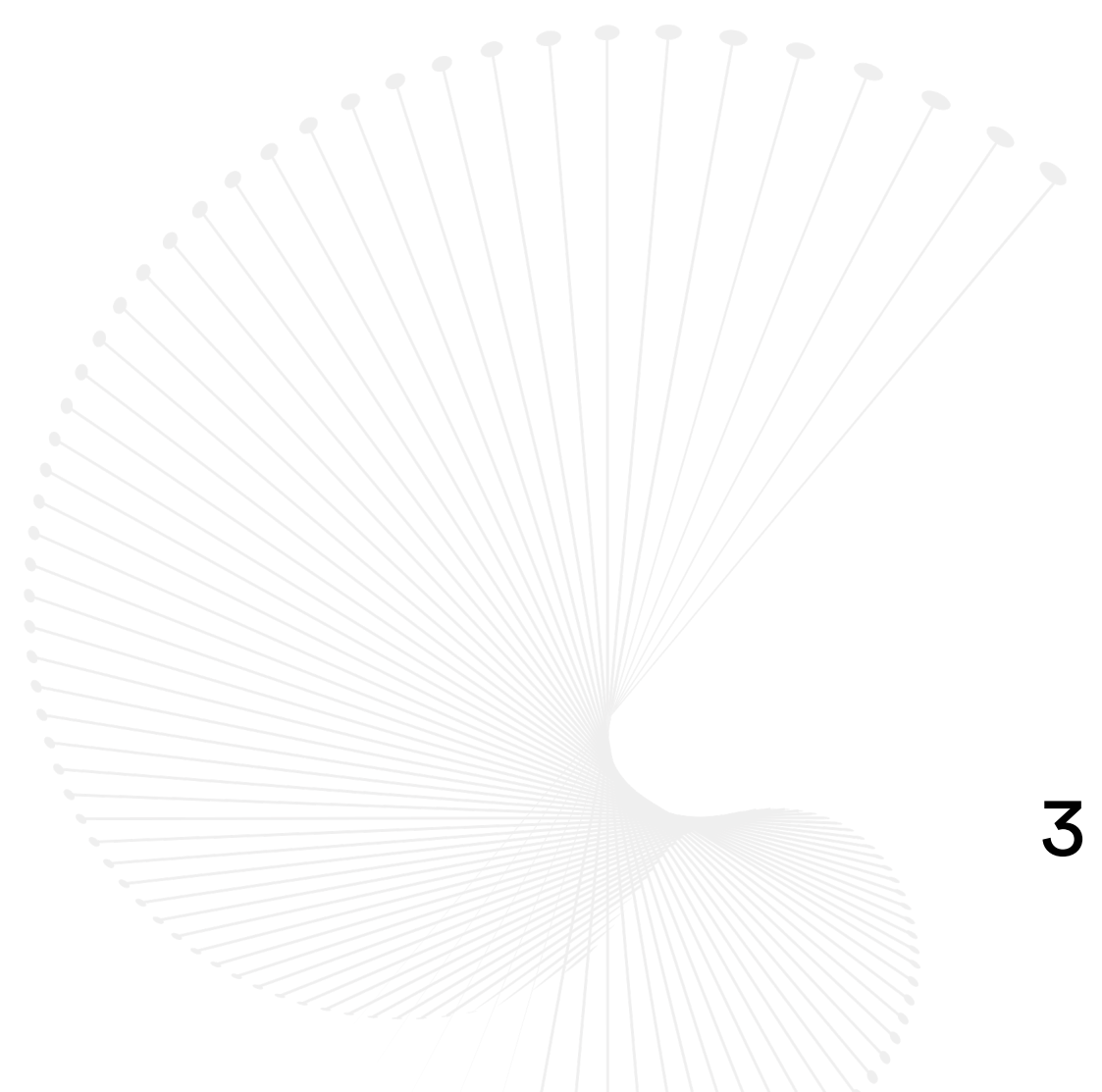
You also emphasised the importance of ensuring that there aren't unintended consequences which may get in the way or prevent us from achieving our vision. We have addressed many of these in this document and look forward to further consultation and engagement as we continue evolving the plans.

We communicated a summary of your feedback in December's [video presentation](#). You can find an overview of the themes and how we are incorporating them in the plans [here](#).

Thank you again; your insight and ideas have been invaluable in helping us get to this stage, and we are now ready to confirm the strategic direction and provide more detail and clarity.

We look forward to this next phase of development and continuing our discussions with you.

**The Talent Team**





## 2. SCOPE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is the second phase of communication about the new talent system and the first of several phases between now and August 2021.

It is intended primarily for stakeholders involved in the delivery of junior talent development including clubs, coaches, schools, county and regional administrators.

The document focuses specifically on **Talent Centres** and **Talent Academies**, the principal areas where your feedback highlighted there was greatest desire for further information. It maps out the accreditation and licensing criteria and a timeline is provided.

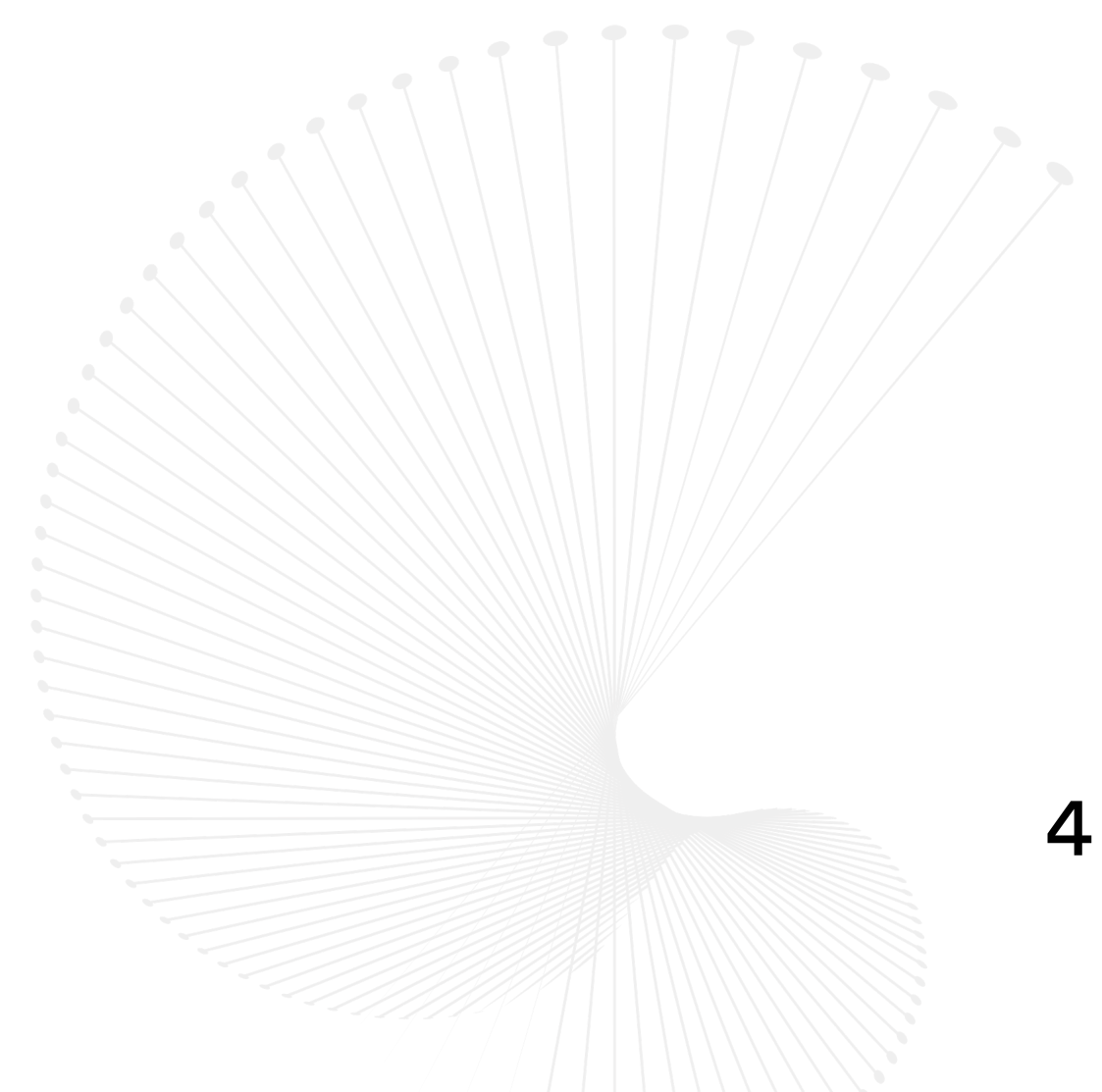
We hope this enables clubs to understand better where they are currently, their position in the future talent system [that best matches their future aspirations] and what resources and structures need to be in place.

The document touches on Talent Schools and County Hockey, the other two environments central to the talent system structure. More detail about county hockey is already available in other publications. There is more work to be completed on the accreditation process for Talent Schools and this will follow in a future communication.

We have not covered everything in this document that will be critical to delivering an impactful Talent System. We are already in discussion with you about some areas not detailed here, such as the Junior Competition Framework.

We are continuing to develop the detail in other areas, and we will share more information in future communications. In particular, more depth about the underpinning talent development principles, hockey specific guidance such as player qualities and profiling, coach development opportunities, game-formats, scouting, and selection processes.

We are confident we have covered many of the questions you have raised. We hope this document provides, reassurance that there is a part to play for everyone in the hockey community who shares our ambition and passion for transforming talent development. Several areas can and will be developed further and we look forward to doing this with you over the coming months.



# 3. THE FUTURE TALENT SYSTEM

Looking to the future, England Hockey is hugely excited by the opportunity to evolve and grow junior talent development provision across the country.

Recapping on what we introduced in 2020, we want to work with and support coaches, clubs, schools and counties to provide **positive enriching experiences** for young talented players. Identifying and developing talented players can be a tricky business, and we know that with some changes we can create a system which is **more open, mitigates for bias, more flexible** and which supports the growth of club hockey.

If we can collectively get this right, we know that there is a real opportunity to embed a **greater feeling of inclusion for all** and in time see the **diversity of the sport develop further**.

Alongside this, we believe that a **vibrant and successful talent system alongside strong domestic senior hockey** will be instrumental in bridging the gap to being the best in the world.

