



**ENGLAND  
HOCKEY**

**TALENT DEVELOPMENT**  
A NEW WAY FORWARD



**TALENT  
CENTRE**

TALENT CENTRES

**FAQs: November 2022**



# UPDATED FAQs

November 2022



## 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.

There is no limit to the number of clubs who can obtain Talent Centre accreditation, however, we anticipate the operation of around 80-100 Talent Centres by 2025 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. These numbers are based on a combination of club readiness and England Hockey's capacity to support clubs.

## 2. What is the Talent Centre accreditation?

Talent Centre accreditation recognises clubs which offer high quality early talent development environments. Clubmark is the 'gold standard' mark for clubs who provide a good, safe environment for children and young people, Talent Centre accreditation is this with added talent development requirements.

Talent Centre accreditation is all about developing and recognising what a club can provide for youth and junior players, with a particular focus on those aged 12-15 years, who are showing potential and aspiration to progress their hockey. It isn't about a defined squad or players.

It is critical that all youth and junior environments provide safe, enjoyable, and inspirational environments for our young hockey players. We recognise the fundamental role clubs play as the bedrock for initiating a lifelong love of the game and providing strong development opportunities.

A Talent Centre will provide all these things which is why Club Mark is a prerequisite. But it will also offer safe challenge and support for talented players and pro-actively prioritise its junior system to optimise the opportunities for further development.

## 3. How does the Expression of Interest process work for Talent Centres?

Each year England Hockey will open Expressions of Interest for clubs to complete, this window will stay open for around 6 weeks.

Once clubs complete the Expression of Interest form the England Hockey Talent team will complete a robust internal review across a series of principles aligned with our talent strategy with input from other relevant stakeholders such as the England Hockey Area Chairs.

The next window will open in the Summer of 2023.

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

A key principle of the talent 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 to stipulate the combination of club, school and Junior 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 result of designing a more flexible system means it won't limit the development of gifted players at smaller clubs if that environment is the right one for them.

#### 5. 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 club may not be able to provide the best environment for an individual. However, for most young players a 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 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.



**QUESTIONS THAT COULD SUPPORT A RARE ASSESSMENT...**

1. What combination of club, school, county, Talent Academy, National programme environments are best for me/my child?
2. How does this session/activity/game impact on a player's hockey programme and overall 'load'?
3. Is it the right time for my child to move to a different club?

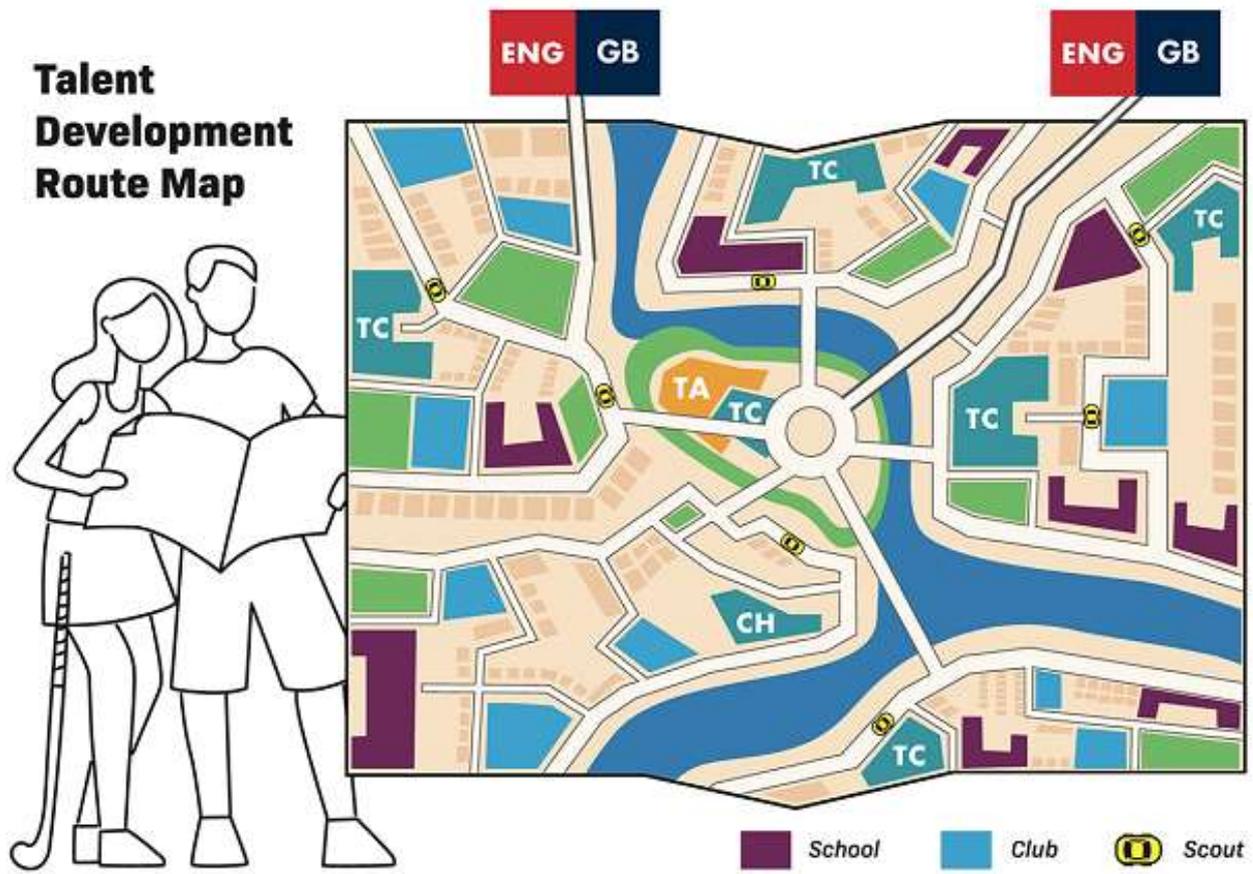
*Side note: Matching the environment to a player's physical, mental and social needs at any point in time is critical to ensuring they can thrive, develop and enjoy their time playing hockey.*



**6. The Talent System structure shows Junior 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. Junior 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.

England Hockey are working to establish Talent Development Forums that would provide an open opportunity for regular and facilitated conversations between those in the game who have an interest in putting the player at the heart of talent development.

For more information on Talent Centres visit: [Talent Development | Talent Centres \(englandhockey.co.uk\)](https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/talent-development/talent-centres).

For more information on Junior County Hockey visit: [Talent Development | County Hockey \(englandhockey.co.uk\)](https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/talent-development/junior-county-hockey).