

GOOD PRACTICE

GOOD PRACTICE



A large, stylized crest featuring three lions passant guardant, one above the other, on a shield. The crest is rendered in a dark blue color against a lighter blue background.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOOD PRACTICE

A

Additional Vulnerability

B

Best Practice

Bullying & Banter

C

Changing Rooms

Communication

M

Mental Wellbeing

P

Photography

T

Transport

V

Video Conferencing &
Livestreaming

W

WhatsApp

Y

Young People in Adult
Hockey

Young People
Motivation

ADDITIONAL VULNERABILITY

UPDATED MARCH 2022



Whilst the phrase additional vulnerability suggests that certain individuals could be at greater risk of abuse or harm, this should not be assumed.

It is essential to create a culture and environment within your club that allows all members to feel included and safe; an environment that allows your members to flourish.

Individuals may be at greater risk of additional vulnerability to harm or abuse for the following reasons:

- Increased likelihood of social isolation
- Fewer outside contacts than other young people
- Dependency on others for practical assistance in daily living

- Impaired capacity to resist, avoid or understand abuse
- Affected/ delayed speech and language to tell others what is happening
- Limited access for someone to discuss to
- Particular vulnerability to bullying

Be aware, adaptable, promote inclusion and support individuals to be individuals. Sport is a great place for people to express themselves as they may not feel comfortable to do so in other environments.

Groups considered to be at risk of additional vulnerability (but not exclusively)

- Deaf and disabled people
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender/ Transsexual plus (LGBT+)
- Religion and minorities (including ethnic)
- Young umpires
- Talented young athletes U18
- Talented athletes 18-25

Deaf and disabled people

Sullivan and Knutson (2000) found that children who are deaf or disabled are up to four times more likely to be exposed to abuse of harm than non-disabled children ([Sport disability & vulnerability – CPSU factsheet](#)).

It is not only children with visible or physical disabilities who are at a greater risk of abuse, children with the following types of impairment are also at greater risk of abuse of harm:

- Hidden disabilities – such as learning disabilities, attention disorders, diabetes, dyslexia, epilepsy etc.
- Sensory – such as visual or hearing impairments
- Intellectual impairments – including young people with Down's Syndrome
- Interaction and communication difficulties – Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) including Asperger's Syndrome

Find more information on [Safeguarding Deaf and Disabled Children on the CPSU's website](#).

LGBT+

Many young lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+) people have difficult experiences when they reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity ([CPSU, 2016](#)). It is important that sport is an inclusive and welcoming place for all young people as it may be the only environment in which they feel comfortable to be themselves.

In order to create a safe and inclusive environment in your club you should:

- Ensure everyone is treated with respect and individuals have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Tackle homophobia and transphobia in the same way as sexism, racism or other forms of discrimination
- Challenge gender stereotypes and celebrate individual differences
- Promote inclusion
- Encourage all young people to be themselves and support them

This list is not exhaustive.

Further resources to support young LGBT+ people can be found at:

- [PrideSports](#)
- [CPSU](#)
- [Gendered Intelligence](#)
- [Stonewall](#)
- [Young Stonewall](#)

Religion and minorities (including ethnic)

In order to increase participation of young people from minority groups, clubs should promote inclusion of all young people within sport. As a club you may need to consider the following when supporting young people:

- Culture – including dress
- Festivals – e.g. Fasting during Ramadan
- Food and drink – you may need to consider this for Teas or social events
- English as a second language or parents not speaking English – consider how to communicate effectively
- Role models – whether within sport or outside, young people are often influenced by role models.

[Sporting Equals](#)

Grooming, Extremism & Radicalisation

Young people who are vulnerable may be at greater risk of being groomed or exploited for reasons such as social isolation, low self-esteem, feelings of rejection or discrimination and strong feelings of anger or grief. The process of radicalisation may involve grooming (online or in person), exploitation (including sexual exploitation), psychological manipulation, exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information or risk of physical harm or death through extremist acts. ([NSPCC](#)).

If you are concerned that a young person is being groomed or radicalised and is at risk of immediate harm you must call the police. If it isn't an emergency (i.e. a young person is not in immediate harm of danger), consult your welfare officer or England



Hockey's Ethics & Welfare Team in the first instance.

[NSPCC - Radicalisation](#)

[NSPCC - Grooming](#)

[Gov.UK Prevent Duty Guidance](#)

Young Umpires

It is often the case in hockey that young umpires will oversee games involving adult players. Managing the behaviours, experience and expectations of adults can be challenging for young, developing umpires. There is a heightened risk of experiencing verbal abuse if a decision made by the umpire is perceived to be wrong. It is important to ensure young umpires are supported and they have an experienced mentor who can advise them, both on and off the pitch.

