

PITCH TOGETHER FUND

Nottingham Hockey Centre utilises the Pitch Together Fund to build a new spectator stand

THE NEED

Nottingham Hockey Centre (NHCL) accessed loan scheme investment to help overcome a lack of spectator and event infrastructure that was limiting its ability to engage the community, support inclusive growth in the sport and host competitions. A new spectator stand was planned to transform the venue from a participation focused site into a fully functioning community hub—improving accessibility, showcasing women's and disability hockey, encouraging physical activity among under-represented groups, and enabling the centre to generate sustainable income through events and partnerships.

THE PROCESS

NHCL expressed an interest in the loan scheme in November 2025 and worked with Sporting Assets and England Hockey to develop their application over three months, eventually drawing the loan down and undertaking the project in June 2026.

THE DETAILS

The Pitch Together Fund provided a blended package of support to NHCL including:

- £220,000 loan at 6% interest to enable the construction of the spectator stand.
- Eight year repayment period, with a 6 month capital repayment holiday.
- Match funding was provided through NHCL's own funds, via crowdfunding and a sponsor a seat campaign.
- Ongoing guidance and support throughout the application, business planning and due-diligence process.
- Independent review of NHCL's financial forecast and sustainability planning undertaken by Sporting Assets.

THE IMPACT

NHCL is a heavily utilised multi-sport facility, primarily supporting hockey activity delivered by Beeston Hockey Club and Nottingham Players Hockey Club, alongside wider community, school and regional activity and so already supports strong levels of participation.

The addition of modest spectator infrastructure is intended to make the NHCL more welcoming and accessible to families, schools, volunteers and the wider community, creating more opportunities for people to come to the Centre, watch activity taking place and feel connected to the venue. This increased footfall is expected to help the Centre capture new audiences and support a gradual transition from spectator to participant, volunteer or official over time.

This will strengthen the NHCL's role as a community hub, building on a strong base of existing activity. While additional activity is expected to grow over time, the core aim is to enhance visibility, improve the experience and accessibility of existing delivery, and lower barriers for people who may not currently see themselves as regular users of the facility. This creates more accessible entry points into participation, spectating and community use.

Although NHCL is among the largest hockey clubs in England, this is a targeted and appropriately scaled project, funded through a balanced mix of loan finance, club reserves, and community fundraising. The Pitch Together Fund exists to support community-focused clubs of every size, with funding decisions driven by impact and outcomes rather than the size of the organisation.



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THE IMPACT

David Griffiths, NHCL

'The loan has helped us massively in getting the project off the ground and turning what was a really exciting idea into a reality. Without the support, it would have been much more difficult for us to move the project forward, so it has made a huge difference to the club.'

The whole process was also really quick and straightforward. From the initial conversations through to getting everything in place, the team were brilliant and really helpful, supportive and easy to deal with. It meant we could focus on getting on with the project rather than spending a long time worrying about the finance side of things.

We're really hoping that having a proper covered stand will help us grow our audiences, create a better match-day atmosphere and give the club a platform to continue developing. It has already created a real sense of excitement around the club and the wider community at NHCL. There's a real feeling that this is an important step forward for us, and it's been great to see how much interest and enthusiasm there has been around the project.

Ultimately, we see the stand as much more than just a new facility. It's an investment in the future of the club, helping us create a better environment for players, supporters and the wider community, while hopefully bringing more people into hockey and encouraging them to get involved. We're really excited to see the finished project and the impact it will have over the coming years.'

Eleri Lavender, Investment Manager, Pitch Together Fund / Sporting Assets

'NHCL is already doing great things in its community. We listened to what they were trying to achieve, and backed a project that not only makes the NHCL more accessible to the community for spectating the sport, but also generates revenue they can put straight back into programmes like Back to Hockey and their schools work. This is a great example, and shows how NHCL are thinking ambitiously and slightly outside of the box to grow their reach and improve their impact in the community!'

