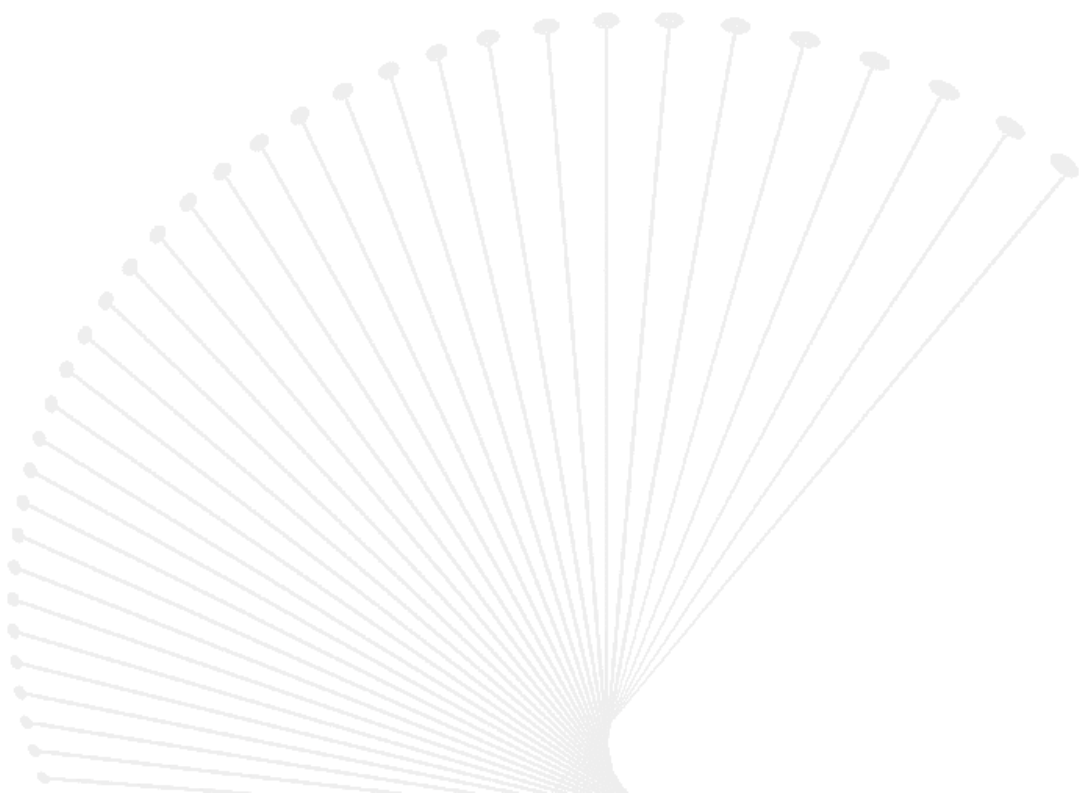




**ENGLAND
HOCKEY**

TALENT DEVELOPMENT
A NEW WAY FORWARD

FAQs: DECEMBER 2021



UPDATED FAQs FOR PARENTS

December 2021

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 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.

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

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.

Being at a Talent Centre Club does not promise an accelerated trajectory. Each Talent Centre needs to continue to offer the high-quality provision that has led to its accreditation; this does not mean growing its junior membership.

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 junior players. Local hockey should be encouraged for most players below the age of 14.

4. How do I decide which environment(s) is best for my child?

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

England Hockey's [Right Athlete, Right Environment \(RARE\)](#) resource provides some guidance about the questions to ask and areas to consider. Parents are encouraged to use the RARE document as a guide if they are considering moving their child to a different hockey environment.