Make teams aware if a young umpire is officiating and remind them of the club's expected behaviours towards young people.

Talented young athletes (Under 18)

Talented young athletes may be at risk of being vulnerable due to the increased pressure placed on them, whether that pressure is from parents/family, coaches, peers or even from themselves. It is important to support young people in their development and help them reach their potential.

Talented young athletes may be additionally vulnerable due to any of the reasons below:

- More intense, dependant relationship with coach
- Performance environment – pressure to perform
- Higher stakes – for young person and family
- More away, overnight trips and travel abroad
- Less family and social / other support network
- Relatively isolated
- Self-image
- Child performing in a mainly adult based environment
- Overtraining – training level/ commitments
- Greater risk of poor mental health/wellbeing (see EH's mental wellbeing guidance)

This list is not exhaustive

In 2017, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson published the 'Duty of Care in Sport' report. This report was conducted as an independent review into the duty of care that sport has towards its participants and the measures sports organisations can take to fulfil this duty. The report can be found [here](#).

The CPSU have several resources available to support and safeguard talented and elite athletes, which can be found [here](#).

England Hockey's [#BehindEveryGreatPlayer campaign](#) in 2018 celebrated the importance of supportive role models in achieving sporting success.

Talented athletes 18-25

Although this guidance is aimed at the additional vulnerabilities faced by young people under the age of 18, it is essential to recognise that the transition to adulthood can be challenging for many young people aged between 18-25. Young people do not automatically become responsible adults overnight upon reaching their 18th birthday and may need continued support, especially if they are in a talent environment, as many of the factors that relate to under 18's will remain:

- A win at all costs approach
- Intense coach-athlete relationships
- Being away from family and support networks
- Fear of losing funding or a place on the programme if they speak out

In a talent environment, there will still be high dependency on coaches and support networks, therefore it is important to ensure that they have someone they can speak to who can help them through this transition.

[CPSU - Elite Athlete Welfare](#)

Further considerations

There are certain considerations that must be made to make sure young people are supported in their development such as:

- Facilities – are the facilities suitable for young people with additional needs
- Accessibility (not just disabled access!) – are your sessions young people friendly?

- Privacy – changing facilities can often be a big issue for the groups identified in this document
- Support – do you have the necessary support in place for individuals who may be at greater risk of harm or abuse?
- Increased supervision ratios – do you need to increase supervision ratios in order to better support your training sessions/matches

- Relevant training – do your coaches/volunteers require specific training to better support them in their role
- Awareness of the importance of mental health – be aware of the links between physical and mental health, how to promote positive mental health and what to do if you are concerned about a young athlete's mental health.



BEST PRACTICE

UPDATED MARCH 2022

Hockey is one of the few sports where young people play regularly in teams with adults, there are very few situations where no young people are present.

Therefore, it is important to remember that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- All children, regardless of sex, gender, age, race, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientations, religion, ability or disability, have the right to enjoy hockey in an environment that is safe from any kind of abuse.
- Safeguarding is not solely about preventing abuse, but also providing the best environment possible to allow young people to enjoy the sport.
- Create an environment where sport is fun and enjoyable for all and encourage fair play.
- Strive to be a good role model to all young people.
- Encourage involvement of parents/ carers backed up by good and consistent communication.
- Include young people in decision making processes – especially if that decision has the potential to impact a young people future involvement in the sport.
- Set guidelines on what behaviour/language is and is not acceptable – create a culture where inappropriate language/behaviour can be challenged.
- Take all allegations, concerns and suspicions of harm seriously and respond to them in a way that is fair, swift and appropriate.

- Work in an open environment wherever possible; avoid situations where you could be alone with a young person.
- Avoid placing excessive amounts of pressure on young people – whilst they may play in a competitive setting, there should be a greater emphasis on their development and having fun playing hockey.
- All clubs/associations with young people must appoint a club Welfare Officer (WO) to ensure compliance with England Hockey's policy, procedures and best practice guidance.
- All concerns should be reported to the WO in the first instance. If the concern involves the WO, you should contact England Hockey's Ethics & Welfare team. If a child is in immediate danger, contact the police.
- Remember – It is not your responsibility to decide if a situation is poor practice, abuse or bullying, but it is your responsibility to report your concerns.