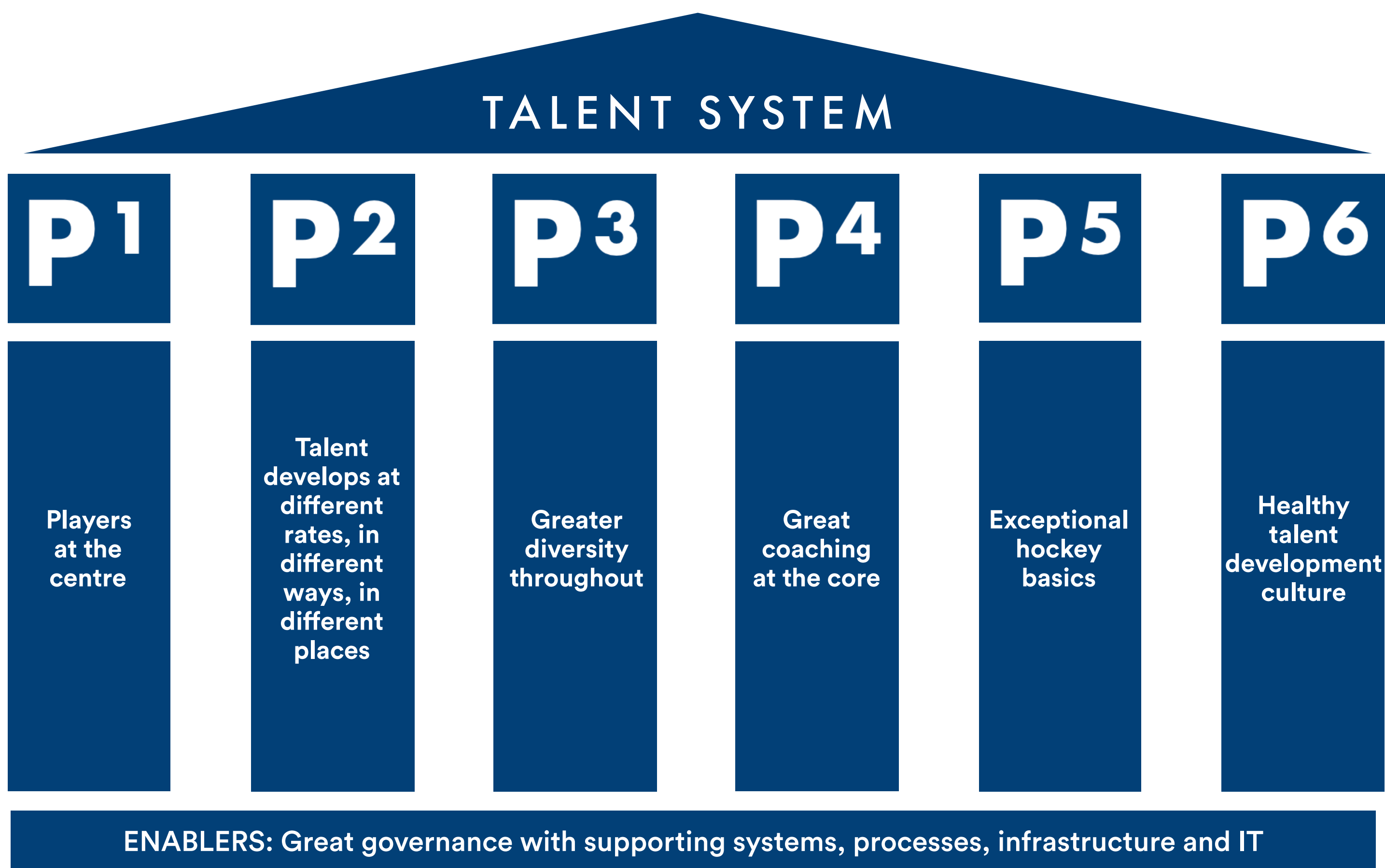
Together these are expressed by our **purpose, aspiration** and overarching **priorities** for the future talent system.

The **purpose** of the Talent System is to produce greater breadth and depth in the talent pool.

Our **aspiration** is to create:

- ▶ A phenomenal generation of players which the hockey community in England and Great Britain are proud of.
- ▶ Exceptional talent development environments which breed competition for places at every level and lead to a vibrant elite game in England, English clubs excelling in European club hockey and role models inspiring through consistent international success.
- ▶ A player identification and development system which attracts and excites young people and inspires them to be the best they can be, and which values both current performance and future potential.
- ▶ Safe, enjoyable and inclusive talent development environments with a duty of care for everyone's wellbeing.

### 3.1 OUR PRIORITIES: TALENT SYSTEM PILLARS



- P1** **Players at the centre:** Putting the player at the heart of everything we do. This will require building shared performance and talent ambitions with clubs and schools, simplifying the support system, bringing clarity to the number of stakeholders around a player and enabling players to move more freely into the right environment.
- P2** **Talent develops at different rates, in different ways, in different places:** There is no one size fits all approach. The talent system needs to embrace many routes and opportunities for players to shine, and to be robustly observed and assessed by multiple eyes on multiple occasions.
- P3** **Greater diversity throughout:** Finding and developing more talented players from many ethnic and socio-economic groups. Work is required to remove barriers which inhibit inclusivity and progression.
- P4** **Great coaching at the core:** Supporting and developing coaches to be experts in identifying and developing talent, with the ability to build great relationships with players.
- P5** **Exceptional hockey basics:** Placing greater emphasis on hockey fundamentals and skill development.
- P6** **Healthy talent development culture:** Developing our collective understanding of talent culture; both what it takes to progress and develop and how we all need to behave based on shared values, purpose, goals and expectations. All organisations should demonstrate their belief in and commitment to a culture which considers the person, the player, performance and partnerships.





**TALENT  
CENTRE**

## 4. TALENT CENTRES

Our aspiration is for Talent Centres to grow and flourish across the country, providing high quality coaching and multiple opportunities most weeks for young players (primarily 12-15yrs). They will build exceptional hockey basics and an understanding of the game through enjoyable experiences.

Talent Centres will be identifiable by their accredited status and able to use England Hockey's Talent Centre logo to promote their centre. Talent Centre accreditation will set high-standards of delivery and recognise clubs that can provide exceptional early talent development environments.

England Hockey would like to work closely with Talent Centre clubs to evolve our collective understanding and practise in talent development.

**The following section of this document details:**

- 4.1 How a Talent Centre fits within a club**
- 4.2 The Talent Centre Framework**
- 4.3 How Talent Centres will deliver our objectives**
- 4.4 How to become a Talent Centre**
- 4.5 Implementation timeline**

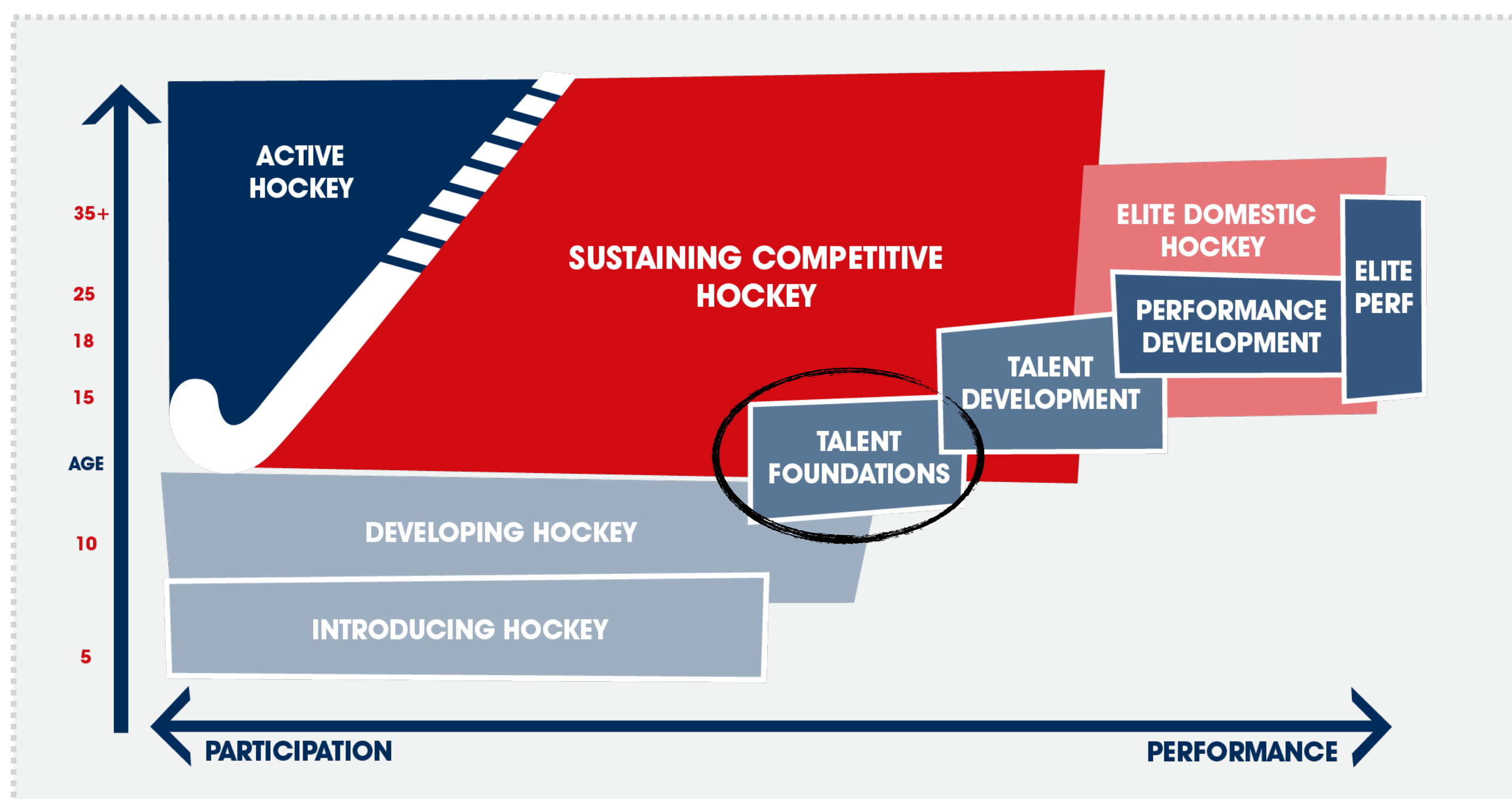


**TALENT  
CENTRE**

## 4.1 HOW A TALENT CENTRE FITS WITHIN A CLUB

**Talent Centres (circa 12-15 yrs.)** will be embedded in clubs as part of a comprehensive junior (11-18 yrs.) programme, recognising that many clubs will cater for younger players too. The club will be open to all. It will have clear and supported pathways for talented players, including entry and exit routes from other parts of the club or other clubs, schools or community environments. Talent Centre clubs will have a transparent process to move players between squads and teams. However, Talent Centre accreditation relates to the club, its environment and its coaching - not to individual players.

The Player Development model below breaks the hockey playing population into nine segments and shows how players develop within and through the sport. The ages are a guide only, acknowledging players develop at different rates and have different needs.



Some hockey clubs cater for all levels, ages and interests from 8-80yrs equally while others focus more on particular participant segments. The black circle on the Player Development Model illustrates the level of player that clubs with Talent Centres need to cater for as a minimum.

The focus in the Talent Centre section of the club will be players in the Talent Foundations segment; however, the club must also cater for players who fit in the surrounding segments - i.e. those who will be transitioning in and transitioning out of the Talent Centre squads.

