

Talent Academy Hardship Fund

Background & Rationale

England Hockey has a vision to make the game relevant, accessible, and meaningful for all by removing stubborn inequalities that exist. We aspire to grow a participation base that is more reflective of society and become a sport that is more inclusive creating access for anyone from any background to participate.

The Talent System aims to create a phenomenal generation of players that the nation is proud of, thus it is imperative the system embodies England Hockey's wider aspirations by developing a broader and more diverse talent pool that can help an increasing number of young players from different backgrounds reach their potential.

Talent Academies (TAs) are situated within host clubs that are intended for the highest potential u15 – u18 players across England. This is approximately 500 players per gender accessing high quality coaching and training for 40-44 weeks of the year.

As England Hockey raises the standards of provision and increases the contact time that our highest potential players access this will have an impact on the financial costs. All TAs operate a not-for-profit model and have committed to providing financial assistance for the equivalent of up to two free of charge places per gender. However, in some locations we anticipate there may be multiple players/families needing support where the expense is a step too far.

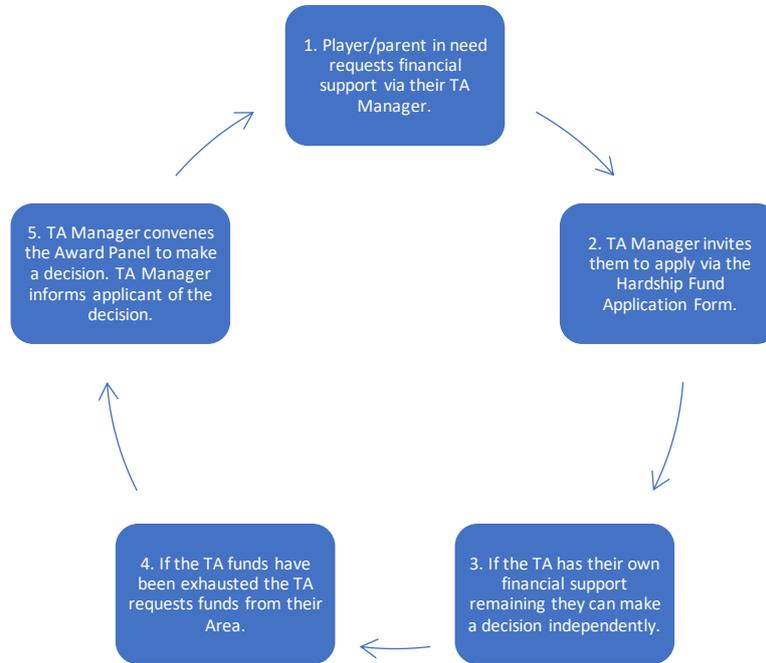
England Hockey and the Area Hockey Associations believes it is therefore vital to come together and remove financial barriers for individuals who are unable to afford provision.

Talent Academy Hardship Fund

The Hardship Fund (financially supported by each TA, Area and England Hockey) would enable high potential players to apply for funds to access the TA environment.

We recognise that there are significant costs required to support young players to progress within the game and a partnership approach will make sure financial barriers do not hinder and individual's progress.

Figure 1 provides a flow chart overview of how the Hardship Fund would function.



Financial Need

It is vitally important that Hardship Awards are given to those players/parents where there is clear financial need for a young player to access the TA. We do not want this to be an intrusive process for applicants, however, for the purposes of transparency where appropriate there may be times when evidence in relation to the criteria is requested.

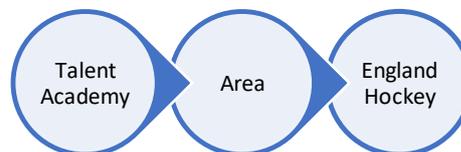
Level of Financial Need	Indicative Eligibility Criteria
Full fees	Applicants relate to one or more of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are in receipt of free school meals• Are considered a young adult carer or are living in care• Other (E.g. loss of job/long term illness)
Partial fees	Applicants relate to one or more of the following; <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are in receipt of free school meals• Are considered a young adult carer or are living in care• Other (E.g. loss of job/long term illness)
Travel contribution	Applicants relate to one or more of the following;

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require support for geographical factors (E.g. travelling more than 90 minutes to a Talent Academy) • Require support with public transport costs (E.g. travelling by train) • Other |
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**Please note this is an interim guide and we will be working with Sport England and our partners to update the eligibility criteria over time.*

Please note the following:

- Talent Academy Hardship Funding is accessible only to those players in **full time, state funded education** or are a recipient of a bursary, or a scholarship from a fee-paying school. The anticipated scholarship level is 100%.
- The maximum amount of funding per season is **£1500** (this considers the full cost of TA provision and travel).
- This fund is not accessible to individuals who are deemed to be financially capable of / or have the means to fund their involvement in hockey.
- Each TA has a ring-fenced amount of financial support per annum for Talent Academy players in need. Once this funding has been exhausted applications will be redirected to the next opportunity as highlighted.



Decision Making

It is expected that this process is to be carried out in an open and trustworthy manner. For example, we are not expecting an appeals procedure to support this process. However, the following guidance can support effective decision-making regarding applications.

Applications will be considered by an Awards Panel consisting of:

- Talent Academy Manager
- Area and England Hockey representation

Award panel members should have no personal financial interest with regards to the decision making process of an application.

Hardship Fund Application Windows

For the 2023-24 cycle the Talent Academy Hardship Fund will open on the **1st September 2023**. For all future cycles the Talent Academy Hardship Fund will open on the **1st September**.

TAs will make their players aware of the Hardship Fund whilst each Area will promote the fund via their website when they are ready to do so.

Roles & Responsibilities

Talent Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the opportunity to their players • Administer the application process • Support each applicant through the process • Convene the Awards Panel where appropriate • Ensure funds are awarded appropriately
Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the opportunity where comfortable • Support the decision-making process alongside their respective TAs • Move funding to the TA where appropriate
England Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the opportunity to the TAs • Support the TAs with the application process • Support the relationship and financial process between the Area & TA • Develop national data regarding uptake

Next Steps

If you would like to discuss the possibility of accessing Hardship Funding please contact your TA directly who will support you through the process.

End June 2023