Avoid

- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people, away from others
- Taking young people alone on car journeys, no matter how short the distance
- Taking young people to your home, or any place they will be alone with you
- Putting yourself in any situation with a young person that you/they are uncomfortable with

Never

- Engage in personal relationships (including sexual relations) with any young person
- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games
- Allow or engage in any inappropriate physical, verbal or online communication (e.g. social media/messaging) with young people
- Allow young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a

young person, even in fun

- Allow allegations of a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Do things of a personal nature for young people that they can do for themselves
- Invite or allow young people to stay with you at your home unsupervised
- Allow any form of bullying or bad behaviour by young people
- Allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour or make suggestive or derogatory remarks or gestures in front of young people
- Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- Either exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- Show favouritism to any individual

Key Top Tips

In the case of an emergency where these situations may be unavoidable, they should only occur with full knowledge and consent of the young person's parents/ carers. These situations should always be reported to your Club Welfare Officer.

If you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions, or misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incident as soon as possible to another colleague and make a brief note of it. Parents or guardians should be informed of the incident.

It is strongly recommended that you do not work completely alone with groups of young people. Enlist the support of others – assistants, parents/ carers etc.

Make sure you provide support and guidance to all individuals representing your club on the appropriate ways to interact and engage with young people in hockey.



BULLYING & 'BANTER'

UPDATED MARCH 2022

"Every child has the right to experience sport in a safe environment, free from abuse and bullying"

**Child Protection in Sport Unit
(CPSU)**

Bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is: repeated, used with intent to hurt someone physically or emotionally and often aimed at certain groups such as race, religion, sex & gender or sexual orientation. Bullying can take place between adult(s) and young people, or between young people.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Emotional** – Persistently being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures
- **Physical** – hitting, pushing, kicking or other physical assault
- **Verbal abuse** – offensive name-calling, insults or gossiping
- **Non-verbal abuse** – offensive hand signs or text messages
- **Racial, sexist or homophobic** – racist remarks, sexist jokes or comments, or homophobic, transphobic or gender-related jokes or comments
- **Sexual** – abusive sexualised name-calling, inappropriate and uninvited touching, or an inappropriate sexual proposition
- **Indirect** – spreading nasty stories or rumours about someone, intimidation, exclusion from social groups, manipulating or constantly undermining someone

(Source: [Anti-Bullying, CPSU, 2017](#))

Cyberbullying

Any form of bullying that is carried out through the use of electronic media devices, such as; computers, laptops, tablets, smartphones or gaming consoles ([Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)). Cyber bullying can occur between an adult and a young person or can be peer on peer between young people.

Bullying has become far wider spread due to online platforms. The nature of online activity means it is possible for the instigator to hide their identity, to harass the victim at any time and to reach a wider audience.

Sexting is another form of cyberbullying. This is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images/ videos of themselves and/or others or sends sexually explicit messages on any device that allows the sharing of media and messages. ([NSPCC](#))

There is no single sign that a young person is being bullied, however if you notice changes in behaviour such as nervousness or loss of confidence, physical injuries such as unexplained bruises, notice that their belonging are getting 'lost' or damaged, becoming afraid to attend school/training or making excuses to avoid attending these signs could indicate that the child is being bullied.

Banter

"The playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks" - Oxford dictionary

Whilst banter is commonly used in sport at all levels, it is imperative to understand when the line has been crossed. Excessive and repetitive teasing is a form of bullying.

Banter involves people with equal power, where there is no intent to cause harm and no hurt involved. Banter becomes bullying when it is consistent, hurtful or when there is an imbalance of power, for example a coach and player, teacher and pupil or even peer on peer.

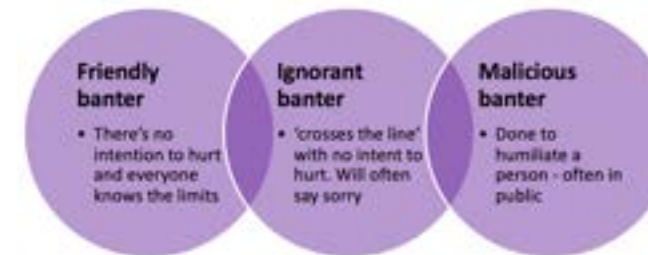
Just because you think something is banter or a joke doesn't mean other people will

People won't always feel confident to speak up if they are offended by something. They might even go along with it so as not to draw attention to

themselves

Banter should never be used as an excuse to bully another person and should be challenged.

More information and resources on banter [here](#).