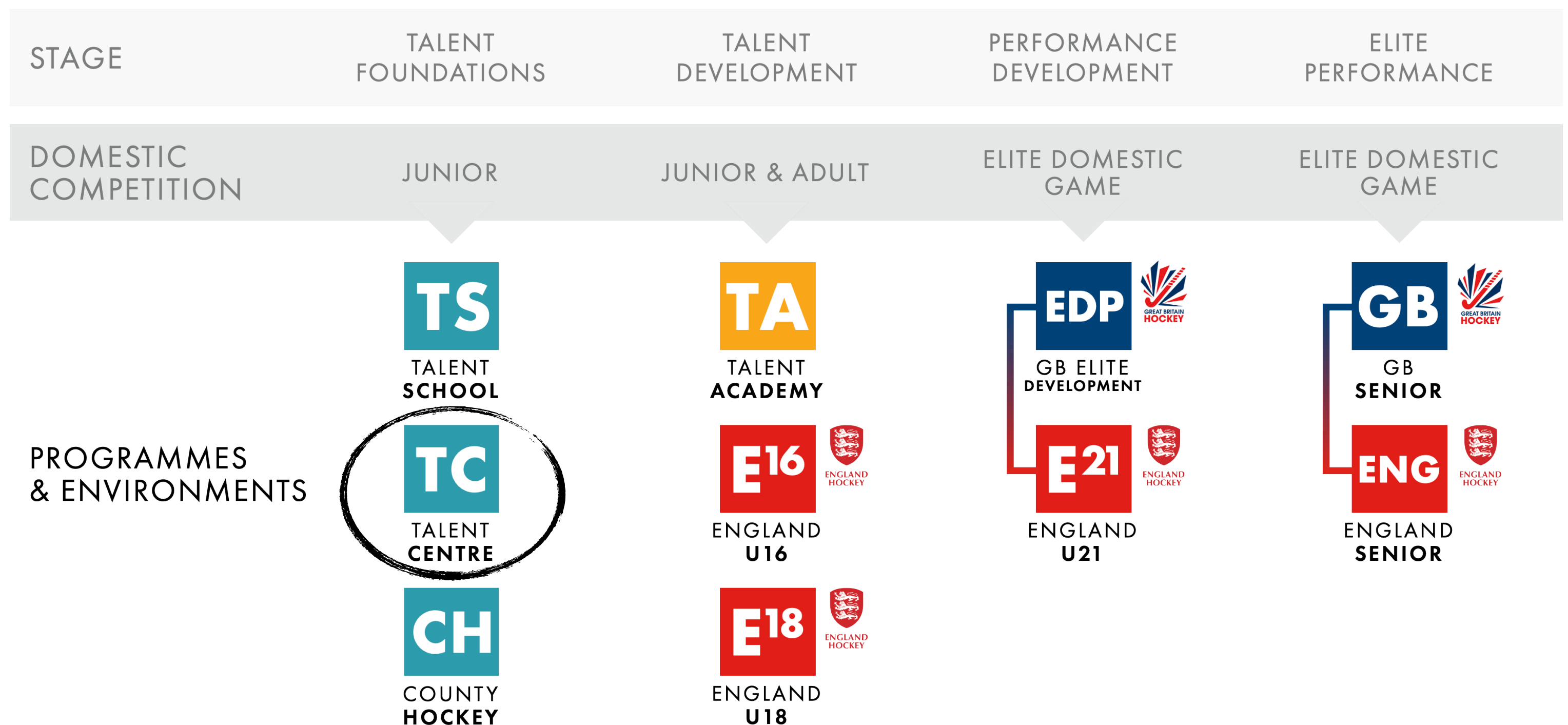
These will include young players transitioning in from the wider junior club, players transitioning out into regular adult or junior participation teams or players progressing to the Talent Development stage.





TALENT  
CENTRE

## Performance and Talent System Structure



Some of those who progress to the Talent Development stage may transition out to another club's Talent Academy for some or all their hockey. At 15-16 years of age many players will be on the verge of the Talent Development stage but not yet ready for a Talent Academy and must continue to be nurtured by the Talent Centre club through its junior and/or adult programmes.

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. We need these environments to continue doing a great job.

A Talent Centre will provide all these things by offering a safe challenge and support for talented players and pro-actively prioritising its junior system to optimise the opportunities for further development.

This distinction is important in understanding what is right for a particular club. If a club's aim is to run a safe, enjoyable and rewarding place for young people to enjoy hockey, then ClubMark is absolutely the foundation of this.

[England Hockey's ClubMark accreditation](#) has evolved from Sport England's cross sport accreditation for community clubs. England Hockey describe a ClubMark accredited club as:

***"a safe, rewarding and fulfilling place for participants of all ages as well as helping parents and carers know that they're choosing the right club for their young people."***

However, if a club wishes to be a Talent Centre, then it is its responsibility to provide a talent environment, that also stretches and develops young players to fulfil both their potential and their hockey aspirations.



## 4.2 TALENT CENTRE FRAMEWORK

The Talent Centre Framework details the criteria for a Talent Centre. It is designed to be both an evaluation tool for clubs seeking Talent Centre Accreditation and a development tool to support a club to develop its provision and practices for talented young athletes.

**It consists of eight categories which split into sub-categories:**

- 1. Leadership and governance**
- 2. Talent development environment**
- 3. Coaching**
- 4. Player development and wellbeing**
- 5. Culture**
- 6. Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- 7. Stakeholders**
- 8. Data and insight**

At present the Talent Centre Framework describes each sub-category and provides an overview of what will be required to achieve Talent Centre Accreditation, cross referencing to the ClubMark statements where relevant.

It is not the final version; this will be published in the summer and include a rating system to enable a club to evaluate its current level for each category and help form a development plan. [Link here to the document.](#)



**TALENT  
CENTRE**

## 4.3 HOW TALENT CENTRES WILL DELIVER OUR OBJECTIVES

The Talent Centre Framework covers a wide range of topics to help a club assess the infrastructure, people and practises it has in support of junior players. If a club scores highly we are confident that it will be focusing its attention on the six Talent System Pillars and providing an exceptional talent development environment for all its young people.

Systemically, more environments providing high quality provision with a focus on the six pillars will increase the quality, quantity and diversity of talented players, increase competition for places at higher levels and ultimately lead to better performances on the senior stage.

## 4.4 HOW TO BECOME A TALENT CENTRE

In the timeline you will see a phased introduction of Talent Centres. 2021- 22 isn't the only opportunity to fulfil Talent Centre accreditation.

We do not have fixed numbers projected as accreditation is based on a club's capability to fulfil the criteria. However, we have capacity to work with approximately 30 clubs in year 1.

In the first tranche of clubs from September 2021 we are especially keen to work with clubs that aspire to be a Talent Academy.

The expectation is that in most circumstances clubs applying to become a Talent Academy in 2022 will have already become accredited as a Talent Centre.

Our intention is to prioritise those with the capability to become Talent Academies. In addition, we will place a strong emphasis on geographical distribution and those with a genuine commitment to improving the diversity of our talent pool.





**TALENT  
CENTRE**

## **Talent Centre Accreditation Process**

### **Step 1: England Hockey ClubMark**

England Hockey ClubMark is a part of Talent Centre accreditation. England Hockey ClubMark has evolved from Sport England's cross sport accreditation for community clubs. **You can find further information relating to the ClubMark process [here](#).**

Clubs can work towards ClubMark while working towards Talent Centre accreditation. It must be in place before Talent Centre accreditation will be awarded.

### **Step 2: Talent Centre Accreditation**

There will be a six-month window to gain accreditation each year. To formally enter the process clubs will need to register to gain access to the supporting resources and book an assessment place. Clubs may work through the Talent Centre criteria on their own and at their own pace before registering. Registration will cover a six-month window and the support required. It will also bring exclusive access to several talent and coach development resources.

A one-off registration fee of circa £600 will be required to contribute towards the cost of support from the Talent team through this process and the 'back office' administrative costs.

By the end of the six months, the club will either meet the talent accreditation criteria and become accredited, or it will be deemed not yet ready for accreditation. If a club is deemed 'not yet ready' then they will be offered feedback and the opportunity to prepare to enter the process at the next window. The first accreditation window will be open from September 2021 to March 2022. Clubs will be expected to enter the process by December 2021 if they wish to achieve accreditation in this first window.

### **Step 3: Maintaining Talent Centre Accreditation**

Whilst the requirement for continued improvement to maintain accreditation will be set, it will be up to each club to choose whether to invest in enhanced levels of support through an England Hockey programme, beyond meeting the mandatory ClubMark requirements. These will include valid England Hockey coaching qualifications, insurance, and the other good governance requirements detailed.



## Talent Centre Accreditation Packages

### Basic Support

Clubs will pay a monthly subscription which maintains their accreditation, provides access to use the England Hockey Talent Centre brand as a mark of quality assurance, and cover England Hockey administrative costs.

Clubs choosing this option will have access to the package of talent education resources exclusively available to Talent Centres, Talent Schools and Talent Academies, as well as mandatory online ‘good practice in talent development’ modules to keep up to date as part of maintaining accreditation.

The club will still be required to demonstrate that its identified Talent Centre coaches have completed their coaching needs analysis, that a simple plan is in place, and that the coaches supporting the Talent Centre are fully engaged in their individual development. For this support package, it is expected that the Talent Centre deliverers would be able to identify and design their development plans, for which England Hockey would then offer some supporting tools and guidance.

### Enhanced Support

The second option is to subscribe to a bespoke support package from England Hockey. This will support coaches in identifying their development needs and then co-creating a bespoke people development plan for the club’s Talent Centre. England Hockey’s coach development and talent teams will support the delivery of this programme and then provide an evaluation of the key developments that have occurred.

This bespoke programme will be agreed between the club’s Talent Centre lead and an England Hockey Coach Developer. The fees for this support are to be confirmed.

## 4.5 IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



SEASON 2020-21				SEASON 2021-22								
APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER		JANUARY - MARCH		APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		
	Clubs focus on Clubmark			Talent Centre Accreditation support window 1								
	Ongoing Talent Centre CPD and quality assurance											
	Expression of interest											
SEASON 2022-23							SEASON 2023-24					
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER		JANUARY - MARCH		APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER				
Talent Centre Accreditation support window 2							Talent Centre Accreditation support window 3					
Ongoing Talent Centre CPD and quality assurance												



COUNTY  
HOCKEY

## 5. COUNTY HOCKEY

### 5.1 THE ROLE OF COUNTIES (SUB-AREAS) IN JUNIOR HOCKEY IN ENGLAND

England Hockey has been undertaking a significant governance review over the last few years that was resoundingly accepted by the membership at the September 2020 England Hockey AGM with 86% of membership votes cast in favour of change. This will affect all levels of local administration of the game with the intent of creating more consistency and efficiency in the management of the game. The process will take 2-3 seasons to fully complete, but the main changes will be seen from September 2021 as adult leagues reorganise to the eight new Area organisations.

In January and February 2021, a series of forums were held with representatives from Counties (or Sub Areas as set out in the [‘Structure Fit for the Future’ proposals](#)). The purpose of these forums was to confirm the future role of Counties (Sub-areas) in the future governance structure for hockey in England.

Counties will have two key purposes: (1) *representation* via junior County hockey teams and adult or master’s teams where there is appetite for them; (2) *participation* through providing the support for junior club and schools competition as well as supporting hockey development

All County organisations and any other organisations that currently run Development Centre or Academy Centre activity in the Player Pathway have been invited to be involved in the consultation process. The next stage will be for Counties to evolve in line with the governance changes over the coming 1-2 years.

England Hockey will continue to support Counties through this process directly via a national representative working group covering all aspects of county activity and relevant working groups focused on junior county hockey provision.

If you are a County official and would like to know more please contact [agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:agm.resolution@englandhockey.co.uk) or see [www.englandhockey.co.uk/astructurefitforthefuture](http://www.englandhockey.co.uk/astructurefitforthefuture)





