

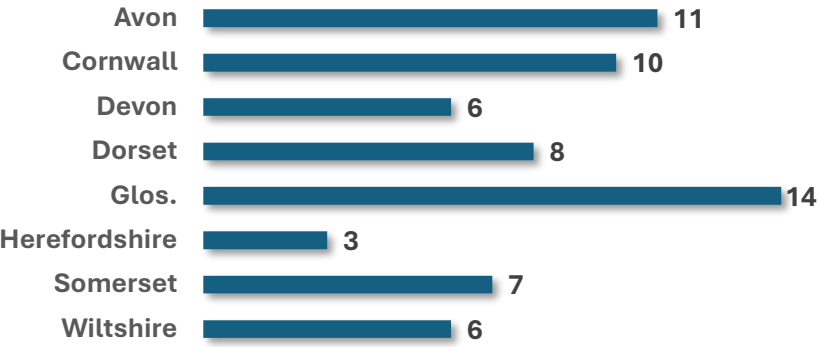


Schools Outdoor Survey 2024/25

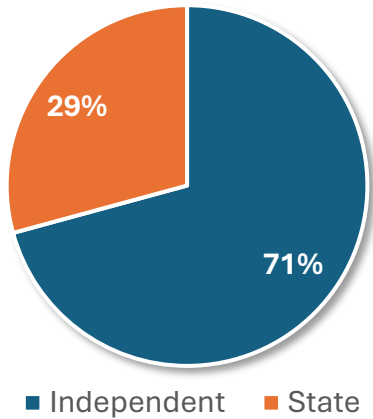
Summary – All Schools (May 2025 – 65 responses)



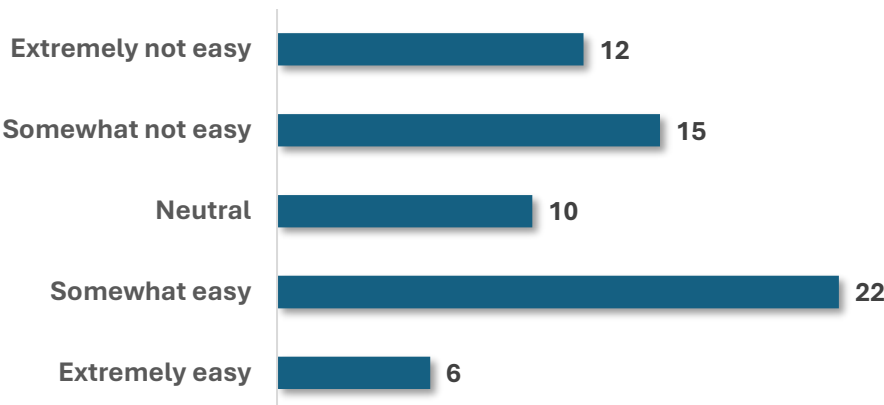
Number of responses by County



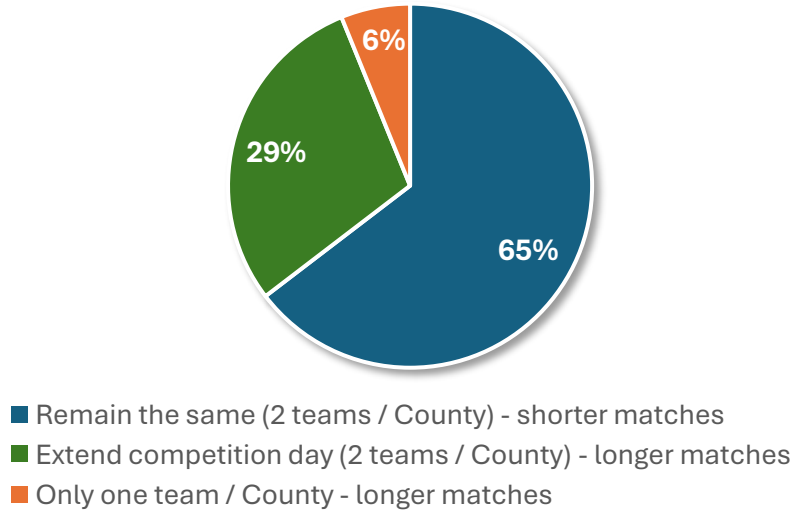
Split of State / Independent School responses



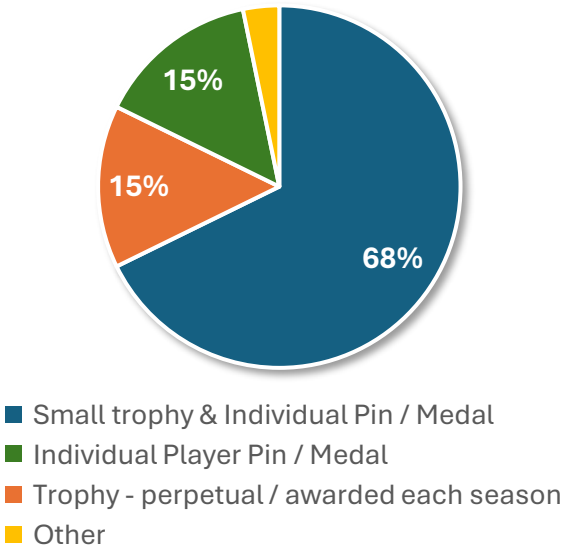
How easy it is for you to bring a qualified umpire to a West Final?