Source: *Anti-Bullying Alliance – John Khan, Anti-Bullying practitioner*

What to do?

Don't make assumptions that young people can't deal with it, but equally don't ignore the problem. Ask the individual what they want you to do to take the matter forward rather than taking over so they don't feel excluded or more stressed/worried than they already are.

You will need to make a judgement call if a young person does not want you to do anything – is that young person at danger of further hurt and upset if you don't step in?

Reassure and encourage the young person and work with them to find an outcome – they may simply want to talk to someone about their situation, or they may want your help.

Dealing with bullying behaviour (this may differ dependent of age) – talk to the individual displaying bullying behaviour and explain the situation, trying to get them to develop an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour. This may be achieved by:

- Developing, maintaining and repairing positive relationships
- Helping young people learn and develop the skills to make good choices
- Enabling young people to recognise when they have harmed another person and how to put it right
- Encouraging young people to consider their feelings and the feelings of others
- Encouraging all children to consider the impact their behaviour has on others

- Parent involvement

Other considerations:

- Try to seek an apology from the person displaying bullying behaviour to the recipient
- Inform the parents of the person(s) displaying bullying behaviour so that they might talk to their child about the behaviour too
- Impose sanctions that are relevant and proportionate as necessary
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- Keep written record of action taken
- Review any learning from having to respond to bullying behaviour

[CPSU, Anti-Bullying](#)

Who to contact?

- England Hockey Ethics and Welfare Team – offer support and advice on any aspect of bullying: safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk 01628 897500
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)
- [Childline](#) 0800 1111
- [NSPCC](#) 0808 800 5000
- [CPSU](#)



CHANGING ROOMS

UPDATED MARCH 2022



Changing rooms play an integral part of the environment in hockey, not only for their intended use but they also provide a place for pre-match discussion, debrief or to celebrate wins.

Whilst changing rooms may appear to be the ideal place for this use, they can also be an intimidating place for young people, especially those playing in senior teams.

The following are examples of good practice when using changing rooms:

- Players aged 10 and under must always be supervised in changing rooms by two adults of the same gender as the players, who hold appropriate checks.

- When young people are playing in senior teams with adults, it may be the case that they will use changing rooms at the same time. In this event, young people should have access to separate showers/ changing space within that room for privacy. Young people and their parents must be informed of the club's policy on changing arrangements.
- Young people can become intimidated or uncomfortable in certain situations and are often self-conscious and anxious about changing in front of others. If young people are uncomfortable changing or showering in public, no pressure should be placed on them to do so - encourage them to do this at home.
- If you are using a changing room for debriefs following a game, make sure that all parties have been informed and are suitably dressed.
- If you have young leaders (under 18) involved in running sessions for other young people, it is not appropriate for them change together as they are in a position of trust. Alternative arrangements should be provided to them for changing (i.e. before / after other young people or change at home).

- Any adult working with young people, including volunteers, coaches, umpires or staff, must not change or shower at the same time when using the same facility as young people.
- If your club has disabled players, involve them and their parents / carers in deciding how, if applicable, they wish to be assisted to change and ensure they provide full consent to any support or assistance required.
- There is a potential that mobile phones may be used inappropriately in changing rooms, resulting in inappropriate photography or filming, therefore clubs are advised to consider banning the use or misuse of mobile phones in changing rooms. Posters such as EH's 'no camera zone' template can be used to increase visibility of the club/association's stance towards the use of mobile phones in changing rooms, a template can be found [here](#).
- Always use appropriate language and behaviour around young people. Don't use 'banter' as an excuse. See England Hockey's guidance on bullying and banter [here](#).
- If no changing facilities are available, all players should be informed in advance and advised to make alternative arrangements/ bring appropriate additional clothing.
- It is the responsibility of all members to report any unacceptable behaviour and to challenge any action which contravenes the Code of Ethics & Behaviour (Respect).

Transgender and Transitioning Young People

There are a number of considerations relating to changing rooms to be made when addressing the needs of young transgender or transitioning people, including:

- The young person's feelings and preference about which gendered changing room they would like to use
- The privacy of the young person
- The feelings and privacy of other young people in the same changing room
- Practical arrangements such as leaving young people unsupervised, the risks of bullying or unwanted/inappropriate behaviour towards the individual

If a young person self-identifies as a gender that differs to the gender they were assigned at birth, they may wish to start changing with other young people of the same gender identity or ask for privacy. Consider what reasonable adjustments to changing arrangements can be made to accommodate the needs of all young people to help reduce the risk of bullying behaviour or distress. You may wish to provide private, separate changing spaces for the individual(s).