COUNTY  
HOCKEY

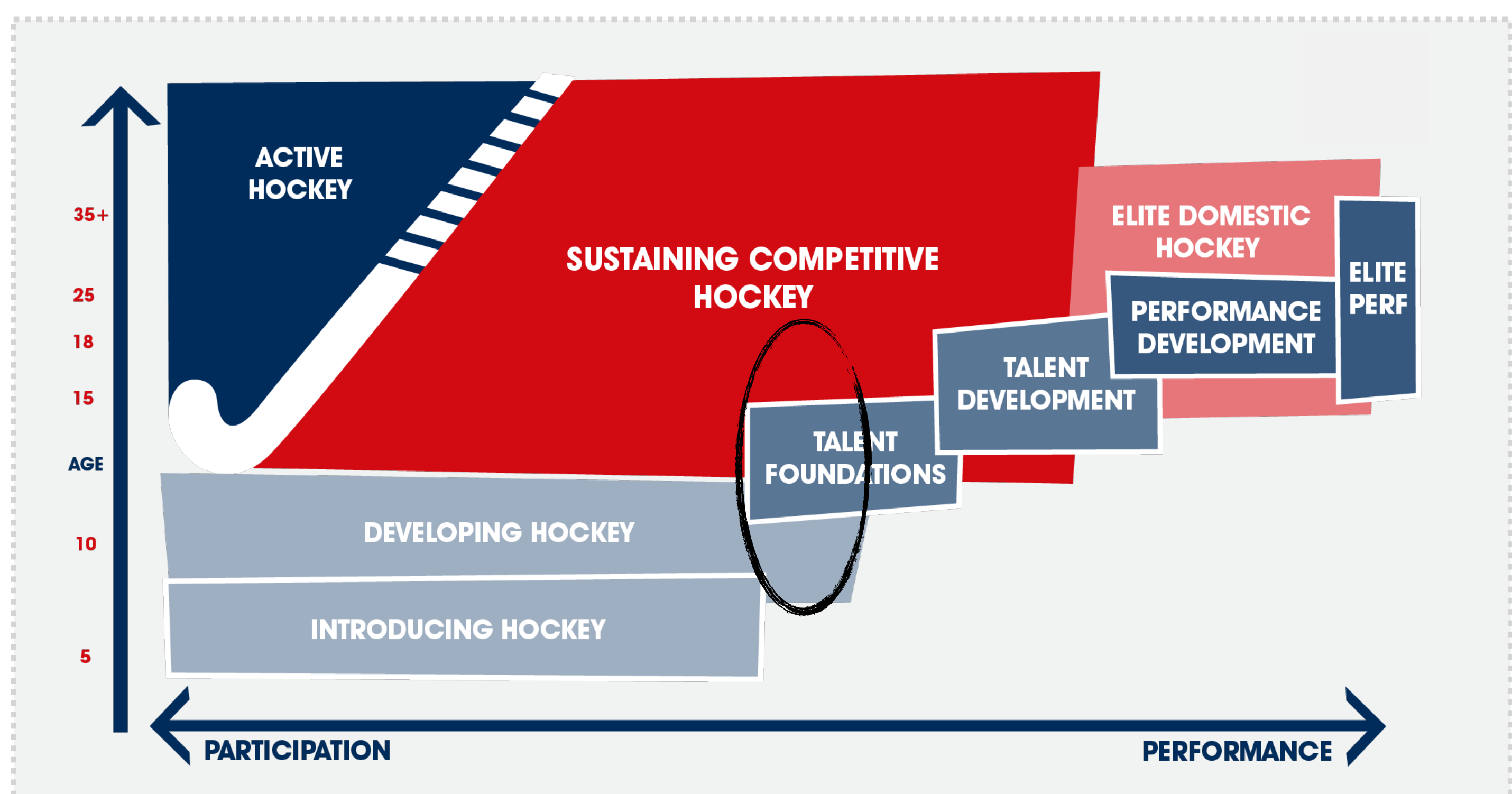
## 5.2 JUNIOR REPRESENTATIVE HOCKEY

County (Sub-Area) junior hockey will continue to provide an exciting and aspirational representative opportunity for the U13-U17 age groups which is different to regular club or school hockey.

In future, there is a huge opportunity for counties to access a wider group of young people by targeting more players who are unable to access regular high- quality hockey elsewhere and contribute to developing a more diverse talent pool. It also has an important role in providing development opportunities for coaches, administrators and umpires from different backgrounds. There will be identified dates in the England Hockey calendar for county activity.

The black circle on the Player Development Model below illustrates where County Academy and Development Centres (AC/DCs) are positioned and the level of player that junior County (Sub-Area) hockey caters for.

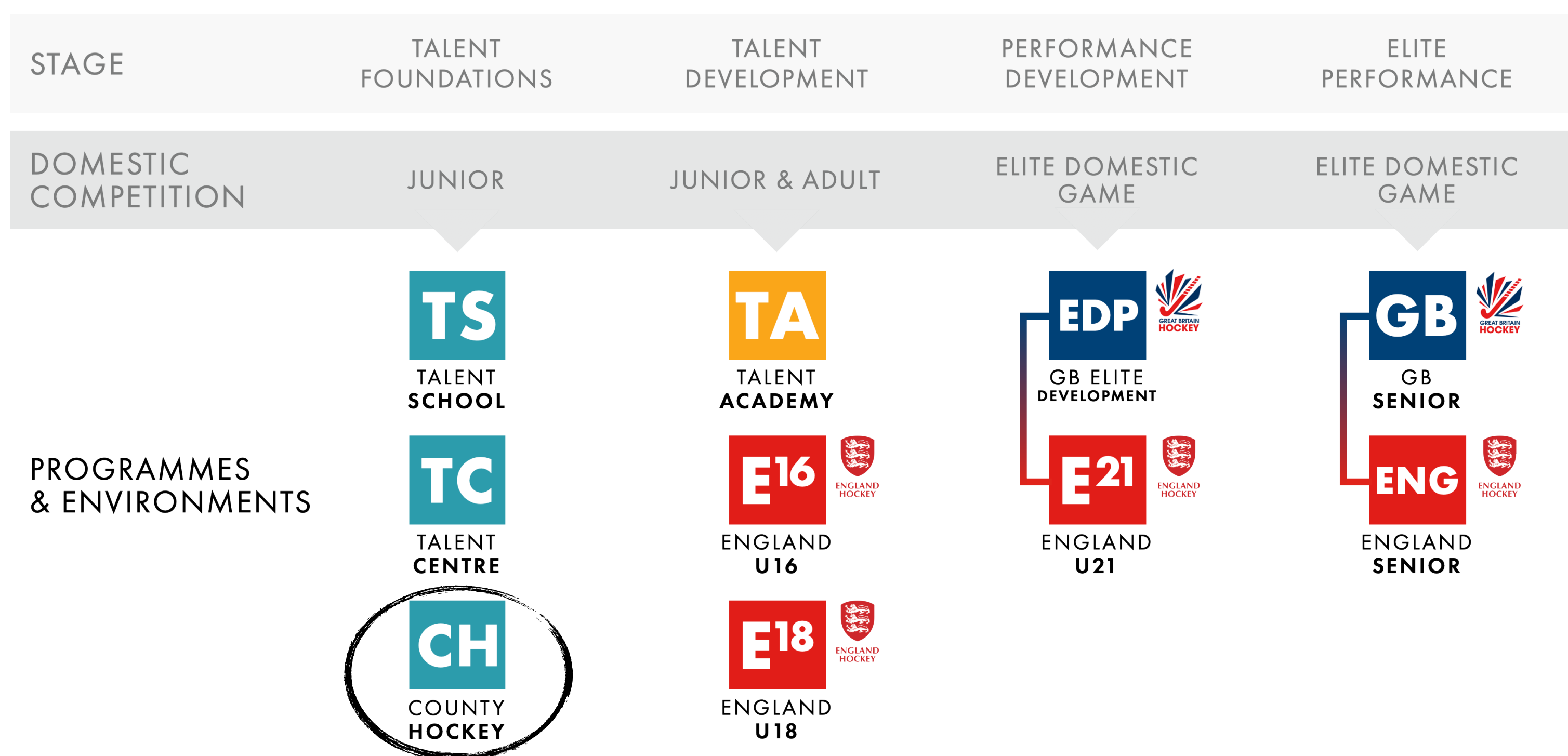
Like many hockey clubs which will embed Talent Centres into their clubs, County AC/DCs cater for a wide range of abilities, ages and interests. For some players County Hockey will be one of several talent development opportunities they take up and a stepping stone to adult performance hockey. For others it will be the pinnacle of their representative hockey and hopefully a stepping stone to life-long enjoyment and involvement in the sport.





COUNTY  
HOCKEY

## Performance and Talent System Structure



**U13-U15 Development Centre DC** activity is positioned at the Developing Hockey stage. As we discussed in the Talent Centre section, the focus at this stage is on providing fun, safe and inspiring environments that develop a wide range of hockey skills and knowledge.

**U13-U15 Academy Centres** offer another opportunity at Talent Foundations level. Like Talent Centres and Talent Schools their aim is to provide high-quality training and competition which develops exceptional hockey basics.

**U16-U17 Development Centre and Academy Centre** typically sits within the Sustaining Competitive Hockey stage. This is aimed at maintaining fitness/skill development, health promotion, self-satisfaction, social interaction and relaxation, particularly during the later teenage years and into adulthood. It is unlikely that this activity will be suitable for the most talented 16-17 aged players, i.e. in most cases we do not expect Talent Academy or England Age Group squad players to attend.

We produced a proposal last November which provides more information. For those who haven't seen it, it can be downloaded from [here](#). A second version of this will be produced shortly taking account of the feedback we've received so far. We also plan to develop a County Hockey Framework which will consolidate the [current guidance](#) and any changes into one document.

Notwithstanding the impact of Covid-19 and disruptions to the current cycle which may have knock on effects to next year, we envisage minimal change to AC/DC activity in 2021.

We appreciate that some counties are more impacted by the England Hockey governance changes than others and we will work with those who require further clarification on a case-by-case basis.



## 6. TALENT SCHOOLS

Our aspiration is for a network of Talent Schools around the country who share our aspirations and philosophy about talent development in hockey.

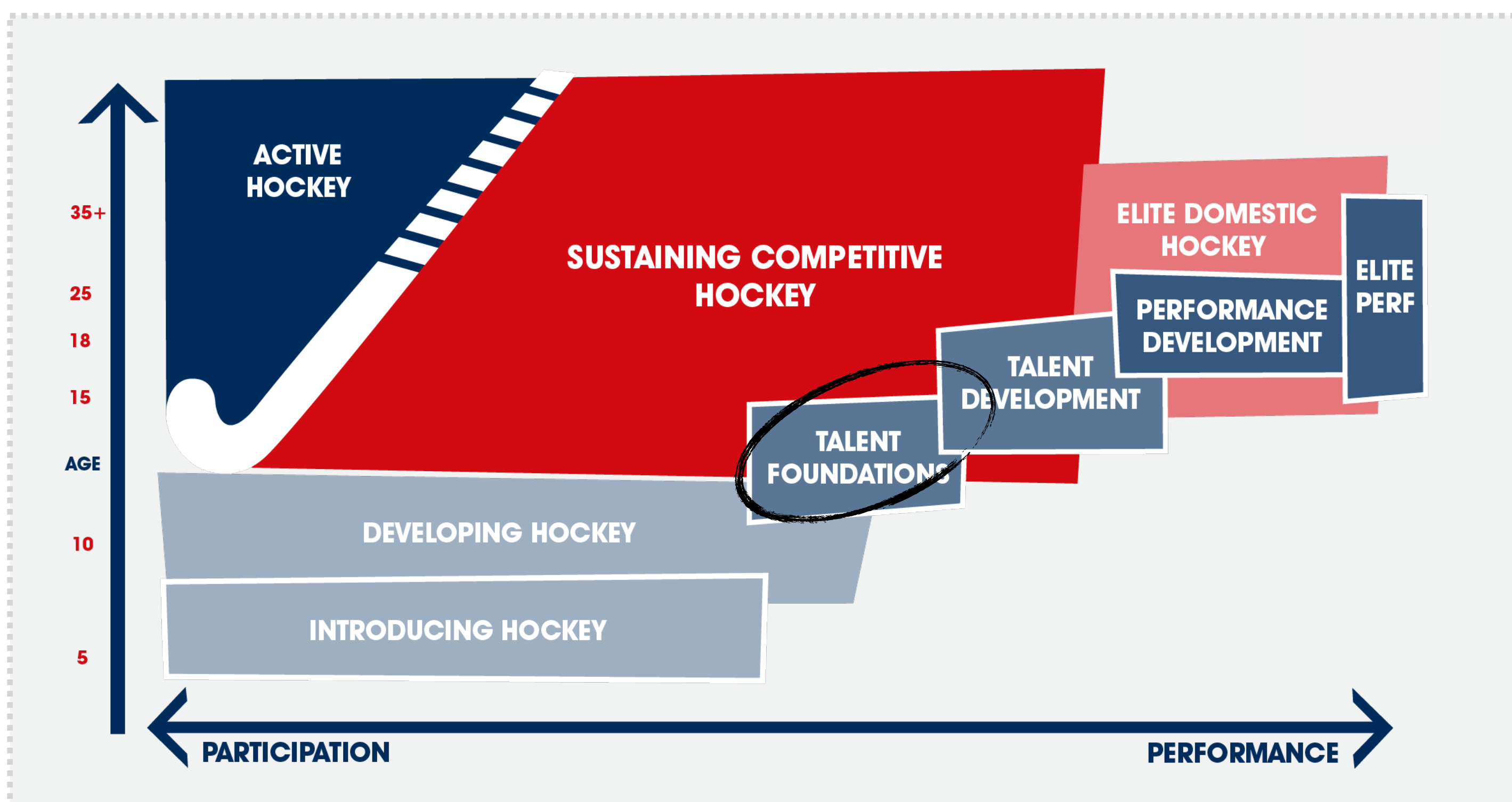
Talent School accreditation will recognise those schools which prioritise their hockey programme, offer a comprehensive programme for talented 11–16\* year-olds and wish to work closely with England Hockey to provide the best possible opportunities for talent players.