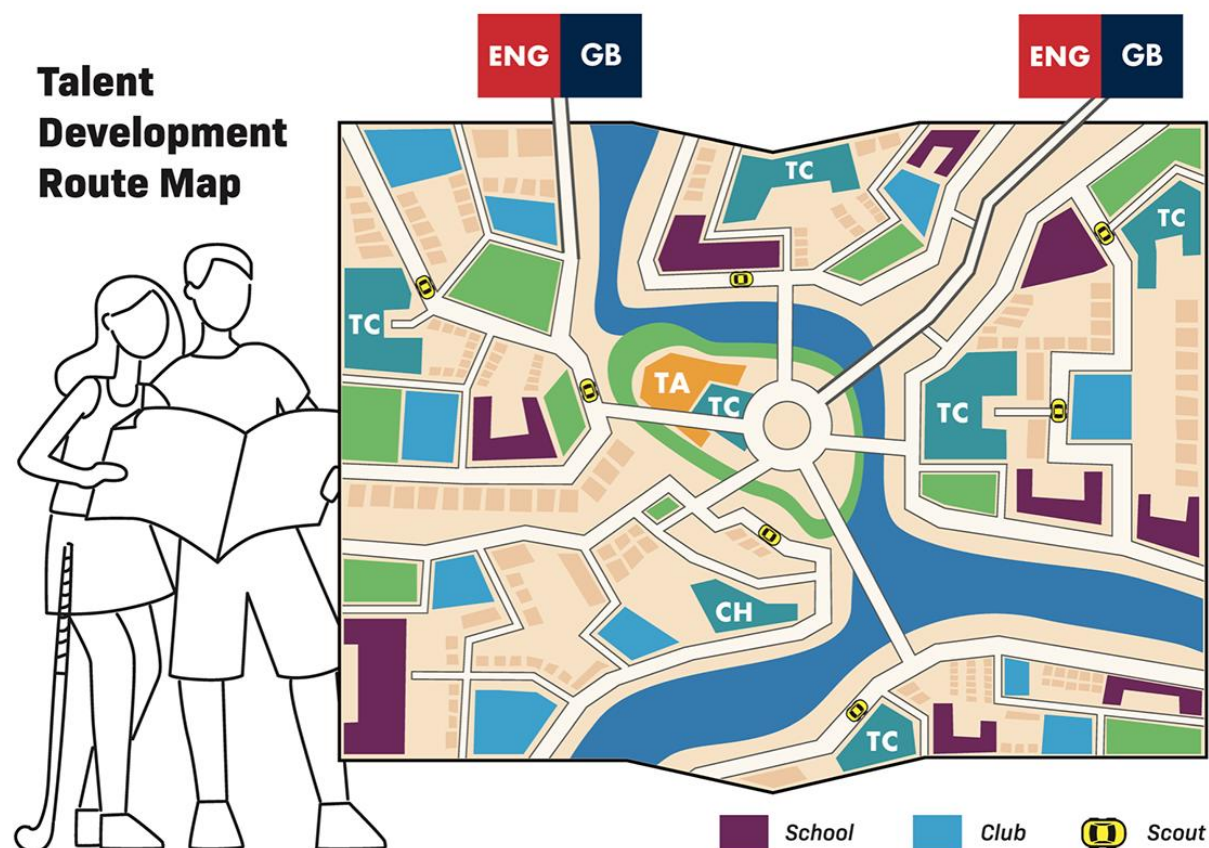
5. The talent system structure shows County (Sub-Area) Hockey and Talent Centres all at Talent Foundations level. What are the relationships between these and how do these link to Talent Academies?

Talent Centres offer regular, high-quality provision within a club setting. County Hockey or representative hockey offers a different opportunity, which includes the recognition of 'playing for your county'. Similarly, there are many other clubs and schools that 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 to attend, with each providing equal opportunity to progress. Therefore, County Hockey and Talent Centres in clubs are shown at Talent Foundations level alongside other clubs and schools.

There is no formal link between different entities at Talent Foundations level, however, a player centred approach can only be achieved through collaboration around the best interests of the individual.

We would like Talent Academies to become centres of excellence in their locality, supporting accredited and non-accredited clubs, schools and County Hockey within a catchment area.



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

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

More details about the selection process will be available in early 2022.

7. 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 via county, regional and national teams. Heavily constrained by time, this is primarily a filtering system, especially at the early stages. The focus of the new talent system is on talent development and supporting more high-quality environments where players can thrive, develop and enjoy playing hockey with multiple ways to progress. Clubs, schools and County Hockey all have their part to play in this more flexible system with different environments to meet the needs of different players.

8. 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](#).

9. 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.