Further information can be found [here](#).



COMMUNICATION

UPDATED MARCH 2022



Positive communication is essential in sport; whether the method of communication used is for messages detailing training, selection of match day squads or the celebration of members and their successes, clear and effective communication is key for all involved in hockey – including young people.

Communicating when you are in a Position of Trust

In line with England Hockey's '[Position of Trust](#)' guidance, certain considerations must be made when individuals who are in a position of trust communicate with young people. Individuals in a position of trust for young people in hockey have a duty of care to protect the welfare of these young people.

This is not exclusive to coaches. Positions of trust in hockey will include young leaders, coaches at all levels, captains, team managers, medical professionals, umpires, coaches and mentors. This list is not exhaustive.

Basic do's and don'ts when communicating with young people

Do:

- Promote positive communication
- Contact players only when necessary
- Make sure the method of communication is right for your environment
- Copy a parent/guardian into any communication with young people
- Check that young people are receiving important information if your route of communication is through a parent/guardian
- Agree good practice on how to communicate with young people in your club (e.g. club policy on communication)
- Make sure there is a mechanism for two-way communication, allowing young people to express their views
- Use social media channels in a positive way to promote and celebrate the successes of your clubs

Don't:

- Contact young people unnecessarily
- Rely on apps/ text/ email to get your messages to young people
- Communicate directly with U18s without gaining consent from parent/guardian
- Give the wrong impression to a young person
- Communicate with young people on matters not related to hockey
- Accept 'friend requests' from young people if you are in a position of trust over them
- Use inappropriate language or share unsuitable content with young people
- Compromise the safety of young people by making or receiving phone calls when your full attention should be directed to the individual(s) (e.g. when coaching)

Personal vs 'professional' profiles

It is advised that you keep your private and professional accounts separate on social media. Ensure that professional accounts do not contain or promote inappropriate content. It is important to set and maintain boundaries with young people that you are coaching as you are in a Position of Trust.

Things to be aware of

It is important to acknowledge technology and the speed at which it moves - many young people may not use or have access to an email account, or age limits for apps such as WhatsApp may restrict the ways in which you can contact young people – ensure you find a method that works for your club and you agree it with parents/guardians.

Bullying does not only occur verbally, 'cyber-bullying' can occur online from devices such as phones or tablets. Bullying generally occurs between peers. For more information of bullying, see [EH's anti-bullying guidance](#).

Technology - There are several apps that can be used as communication tools. Some of these, such as [WhatsApp](#), have legal restrictions and minimum age limits. Therefore, it is essential to check the method of communication before using it with young people.

Systems – Club membership systems such

as Pitchero, ClubBuzz etc. are widely used in hockey. They provide tools for easy administration, communication, websites etc. When using systems such as these in clubs, make sure you inform parents and young people what you intend to use the information for and how it will be stored ([see Data storage & retention](#)). If you are using these systems for the purpose of communication, ensure you follow the guidance outlined in this document.

1-on-1 communication - there may be times when you need to communicate with an individual away from their peers or team-mates. In this situation, make sure they are supported by another individual such as a peer, parent or guardian and you have another adult present. If you need to communicate with a young person individually via text, email etc. make sure a parent/guardian is included in the conversation.

Grooming – 1-on-1 communication can be used to groom young people for sexual abuse or radicalisation. If you are concerned that a young person is being [groomed](#) or [radicalised](#) and is at risk of immediate harm you must call the police. If it isn't an emergency, consult your welfare officer or England Hockey's Ethics & Welfare Team in the first instance.

Social network – Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat etc. are widely used by young people. It is essential that individuals such as coaches who are in a position of trust over an U18 are not linked with young people on social media. Individuals in a position of trust are advised to set their privacy settings so that young people cannot access their information.

Livestreaming and video conferencing – The use of platforms such as Zoom, Skype, Teams etc for coaching or communicative purposes has rapidly increased over time. Guidance on the use of video conferencing or livestreaming can be found [here](#).



Giving young people a voice

In addition to considering how you communicate with young people in your club/association, it is also important to consider how to ensure that young people can express their thoughts and opinions. You may wish to run forums on a regular basis to allow young people to share their views, you might consider having youth representatives on your committee – whatever route you choose to follow, it is important to make sure young people feel confident to express concerns, share their thoughts and aid development of the club, themselves and their peers.

Access **FREE** online training about giving young people a voice [here](#).

Best Practice Advice from CPSU [here](#).