\* Many schools will also cater for 17–18-year-olds while others will start from 13 years old.

It is intended to recognise the significant contribution that school hockey plays in developing our most talented players. We would like to help build on the excellent hockey provision that already exists and work more closely with these schools.

We know at the moment this occurs more in the independent sector and state grammar schools, than in many other state schools. Our aspiration is for state schools to become Talent Schools and we look forward to helping those who strive to this level to achieve accredited status.

The black circle on the Player Development Model below illustrates where Talent Schools are positioned recognising that the ‘talent’ provision is likely to be part of a wider school hockey programme.

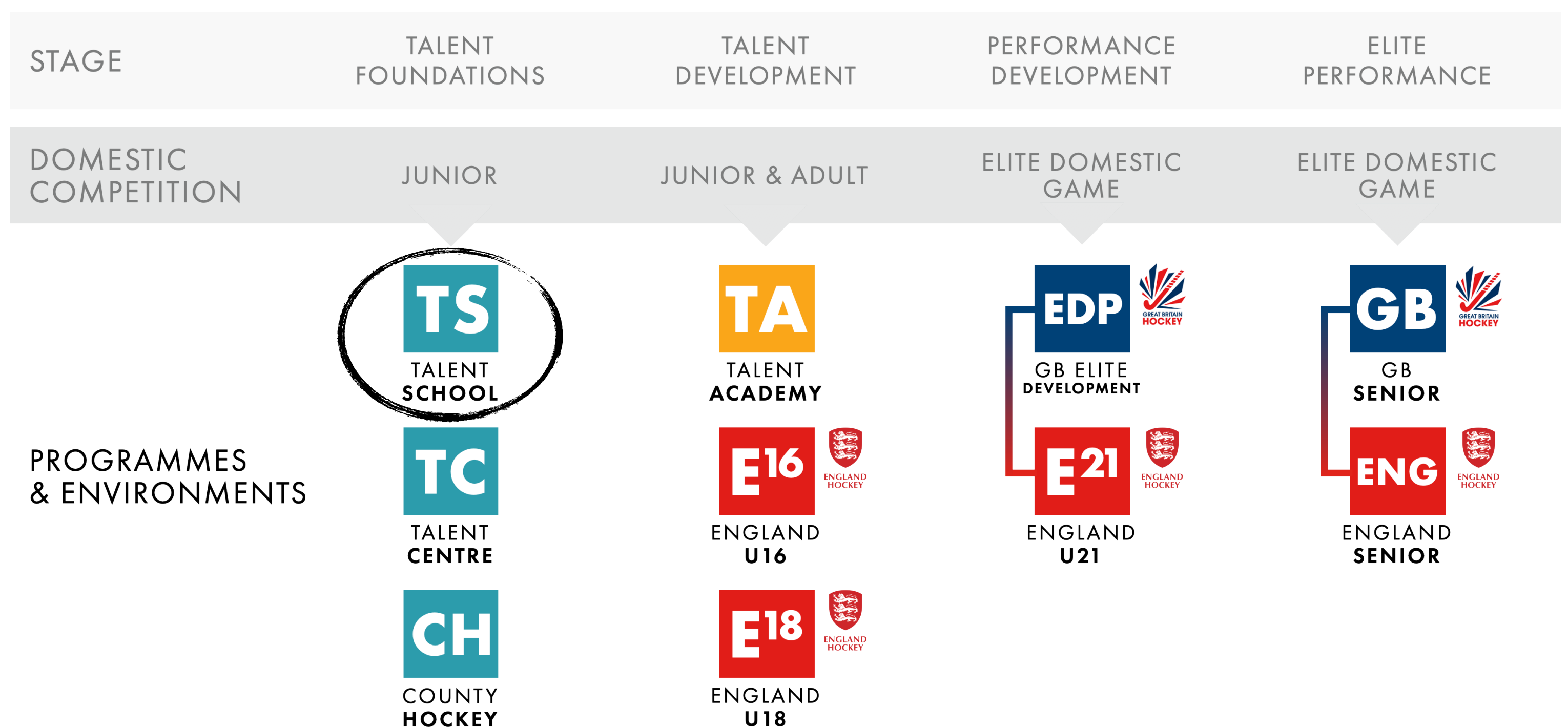






**TALENT  
SCHOOL**

## Performance and Talent System Structure



For some players at Talent Foundations level, a Talent School will be their primary hockey environment. For others, it will be part of their hockey diet, complementing club provision which may be at a Talent Centre and/or County Hockey.

Some players attending an accredited Talent School may also be part of a Talent Academy. In line with both our ‘Players at the centre’ and ‘Healthy talent development culture’ pillars, Talent School and Talent Academy coaches will work together to create an aligned programme for the player which considers their all-round development.

While we hope Talent School accredited status will help parents identify which schools are working closely with England Hockey to support talented players, we recognise there are many factors to consider when deciding where a child is educated. We do not intend to direct players to schools or require them to attend specific schools to progress. We are committed to increasing access to hockey and facilitating new opportunities while at the same time acknowledging and supporting those who are investing significantly in hockey now.

We believe these strands in our strategy can (and need to) develop concurrently. We know that many independent schools are working hard with their local communities and there is a lot of good work already taking place. The development of Talent School accreditation is an opportunity to do this more systematically.

England Hockey already has several comprehensive resources aimed at those working in both primary and secondary school settings which can be accessed here:

Primary Teacher Resource: [https://hockeyhub.englandhockey.co.uk/teaching\\_in\\_primary\\_school](https://hockeyhub.englandhockey.co.uk/teaching_in_primary_school)

Secondary Teacher Resource: [https://hockeyhub.englandhockey.co.uk/teaching\\_in\\_secondary\\_school](https://hockeyhub.englandhockey.co.uk/teaching_in_secondary_school)

Why Hockey is great for schools: <https://ehprod.mtmhosting.co.uk/deliver/teach/why-teach-hockey>

As part of the next phase of development we will develop the Talent School Framework and provide more details about the accreditation process and support available to accredited schools.

# 7. 2021-22 PERFORMANCE CENTRE PROGRAMME

Recognising September 2022 will see the introduction of Talent Academies, the Performance Centres programme will continue for the 2021-22 cycle in much the same way as the current (pre-Covid-19) programme. It will conclude with an end of cycle tournament for all Performance Centre players in the place of Futures Cup in 2022.

We expect the Performance Centres to look and feel the same in 2022.

## **The intention is to:**

- ▶ Use the same centres
- ▶ Retain the expertise and knowledge of as many of the current coaches and centre managers, who are willing to continue, as possible
- ▶ Retain player numbers and age groups, i.e. 21-24 players per gender per U15 and U17 age group
- ▶ Select players through the same process as is currently in place via County Academy Centres (AC) or current Performance Centres squads
- ▶ Deliver similar contact time and run until early summer (dates will be published in the England Hockey centralised calendar) but there will be no selection point to the end of cycle competition.
- ▶ Introduce a Talent System tournament for all Performance Centre players in place of Futures Cup in 2022.

The tournament will signal the transition from Player Pathway to Talent System and be the primary entry route to Talent Academies in Year 1 (2022-3) ([see section on Talent Academy selection below](#))

The tournament will also be the primary entry route to the England Age Group Programme. To maintain the openness and inclusive approach to selection opportunities, there will also be open trials for England Age Group Squads available to those players who are not in a Performance Centre.

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



## 8. TALENT ACADEMIES

Talent Academies (TA) will be exceptional environments for approximately 500 high potential players, per gender, aged 15 -18 years to develop. There will be multiple opportunities most weeks for high-quality coaching and training. Each Talent Academy will have approximately 25 players per gender.

Talent Academies will become centres of excellence in their locality. They will be hubs which attract talented players and high-quality coaches and a source of expertise and support to their catchment area.

Talent Academies will be hosted in clubs, putting clubs at the heart of talent development. Over time this should simplify and align the training and competition environments that the most talented players are involved in.

Clubs and the club setting provide the opportunity for a more flexible approach with appropriate support and stretch, together with regular access to adult domestic hockey.

We hope that hosting a Talent Academy will be an exciting opportunity to contribute to a transformational step change in elite domestic hockey and international success for our clubs and national teams.