Preferred match length at West Schools Finals



If you won, what would you like to win?



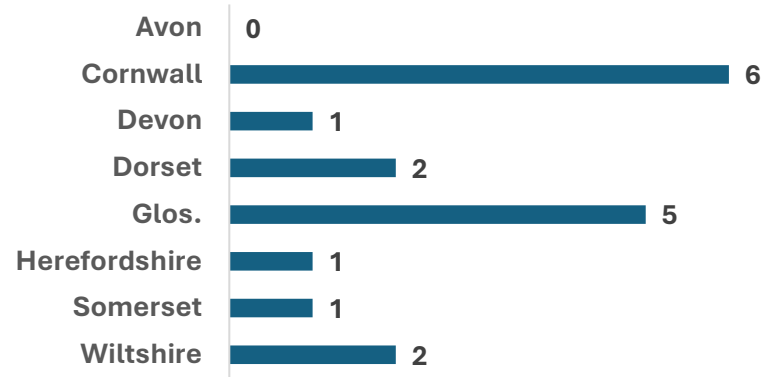
West Strategy focus areas to develop (in order of importance)



State Schools (18 responses)



Number of responses by County



Of the 18 schools who responded

- All but one school participated in local County based National Schools or In2Hockey competition
- 12 schools progressed to and participated in a West Area Final
- 16 schools interested in entering a State School only competition
- All schools thought that the West should organise a State School only Final, where the top two schools from each County round qualify

Key Challenges

- Cost / Budget restraints
- Staffing / Cover
- Travel
- Scheduling
- Umpires

Please offer any suggestions on how the West can try to improve the West Area School Finals

- **Provision of Umpires:** Many respondents emphasised the need for qualified umpires to be provided for matches. Suggestions included creating a pool of neutral umpires, ensuring fairness, and addressing challenges faced by schools in sourcing their own umpires.
- **Scheduling Improvements:** Feedback highlighted the importance of early date announcements to avoid clashes with other events. Requests included avoiding finals on Fridays or before holidays, aligning competitions with school terms, and compressing timings to speed up the day.
- **Travel Challenges:** Travel difficulties, especially for schools from Cornwall, were frequently mentioned. Suggestions included considering travel times, hosting events at more central locations like Exeter, and starting events later to accommodate long journeys.
- **Tournament Structure and Rules:** Respondents suggested improvements to the tournament structure, such as introducing semi-finals and finals, clarifying rules, and ensuring consistency. Ideas included alternative game formats to speed up matches and promoting fair competition tiers.
- **Positive Experiences and General Feedback:** Many participants praised the organisation, setup, and overall experience of the finals. Suggestions included enhancing social media coverage, continuing efforts to engage state schools, and maintaining the current structure for short matches.

Are there any constraints preventing your school attending a West Final if you qualified from the County round? e.g. staff cover, transport costs, releasing pupils, timing of competitions, etc.

- **Transport Challenges:** Transport costs and logistics are significant concerns, with some schools facing expenses exceeding £1,000 for coaches or requiring additional drivers for minibuses. Distance to venues also adds complexity.
- **Staffing Issues:** Staff cover is a recurring challenge, especially when tournaments coincide with other commitments. Schools often struggle to find qualified umpires and balance coaching responsibilities during events.
- **Timing of Competitions:** Scheduling conflicts with exams, holidays, and other sports competitions like Rugby 7s or Netball are common. Early communication of dates is crucial for planning and avoiding clashes.
- **Financial Constraints:** Budget restraints impact participation, with costs for transport, accommodation, and staffing being prohibitive for some schools. Suggestions include rotating venues to balance expenses.
- **Releasing Pupils for Events:** Releasing pupils during academic lesson time poses challenges, especially for all-day events. Schools aim to minimise disruptions to students' education while enabling participation in tournaments.

West Hockey value your opinion and would be interested in hearing if there is any further information that you could provide us with that may help with developing Hockey across the West

- **Participation and Inclusivity:** Feedback highlights the importance of inclusivity and participation in hockey, with schools and clubs working to provide opportunities for all players. Examples include after-school clubs, holiday camps, and outreach programs to attract new members.
- **Competition Structure and Tiering:** Concerns were raised about the tiering system in competitions, particularly the placement of independent schools in lower tiers. Suggestions include creating state school-only competitions and ensuring appropriate tier placements.
- **Challenges Faced by State Schools:** State schools face barriers such as lack of facilities, cost, and time constraints. Feedback emphasises the need to focus on state school hockey development, including addressing equipment shortages and providing more accessible tournaments.
- **Resources and Equipment:** Suggestions include providing shin pads, gum shields, and astro facilities to encourage student participation. Free or affordable umpiring and coaching courses for teachers were also recommended to improve grassroots hockey quality.
- **Support for Clubs and Schools:** Feedback calls for better communication between clubs and schools, earlier release of tournament dates, and support for higher-level clubs to promote performance teams. Additional coaching opportunities and CPD for teaching staff were also suggested.