Parent/Guardian expectations and engagement

Parents and guardians play a huge role in the development of young people. They are often the people responsible for driving players to training and matches and can invest large amounts of time, effort and financial resource into ensuring they support their child/ children in the sport.

England Hockey's [#BehindEveryGreatPlayer campaign](#), launched in 2018, celebrated the importance of supportive parents and/or guardians in achieving sporting success.

It is important to ensure that clubs/associations work with parents and/or guardians, outlining expected behaviours of both parents and/or guardians and the club/association. Clubs/associations should not assume the knowledge level or commitment to the sport of parents and/or guardians. Outlining expected behaviours and values at the start of each season and offering regular meetings to parents can go a long way in supporting parents and/or guardians within hockey. Not all parents and/or guardians will engage with the sport their child/ children have chosen, therefore it is essential to consider how you will communicate with young people and their parents and/or guardians to make sure important messages get through to young people.

Positive parental engagement is important, parents can be a brilliant resource to their own child(ren) and potentially to the club or organisation as they may bring skills, knowledge and expertise.

Poor parental behaviour also has an impact on young people, the ['Magic Sports Kit'](#) is a very powerful video that highlights the impact from a child's perspective.

Further resources:

- [CPSU - Parents](#)
- [EH Code of Conduct for Spectators and Parents](#)



MENTAL WELLBEING

UPDATED MARCH 2022



“Mental Wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year” Mind (2019)

Everyone will be exposed to situations which may affect their mental wellbeing, both in a positive or negative way. Every individual will be affected in a different way; it is normal to have times of low mental wellbeing where we feel stressed, upset or overwhelmed.

Physical activity has many positive benefits for mental wellbeing and should be widely encouraged. Not only does sport offer a relief from other issues a person may be dealing with, but it offers social interaction with team sport such as hockey providing an extensive support network for individuals.

What factors can affect a young person's mental wellbeing?

There are many different factors that can affect a young person's mental wellbeing, for example:

- Social pressures
- Family pressures
- Relationships
- School pressures e.g. exams
- Pressure to perform
- Social media
- Additional vulnerability e.g. LGBT+, talented athletes, ethnic groups etc. (find England Hockey's 'Additional Vulnerability' guidance here).

This list is not exhaustive

For some young people, these factors may not affect their mental wellbeing, whereas others may be largely affected and will subsequently suffer with poor mental wellbeing. It is important to support all young people and create an environment where they feel they can speak to someone if they are struggling with mental health issues.

What signs should clubs look out for?

Every individual is different. Individuals who are experiencing decreased mental wellbeing may display some of the following signs:

- Dramatic changes in an individual's language of behaviour
- Social withdrawal
- Rapid mood changes
- Dramatic changes in routine (e.g. sleeping habits or eating)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unexplained weight loss or gain
- Physical harm or substance abuse

If you are concerned about a young person, speak with your welfare officer in the first instance.

If you are concerned that the young person is in immediate danger of harming themselves or others, you should call 999.

How can clubs support young people?

It is important to promote positive wellbeing and create a nurturing environment where young people feel they can raise concerns and feel supported to speak to someone when they are struggling – whether this is another member of the team, a coach, the welfare officer, or anyone else they feel comfortable to speak to. Young people need to feel reassured that their concerns will be listened to and that someone can support them.

If someone discloses to you, take advice – you do not have to fix this! Your role is to support and advise services that can support young people. Schools will often have links with people who can offer a greater level of support to young people. You are advised to have awareness of mental health, to reassure the individual and to seek advice on how you can support the individual.

England Hockey commitment to Mental Wellbeing – Goal in Mind

In 2020 England hockey signed the Sport and Recreation Alliance 'Mental Health in Sport' Charter (link), a commitment to take action in relation to mental wellbeing across the sport.

'Goal in Mind' is the name of England Hockey's campaign to promote positive mental health and tackle discrimination.

Further details can be found on the England Hockey website [here](#).

What resources are available to help clubs support young people?

There are a number of organisations and charities set up to support young people who are experiencing decreased mental wellbeing, including those specific to self-harm and eating disorders.

[NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit \(CPSU\): Promoting positive mental wellbeing.](#)

[Mind](#) have a range of resources available to support organisations in the sport and recreation sector:

- [MIND](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Believe Perform](#)
- [Time to Change](#)
- [Childline](#)
- [Beat \(eating disorders\)](#)
- [Self Harm UK](#)
- [Samaritans](#)
- [Princes Trust](#)

Training

UK Coaching have worked with 1st4Sport's and mind to develop an [online course](#) 'Mental Health Awareness for Sport and Physical Activity'.