**The next section covers the following areas:**

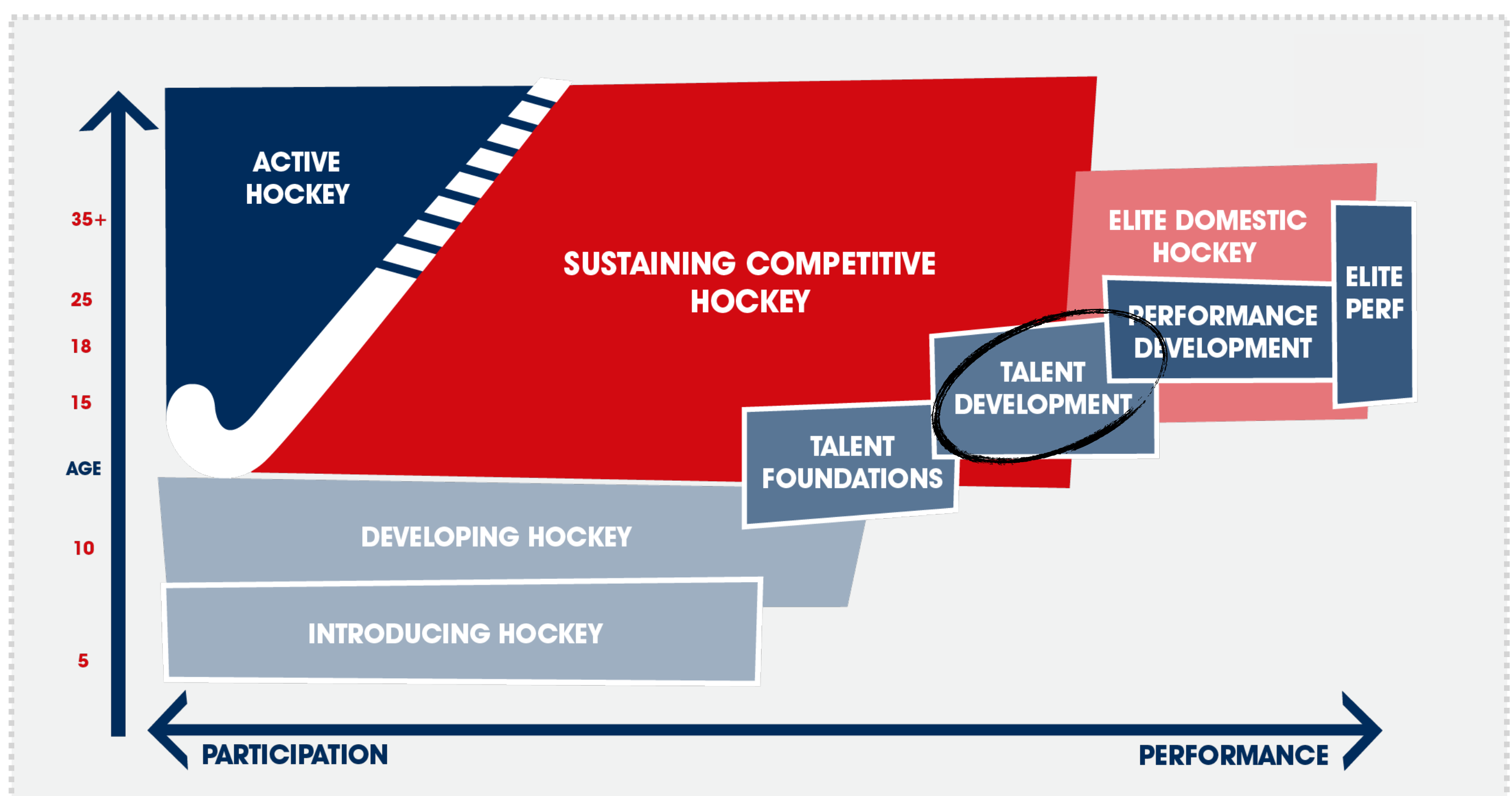
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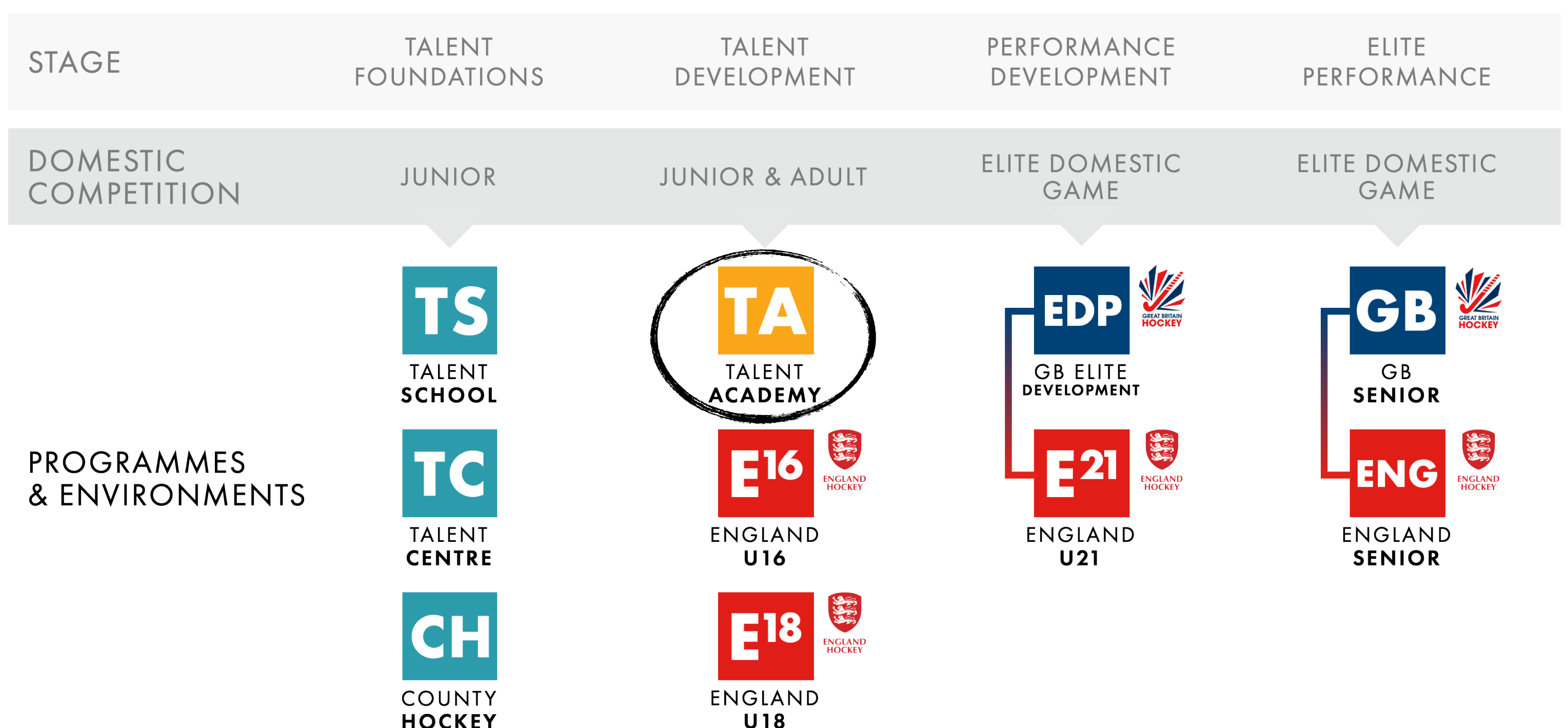


## 8.1 POSITIONING OF TALENT ACADEMIES

The black circle on the Player Development Model illustrates which level of player Talent Academies are focused on.



### Performance and Talent System Structure





## 8.2 TALENT ACADEMY FRAMEWORK

The Talent Academy Framework provides a comprehensive specification for a Talent Academy. Consistent with the Talent Centre Framework, it consists of eight categories:

- ▶ **Leadership and governance**
- ▶ **Talent development environment**
- ▶ **Coaching**
- ▶ **Player development and wellbeing**
- ▶ **Culture**
- ▶ **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- ▶ **Stakeholders**
- ▶ **Data and insight**

At this stage the Talent Academy Framework is designed to give potential hosts a clear indication about what will be required. However, this isn't the final version which will be published in due course. [Link here to the document](#)

## 8.3 HOW TALENT ACADEMIES WILL DELIVER OUR OBJECTIVES

The Talent Academy Framework incorporates the six pillars together with enablers (for example, governance and leadership structures) that underpin the ability to deliver against the pillars.

If a Talent Academy meets or exceeds the criteria it will be delivering an impactful programme and a step-change in talent development. Over time this will lead to more players with the qualities required for senior international hockey.

- ▶ With a group of approximately 25 players per gender, a Talent Academy will be delivering a challenging and supportive programme of player development with the best players training and competing regularly with and against each other most weeks of the year.
- ▶ There will be well-co-ordinated management of individual programmes which will be enhancing players' experiences and ensuring that all aspects of their development is considered.
- ▶ A more flexible identification and selection process, which occurs over a longer period and acknowledges that talent develops at different rates, in different ways, in different places, will be in place. This will provide opportunities for a more diverse group of players to be identified and enable better selection decisions. It will be innovative, focusing on finding these players and offering them opportunities, not following a rigid system.
- ▶ In appointing Talent Academies, we aim to ensure that they are more geographically accessible (than current opportunities). Together with extensive outreach work, Talent Academies will support hockey's aspirations to widen its reach.



## 8.4 MINIMUM VIABLE CRITERIA (MVC)

The Talent Academy Framework sets out an ambitious specification based on evidence of good talent development practise and enabling factors. We acknowledge that it is going to take time for all hosts to be able to develop a programme that excels in all areas, especially given the context of the current pandemic and the uncertainty this brings for us all.

Therefore, we have defined a realistic starting point through a Minimum Viable Criteria (MVC). However, we know some clubs will have the ambition and resource to strive far beyond this from the start.

In developing the MVC, we have asked ‘what is the minimum level of provision needed to make a step-change in provision for the most talented 15-18 year olds?’

Please see the accompanying document for the [Talent Academy Framework](#).





## 8.5 PLAYER IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION

Open, meritocratic and evidence-based selection is a critical corner stone of Talent Academies.

**Talent Academy activity across the year will be two-fold:**

1. Developing the current cohort
2. Identifying players for the following year's cohort through a range of activities which enable multiple observations by multiple people

The following section provides an overview of how we foresee selection into Talent Academies operating.

### **Year 1 cohort (2022-23)**

In year one, the first cohort of Talent Academy players will be selected slightly differently to the process in future years because Talent Academies will not exist long before the start of the 2022-3 cycle.

There will be several ways to be selected:

- a) 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 end of cycle tournament.
- b) There will be an opportunity for County ACs to nominate players who fall into the Talent Academy catchment area.
- c) There may also be a few players nominated who are not in a Performance Centre or a County Academy Centre in 2021-2. We don't envisage this being a common route, however, as an open talent system it is important to maintain opportunity for players who are outside of these environments.

Routes B and C will occur at local level with nominations made to a specific Talent Academy.

There will a maximum number per age group to ensure sufficient opportunity for younger high potential players to be selected.

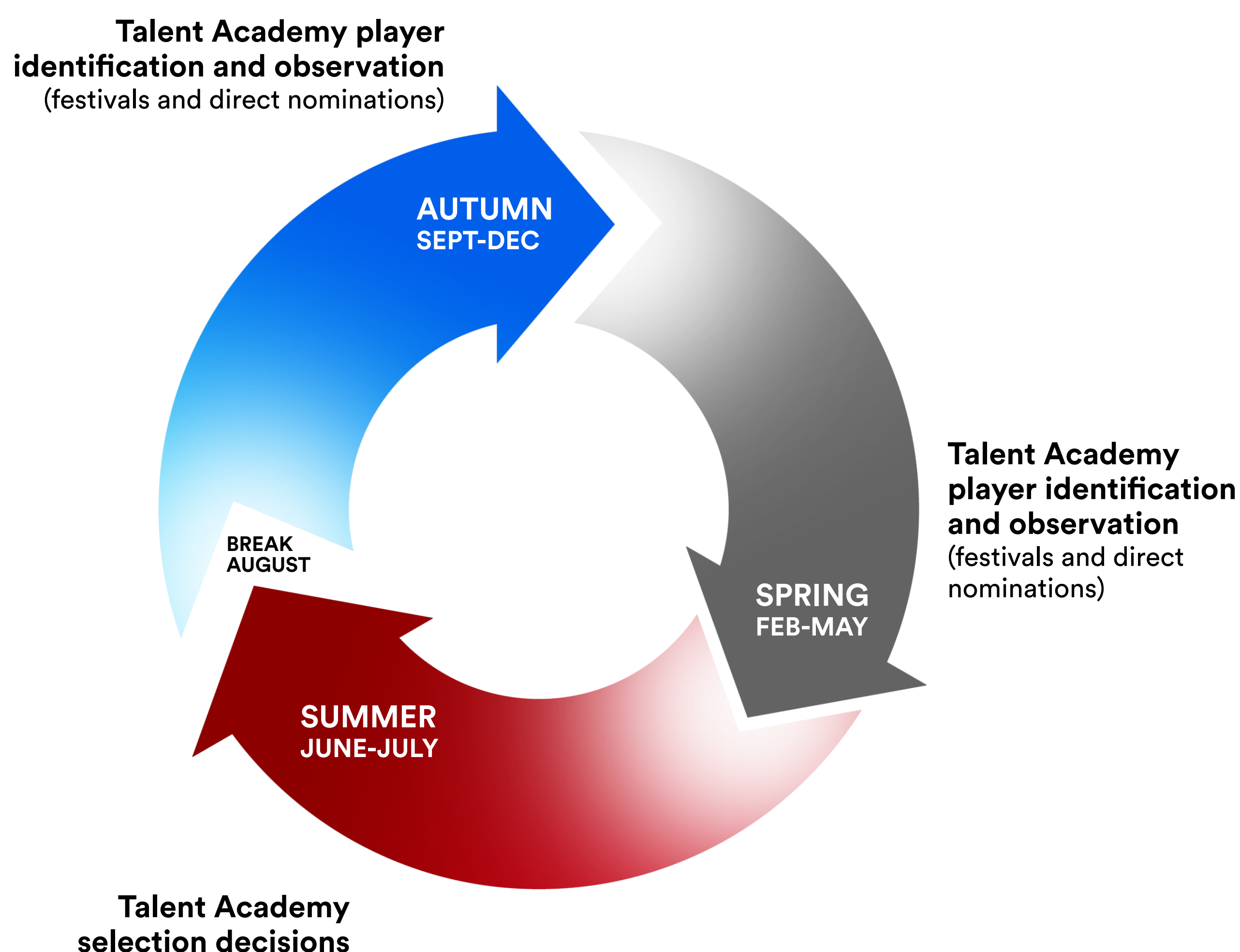
The intention is for Talent Academies to support the best 15-18 year olds. We envisage most England Age Group squad members being involved in Talent Academy activity where it meets their individual needs. In year 1 these players may be additional to any limit on squad numbers.