- **West Finals:** See Slide 8 for dates and venues
- **Travel / Venues:** Notwithstanding the geography of the West as an area, our primary aim is to minimise travel 'across the board' wherever possible.
- **Match duration:** Will remain similar to 2024/25 season.
- **Refreshments:** A 'tuck-shop' will be available at Millfield and we are trying to arrange for a coffee van at Clifton College Sports Ground.
- **Umpires:** Regrettably, availability for both school and club events remains a challenge. Discussions with the West Officiating Committee are ongoing.
- **Coaching courses:** Support for teachers is available via this link - [Deliver - Teaching | England Hockey](#)
- **Local clubs:** Nearest clubs to your school can be found via this link - [Find a Club](#)
- **State School Competition:** Five Counties already run U14 State School 7-a-side events. Would there be sufficient interest were these to culminate in a West State School Finals event?
- **Tiering:** Is a perennial issue that is discussed regularly at National level. Unfortunately, a workable solution has yet to be found. See Slide 9 for England Hockey's 2025/26 age group eligibility regulations.

West Schools & EH Finals - 2025/26 v1



		Girls						Boys						Indoor		Day	Date
Date	Day	U18 T3	U16 T3	U14 T2	In2Hockey U13	In2Hockey U12	In2Hockey U11	U18 T3	U16 T3	U14 T2	In2Hockey U13	In2Hockey U12	In2Hockey U11	U18	U16		
10-Nov-25	Monday													West Boys Finals Clifton College		Monday	10-Nov-25
13-Nov-25	Thursday	West Finals Millfield														Thursday	13-Nov-25
14-Nov-25	Friday														West Boys Finals Clifton College	Friday	14-Nov-25
17-Nov-25	Monday														West Girls Finals Clifton College	Monday	17-Nov-25
20-Nov-25	Thursday													West Girls Finals Clifton College		Thursday	20-Nov-25
18-Nov-25	Tuesday		West Finals Millfield													Tuesday	18-Nov-25
19-Nov-25	Wednesday				West Finals Millfield											Wednesday	19-Nov-25
21-Nov-25	Friday															Friday	21-Nov-25
28-Nov-25	Friday			West Finals Clifton College												Friday	28-Nov-25
04-Dec-25	Thursday													National Finals		Thursday	04-Dec-25
05-Dec-25	Friday														National Finals	Friday	05-Dec-25
Christmas																	
09-Feb-26	Monday	National Finals	National Finals	National Finals												Monday	09-Feb-26
12-Feb-26	Thursday							West Finals Millfield								Thursday	12-Feb-26
Half Term																	
24-Feb-26	Tuesday								West Finals Millfield							Tuesday	24-Feb-26
27-Feb-26	Friday									West Finals Clifton College						Friday	27-Feb-26
06-Mar-26	Friday										West Finals Millfield					Friday	06-Mar-26
12-Mar-26	Thursday					West Finals Millfield										Thursday	12-Mar-26
16-Mar-26	Monday						West Finals Millfield									Monday	16-Mar-26
20-Mar-26	Friday											West Finals Millfield				Friday	20-Mar-26
23-Mar-26	Monday							National Finals	National Finals	National Finals						Monday	23-Mar-26
24-Mar-26	Tuesday												West Finals Millfield			Tuesday	24-Mar-26
Easter																	
15-May-26	Friday					National Finals						National Finals				Friday	15-May-26

EH Age Group Eligibility Regulations - 2025/26



- Schools entering U18 Tier 1 Championships may not enter U16 Tier 3 Championships unless agreed by EHCD and Area.
- Schools entering U18 T1 and/or U16 T1 may enter a 2nd XI in the U16 and U18 Tier 2 Championships but not Tier 3 nor U14 Tier 2.
- Teams entering U18 Tier 2, U16 Tier 2 and U14 Tier 1 may not enter a 2nd XI into the relevant lower Tier championship (U18 T3, U16 T3, U14 T2).

Entry ↓	U18 T2	U18 T3	U16 T1	U16 T2	U16 T3	U14 T1	U14 T2
U18 T1	2nd XI	No 2nd XI		2nd XI	Cannot enter unless agreed by EH & Area, but <u>not</u> at all if entering U16 T2		No 2nd XI

Entry ↓	U18 T3	U16 T1	U16 T2	U16 T3	U14 T1	U14 T2
U18 T2	No 2nd XI	2nd XI		but <u>not</u> if entering U16 T2		but <u>not</u> if entering U14 T1

Entry ↓	U16 T2	U16 T3	U14 T1	U14 T2
U16 T1	2nd XI	No 2nd XI		No 2nd XI

Entry ↓	U16 T3
U16 T2	No 2nd XI

Entry ↓	U14 T2
U14 T1	No 2nd XI