Reporting concerns

If you are concerned about a young person's mental wellbeing, report to your organisations Welfare Officer or take advice from England Hockey's Ethics and Welfare Team.

Safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk

01628 897500



PHOTOGRAPHY/ STREAMING / IMAGERY

UPDATED MARCH 2022



Positive images of young people enjoying hockey are essential to promote the sport and a healthy lifestyle.

Parents/carers want to celebrate the achievements of their children through photographs and recorded images. Use of recorded images can also be a valuable coaching aid. England Hockey is committed to providing a safe environment for all young people and it is therefore committed to ensuring that all necessary steps are taken to protect young people from the inappropriate or uninformed use of their images in resources and media publications, on the internet, and elsewhere.

Photographic and recorded images can also be used as a means of identifying young people if accompanied by personal information. Additionally, images can be used or adapted for inappropriate use. This includes any device that is equipped to capture and record images (e.g. digital camera,

video recorder, mobile phone, tablet etc) both live and delayed.

A clear statement should be written, publicised and promoted for all hockey activities, which includes 'the interests and welfare of young people taking part in hockey is paramount'. The use of posters identifying 'no camera zones' in changing rooms and the promotion of positive imagery can help to protect young people but consider how visible and accessible this information is. If using hired facilities, it may not be possible to put up posters around the pitch and in changing rooms – consider how to communicate these messages to members.

Whilst we want to promote positive and appropriate use of images, we must also be aware that some young people will be subject to legal proceedings and in some cases, restrictions will be in place to ensure the young person is protected. In this circumstance, gain consent and information from the parent / guardian and work with them to make sure appropriate measures are in place. Also agree who 'needs to know' this information, so that you are compliant with the arrangements.

Protecting the Identity of Young People

It is essential to protect the identity of young people when using images on websites, social media,

promotional material etc. Ensure that the personal details of a young person are not connected to an image – for example don't use a young person's full name, age and location in conjunction with their image.



When taking and/or publishing photographic and recorded images of young people, written consent from both the young person and their parent/ guardian must be gained. (See [template](#) for more information). Consent forms must clearly detail the intended collection and use of photographic/ recorded images (e.g. for promotional use, coaching aids etc.) and how collected images will be stored.

Encourage the reporting of inappropriate use of images to the welfare officer, so that the circumstances can be investigated, and appropriate action taken.

Ensure that young people are in appropriate dress when taking photographic/recorded images – this will reduce the risk of inappropriate use. Images should focus on the activity rather than the young person.

Communicate your policy on imagery to all parents / guardians so they know how any images taken will be used i.e. no identification / newsletter only / website.

Recorded images

Recorded images are commonly used for coaching purposes or as evidence for exam boards during GCSEs & A Levels. When filming young people in hockey it is important that you make others aware of your intentions including the purpose of filming, how the images will be used and stored

and what will happen to the footage once its need has been fulfilled. If you are filming a match, inform the opposition the reasons for filming and ask for consent to film. Make other young people and their parents/carers/guardians aware of the purpose and gain their consent to be filmed.

Live streaming is becoming an increasingly popular way of sharing content. Live streaming involves broadcasting a live video to an audience over the internet using a device such as a mobile phone or tablet – this could be to a single person or a wider audience. Unlike recorded images, live videos are uncensored and can't be edited. When used in a positive way, live streaming can be a great tool in sport. However, it can be unpredictable and hard to moderate. For further information visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents or click [here](#) for more advice on live streaming.

Club/ Event Photographers/ Videographers

The use of official club/event photographers/ videographer is a great way of taking professional images reflecting the positive and inclusive nature of hockey. Club/event photographers do not fulfil the requirements of regulated activity in relation to DBS checks (see EH DBS guidance here). However, when photographers/videographers are used to capture images of young people, it is important to agree good practice between the club and photographers/videographer to ensure that all parties are protected.

When young people are being photographed/ filmed, consider the following:

- Make sure club/ event photographers/ videographers are easy to identify – photography/ filming bibs are often the easiest way to make official photographers/ videographers identifiable.
- Have a 'sign up' system for registering official club photographers/ videographers so you know who they are and what the purpose of them taking photographs/ footage is. This might apply to a club photographer or local newspaper reporter / photographer.