**More detailed selection guidance will be developed for the 2022-3 cycle.**



### Year 2 cohort (2023-24) and beyond

The diagram below illustrates the annual Talent Academy cycle and when players will be identified, observed and selected.



Talent Academies will select players from a defined catchment area through an open process with primary routes through local clubs, schools and County Hockey.

The section below provides an overview of the concept. There is further work to do to develop the operational model and ensure it aligns with the England Hockey Junior Competition Framework and other school, club and hockey activity in the Talent Academy catchment area.



**Player selection will follow a three-step process:**

**1) Identification 2) Observation sessions 3) Selection decision**

## **1. Identification**

There will be multiple ways for a player to be initially identified and receive an invite to observation days at a Talent Academy.

### **a) Talent Academy festivals**

The Talent Academy will run festivals each year for schools and clubs in its catchment area which will provide opportunities for players to be identified.

Talent Centres and Talent Schools will enter teams in these tournaments, but they will be open to all clubs and schools. As the festivals evolve participation may be extended to individual player entries who would play together in 'independent' teams. Various game formats will be utilised, over and above the traditional 11v11 format. For example, these may be 6v6 with modified rules. After initial player identification at the festival, long listed players will be invited to observation days at the Talent Academy.

### **b) Direct nomination to the Talent Academy**

Players who have not been identified via the festival route may be nominated by coaches in the Talent Academy catchment area and/or the Talent Academy coaching team following observation at identified competitions in the area. These players may be invited to an initial assessment event or receive a direct invite to observation days.





**Player selection will follow a three-step process:**

**1) Identification 2) Observation sessions 3) Selection decision**

## **2. Observation sessions**

These days will involve varied training scenarios where players will be profiled further alongside existing Talent Academy players and observed by the Talent Academy coaching staff.

The intention is for there to be two\* windows for the identification and observation phases each year between September and December and then between February and May.

\* minimum of one in 2022-3 for the recruitment of the second cohort.

## **3. Selection decision**

The summer period (June – July) will be when selection decisions are made and the players for the following year are confirmed, following the culmination of the Talent Academy competition programme\*\*.

Current Talent Academy players will be assessed alongside those who progress through the observation phase to this stage.

\*\* it is envisaged that the full Talent Academy competition programme will begin in the 2023-24 season (cohort 2) with a skeleton competition element in 2022-3.

The Talent Academy programme will run on an annual basis, and players will be selected for the whole cycle. If places become available during the year due to withdrawals or other reasons, then new players may be added after the first observation phase. As the Talent Academy model evolves it may also be possible to run two full recruitment cycles each year to create more fluidity; however, this is not anticipated in the first few years.



## 8.6 FINANCIAL MODEL

In implementing Talent Academies, England Hockey wants to ensure that they are financially viable for clubs and players, and sustainable in the medium and long term. We are committed to supporting this in a realistic and achievable way.

We would like to make an investment into each Talent Academy. Our ability to do this will be primarily dependent on the level of funding that can be secured from Sport England for 2022-25. Due to the pandemic, it cannot be confirmed until later 2021 or early 2022. Therefore, this support should be seen as additional funding to enable the Talent Academy to provide a greater level of service, not as an income stream to cover its core costs to deliver the Minimum Viable Criteria.

Talent Academies will be a clearly defined section of the club with identified squad members. However, we envisage them being integrated and embedded in both the club's junior talent provision and adult hockey bringing mutual benefits to both the club and the Talent Academy. The change from Performance Centres to Talent Academies, together with a greater focus on clubs, means many Talent Academy players will spend more time in their club environments than they do now.

While there will be some bespoke Talent Academy activity, a proportion of training and competition will take place with, or alongside, other parts of the club. It is likely that personnel involved with the Talent Academy will also be active in other areas too e.g., senior elite players may be part of the coaching team and/or Talent Academy coaches may have other club coaching roles.

These inter-dependencies will differ from club to club and shape the Talent Academy's financial model. We also know that costs differ across the country and clubs have many different financial arrangements which will also influence the financial model.

As part of the Talent Academy application process and ongoing licencing, we will require transparent communication about Talent Academy finances. However, we do not intend to set costs for clubs, so for example a club should set its own player fees and contract fees/salaries for coaches so they can cover their costs.

With the combination of player contributions and other activity that can generate revenue, such as talent identification festivals, hockey camps, coaching seminars etc, it should be possible to build a business model, which is sustainable and has the capacity to develop, in all localities.



## 8.6 FINANCIAL MODEL (CONT)

We recognise that some clubs already offer some of these activities to local partners at no cost and/or they are integral to their current club business model. To reiterate, it is up to each club to decide what activity it is appropriate to charge for and which income streams will support their Talent Academy.

The information in this document and the Talent Academy Framework provides clubs with the information to build their own financial model. We will be able to provide support and examples where required; however, we recognise that many clubs have significant expertise in this area and greater local knowledge.

We are committed to working together with potential Talent Academy hosts to find the right model and identify how to bring talent provision into clubs. It will take a collective effort identify the right model for every circumstance. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with clubs individually, to understand their local circumstances and co-create a proposed plan to support applications.

**In building a financial model, it may be helpful to consider the following questions:**

1. What is the cost of delivering against the Minimum Viable Criteria (MVC) in a specific club setting?
2. How can the Talent Academy be effectively integrated into the senior club, for example the integration of Talent Academy players into adult hockey training and competition.
3. What income can be generated for the Talent Academy from other activity? e.g., festivals, or from other income streams.
4. What is an appropriate amount for player financial contributions in a specific location?  
Consideration of other hockey costs and comparative figures with other local elite junior sports club fees, such as swimming, football and tennis clubs and camps may be helpful.





## 8.7 TALENT ACADEMY APPOINTMENT PROCESS

In awarding Talent Academy Licences, all applications submitted will be reviewed against the eight areas of the Talent Academy Framework. The additional factor not detailed in the Framework is geographical distribution. This will be a critical factor, with the aim of ensuring optimal population coverage and accessibility.

We recognise that matching the need in a geographic area with the ambition and capability of entities to host a Talent Academy will require a careful and sensitive approach.

In some parts of the country there may be more credible applications than licences available. In other places, whilst the ambition and need may exist, potential hosts may need support to meet the MVC.

Throughout the remainder of 2021, we look forward to working with a number of potential hosts as we refine the MVC and develop the application and appointment process.

## 8.8 IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



SEASON 2020-21				SEASON 2021-22			
APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER	JANUARY - MARCH	APRIL - JUNE	JULY - AUGUST
				Application window	Evaluate applications		Player selection
						Award contracts	

SEASON 2022-23				SEASON 2023-24			
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER	JANUARY - MARCH	APRIL - JUNE	JULY - AUGUST	SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER			
TA Cycle 1				TA cycle 2...			
				Closed competition			

# 9. NEXT STEPS

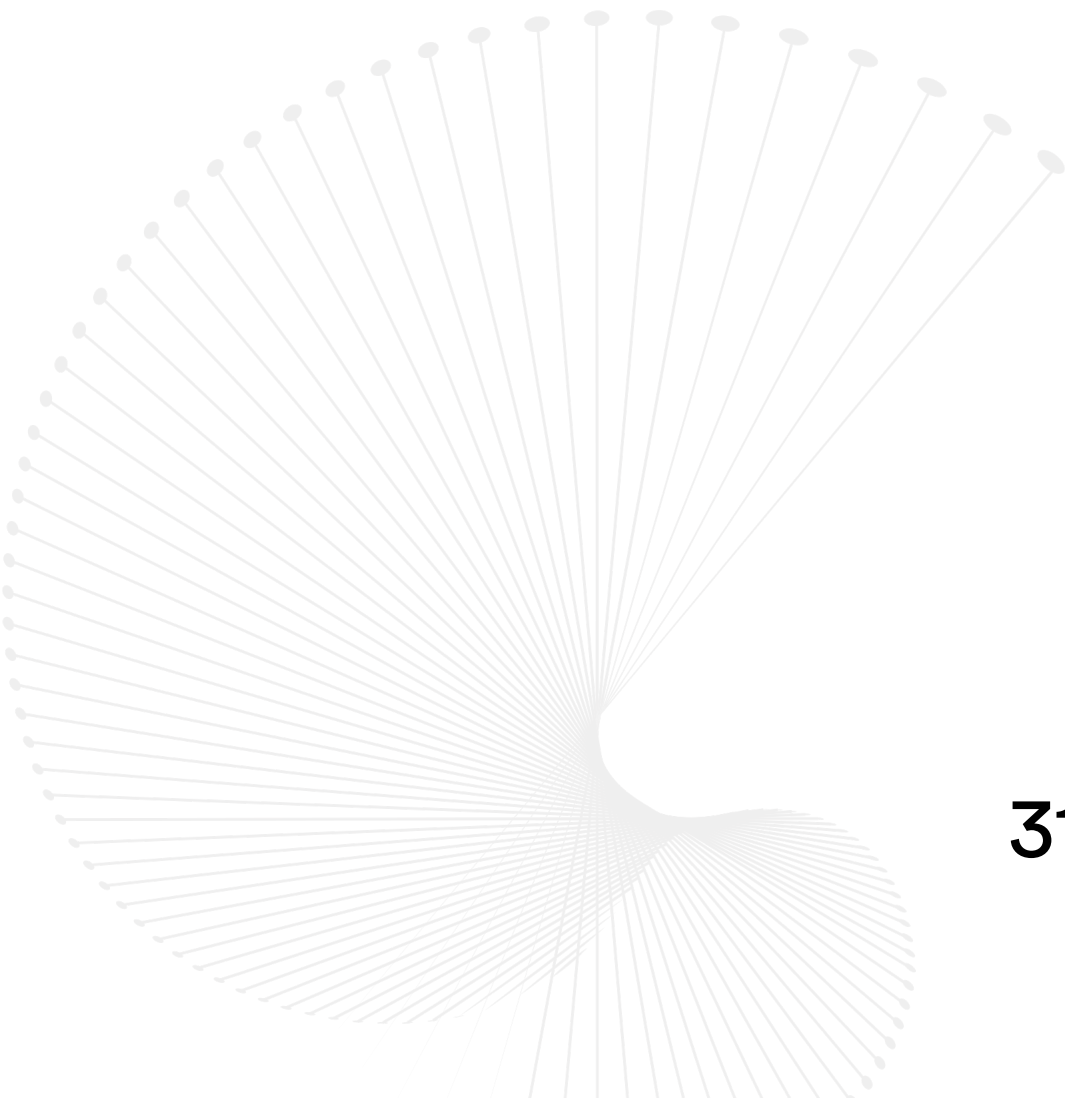
We hope this document’s content and the supplementary information provided in the Talent Centre and Talent Academy Framework documents are helpful.

We look forward to more discussion with you either during the next round of workshops or on a 1-1 basis. The dates for these workshops are still TBC; however, we are working towards the last week of April and the first week in May.

In the meantime, if you require further information, please contact [talent@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:talent@englandhockey.co.uk)

The timeline below provides an overview of the next steps and what you can expect from us in the coming months.

2021	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPT
March update							
Talent System workshops (TC/TA)							
County Hockey guidance V2							
Talent Academy Framework V2							
Talent Centre Framework V2							
Talent School Framework draft							
Player and parent update							
Talent System Framework online seminars							
Scouting and talent identification							
1-1 club engagement							
County Hockey Framework							
Talent Centre accreditation guidebook							
Talent Academy application process							



# APPENDICES

## Full timeline

TC

TALENT CENTRE

PERFORMANCE CENTRE

TRANSITION PROGRAMME

TA

TALENT ACADEMY

TS

TALENT SCHOOL

SEASON 2020-21					SEASON 2021-22							
APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER		JANUARY - MARCH		APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		
	Clubs focus on Clubmark			Talent Centre Accreditation support window 1								
	Ongoing Talent Centre CPD and quality assurance											
	Expression of interest											
	Player selection			2021/22 PC delivery								
Recruitment of delivery teams												
			Futures Cup								Tournament	
				Application window		Evaluate applications					Player selection	
								Award contracts				
								Talent School Accreditation support window 1				

TC

TALENT CENTRE

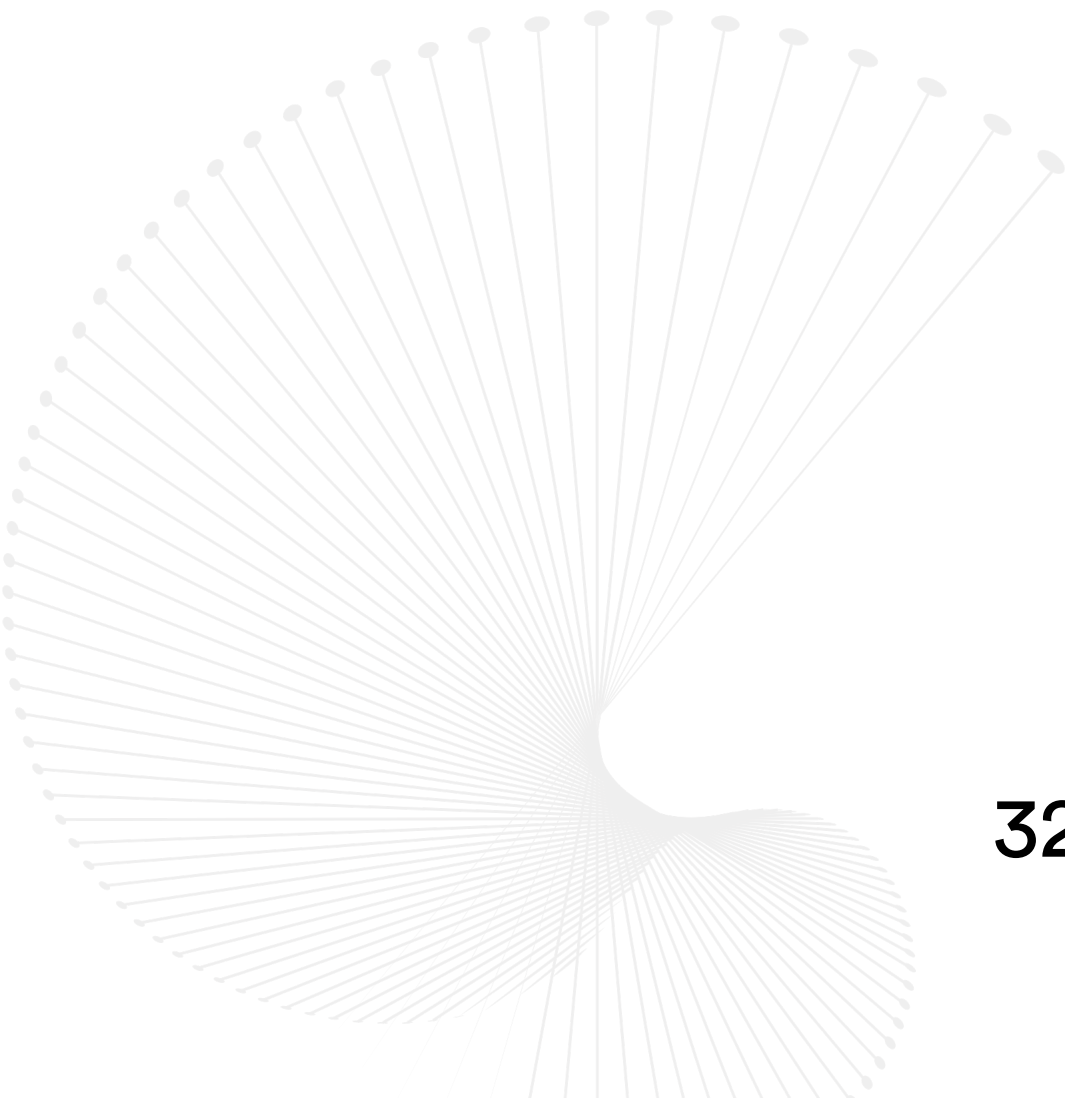
TA

TALENT ACADEMY

TS

TALENT SCHOOL

SEASON 2022-23							SEASON 2023-24				
SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER		JANUARY - MARCH		APRIL - JUNE		JULY - AUGUST		SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER			
Talent Centre Accreditation support window 2							Talent Centre Accreditation support window 3				
Ongoing Talent Centre CPD and quality assurance											
TA Cycle 1							TA cycle 2...				
							Closed competition				
					Talent School Accreditation support window 2						





# APPENDICES

## Key themes from the consultation

What we heard?	How will this be addressed?
<b>Positive direction of travel:</b> There was positivity towards the direction of travel and the underpinning rationale coupled with some anxiety about the amount of consultation and pace of change.	We were delighted that the suggested direction of travel was received so positively. Many agreed with the need and reasons for change (the ‘Why’). There were some great questions and some concerns about the specifics (the ‘What’) and the way in which some of it could come into effect (the ‘How’). Many were keen to see more detail on the What and the How. This document aims to provide a lot more information on both topics. We hope that this allows many stakeholders to understand and consider the opportunity in more detail. Over time, we know that this will continue to develop.
<b>Hierarchy of clubs:</b> There was a perception that the strategy may create ‘super-clubs’ and lead to the migration of players to Talent Centre clubs and Talent Academies hosted by clubs.	<p>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. In terms of player movement, we know that many players move between clubs for many reasons. In being more explicit about exceptional junior talent development environments (through the frameworks) and accreditation, we’re keen that this supports players and parents to make good decisions about clubs, schools and county hockey.</p> <p>Accreditation and licensing will come with high expectations about behaviours connected to player movement based on ‘right athlete right environment’ principle. This will be supported by resources to help players, parents, coaches and clubs make the best decision for each young person.</p>
<b>Feasibility of the Talent Academy model:</b> Different aspects were of interest to different stakeholder groups and included: financing, contact hours and practical issues around facilities, impact on adult teams, managing relationships, geographical differences.	We hope that the Minimum Viable Criteria sets out a realistic starting point, while creating an aspirational vision for where we could be in future. The Talent Academy model is intended to be flexible to accommodate the opportunities and challenges in different places. Many of the issues raised are addressed in this document or the Talent Academy Framework. Through further discussions with potential hosts, and through the Talent Academy tender and appointment process, we will work through the practicalities with clubs in different areas to develop bespoke solutions.
<b>County hockey (and support for the 16-17 aged players):</b> There were questions about role of and implications for County Hockey in the new strategy.	County Hockey has an important role to play within the talent system and wider junior participation. Looking to the future, we want to respond to player and parent feedback and ensure an open system, with multiple routes to progress with flexibility of provision which meets the need of the player. There is no ‘one way’ to develop and it is critical we provide different opportunities for different players (based on location, training need, their immersion in / access to different environments). This document provides greater explanation about where DCs and ACs fit within the Player Development Model and the talent system.

# APPENDICES

## Key themes from the consultation

What we heard?	How will this be addressed?
<b>Diversity &amp; inclusion:</b> A greater focus on this was welcomed along with the importance of ensuring that the proposals don't inadvertently create a more 'elite' system There was a lot of discussion around state school provision.	<p>Greater diversity throughout' is one of six priorities for the new talent system and we want to embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in all aspects of the talent system. We recognise that some may see more targeted support at talent development level (Talent Academies) as contrary to this, however 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.</p> <p>Our focus will not be standalone initiatives. Instead, our priority will be to embed cultural changes and simple positive action in all aspects of the talent system to instigate long term systemic change, e.g., the criteria for Talent Centres, Talent Academies and Talent Schools, coach education and development, selection processes, composition of governance groups, outreach work. There will be significant expectations on licensed and accredited clubs and schools to contribute to a more diverse talent pool. 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. This talent strategy will not be able address all the changes we wish to see, but it is part of a wider England Hockey Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy</p>
<b>Governance of the system:</b> This fell into two areas; the oversight of the Talent System as a whole and how entities (particularly Talent Academies) would be governed, monitored and quality assured.	<p>The frameworks set out some of the governance requirements for entities – we hope this provides real clarity on the direction of travel and the confidence that you can take. Over time, the Talent Academy Partnership Agreement between hosts and England Hockey will expand further on respective roles and responsibilities. Some work has been completed on overarching oversight for the Talent System. Over the next six months we're really looking forward to developing this further and consulting on it.</p>
<b>Selection of entities:</b> Many people wanted to know how entities will be appointed, what stakeholders need to do, and what the criteria will be.	<p>Information is provided in this document and the supporting frameworks. More information will be communicated in future updates explaining the application process.</p>
<b>Coaching:</b> Recognition that there is a huge opportunity for coaches in the new system. There was a desire to ensure there are sufficient coaches for the roles. And, alongside this, an exceptional coach development offer.	<p>Parts of this proposal are phased, and relatively small in nature to begin with. We hope that this will ensure the demands on workforce don't shift too significantly in the first instance. We want to operate within our resource and grow safely and responsibly.</p> <p>Alongside this, we, know there are many coaches in the Player Pathway, clubs, schools and private coaching companies with the skills and desire to play a role in the future talent system.</p>
<b>Players:</b> Multiple selection routes and a more open assessment process was welcomed. The scouting concept was well received. There was a desire to ensure transparent processes mitigate biases, and a desire to ensure host clubs operate with integrity.	<p>Covid-19 afforded the opportunity to pilot an open assessment process for the England Age Group programme in Oct'20. In general, feedback from parents and players demonstrated that this was an overwhelmingly positive change. Not surprisingly, there were different approaches to nominating players which led to some inconsistency in the standard of player put forward. There will need to be some adjustments and education to refine and improve this kind of processes in future. Further detail about selection processes and our plans for a scouting will be communicated in future updates. We know this area is mission critical to addressing the priorities we've set out for the future talent system.</p>

# APPENDICES

## Key themes from the consultation

What we heard?	How will this be addressed?
<b>Partnerships:</b> Almost everyone recognised the value of a player centred approach and a desire for greater collaboration between different entities. ‘How’ we achieve this came up frequently	Working in partnership is central to the culture we would like to create through the system. The frameworks provide detail about the expectation to work closely with other entities to identify and support players develop communities of practise, engage with local communities etc. We know that managing multiple relationships around an individual player is complex and time intensive and we have factored this into the coaching resource and financial model when developing the MVC. We also appreciate that effective communication will require an effective IT infrastructure to facilitate fluid and open discussions about a players’ performance and provision - this is something we will be working on over the coming months.
<b>Performance Centre Transition year:</b> Appetite for a greater level of detail about the plan to transition from the current Performance Centres to a 2021-22 delivery model and then to Talent Academies in 2022-23.	More information about 2021-2 has been communicated and is provided in this document. The intention for 2020-21 is for Performance Centre delivery to look and feel very similar. The England Hockey governance changes from regions to areas mean that England Hockey will assume overall oversight of the programme in 2021-22, however we hope this will not impact delivery on the ground.
<b>Role of Talent Schools:</b> Further clarity is required on where they ‘fit’, expectations of Talent Schools and how they link with Talent Centres and County Hockey	There is some further information provided in this document. There is more work to do with schools to develop the Talent School Framework and accreditation process.





**ENGLAND  
HOCKEY**

# **TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

## **A NEW WAY FORWARD**

**MARCH 2021 UPDATE**