- Make sure photographers/ videographers are not left alone unsupervised with young people
- Don't allow photo/ filming sessions to take place outside of the club/ event or at the home of a young person
- Encourage positive photography/ filming to celebrate the achievements of young people
- If playing in a game, make the opposition aware that you have an official photographer/ videographer on site and the reasons for doing so (e.g. filming the game for coaching purposes)
- Consider who holds the photographs/ footage and how they are stored – who has access to these?
- Agree where photographs/ footage will be published – notice boards, website, local newspaper etc.
- Understand their policy on retention and deletion of images.
- Agree positive good practice for your club and share this with photographers/ videographers – including a list of do's and don'ts

This list is not exhaustive.

You cannot control every aspect of photography, most people now have a camera on their phone, however you can promote positive and appropriate use. You can and should challenge inappropriate use.

Storage of Consent Forms and Images

As consent forms contain sensitive information, they should be stored appropriately in conjunction with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Consider how these forms are stored and for how long. You will also need to consider who you give access to these forms.

Similarly, you need to consider how you store photographic/recorded images.

- Who has access to these?
- How are they accessible?
- Where are they stored?
- You also need to consider where these images are displayed - are they public or private?

- Once an image is posted on a public site it will be accessible outside of your club.
- Further information on storage of images and data can be found [here](#).

Visibility of Policy and Procedures

England Hockey has a variety of positive messaging templates that can be used by clubs to promote the use of positive photography.

- [No camera zone](#) - designed for changing room use
- [Positive imagery](#) - designed for spectators, poster that can be displayed pitchside to promote positive imagery and respect for other people's children's images.
- [Changing rooms](#)



TRANSPORT

UPDATED MARCH 2022



It is the responsibility of parents/carers to transport their children to and from a training session, match or away fixture.

It is strongly advised that private cars are not used by coaches, club volunteers, team managers, umpires etc. to transport young players at any time.

If, for any reason, this is the only feasible method of transport, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Drivers must ensure the safety of passengers
- Drivers must ensure the appropriate child car seats are used
- Drivers must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and that they have a valid

licence and insurance cover

- Drivers must only use vehicles with seat belts and ensure that their passengers are wearing these when in transit
- Drivers must be aware of their legal obligations when transporting young players
- Parents/guardians/carers must give written permission if their child/children are being transported in another adult car
- Clear information on the expected time of departure and arrivals needs to be communicated to relevant people, i.e. parents/guardians/carers
- Drivers should not be alone with a young person in the car at any time. If this situation arises, drivers need to ensure that the young person is in the back of the car.

Late Collection

If a parent / guardian is late the club should:

- Attempt to contact the parent/guardian
- Check the club contact number for any

information regarding the young person

- Wait with the young person at the club, with wherever possible other staff/volunteers or parents
- Inform the club's Welfare Officer
- Remind parents/carers of the policy relating to late collection
- If parents/carers remain uncontactable staff will need to report the situation to Local Authority Children's Social Care Dept (Social Services) or the Police

Staff/volunteers should avoid:

- Taking the child home or to any other location
- Asking the child to wait in a vehicle or the club with you alone
- Sending the child home with another person without permission.

Hiring transport

When booking transport for an away fixture you will need to remember the following points:

- Passenger safety
- Competence of the driver and whether the driver holds an appropriate valid licence
- Number of driving hours for the journey and length of the drivers' day including nondriving hours
- Whether more than one driver is required
- Type of journey, traffic conditions, weather, appropriate insurance cover
- Journey time and distance and stopping points
- Supervision requirements
- Suitability of transport if the team includes disabled players
- Drivers to take breaks and be aware of emergency procedures.

Useful links

[CPSU](#)



VIDEO CONFERENCING & LIVESTREAMING

UPDATED MARCH 2022

Positive communication is essential in sport and can greatly impact the mental wellbeing of individuals.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, England Hockey are aware of an increased use of video conferencing and livestreaming platforms to connect those involved in hockey. Video conferencing and livestreaming can be used in many ways such as for coaches or team managers to check in with their squads or to keep connected with teammates.

If you are considering the use of video conferencing and livestreaming platforms to connect with young people, you are advised to take the following advice into account:

- **Platform** – There are many online platforms that can be used to livestream video calls such as Zoom, Skype, Teams etc. Ensure you use a recognised platform provider
- **Setting** – Where and how is the call taking place? When making a call ensure that you are in a neutral area where nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background
- **Consent** – Ensure that parental consent is gained prior to any livestream or video conferencing calls taking place between young people and coaches/team managers.
- **Parents/Guardians** – Keep parents/guardians informed and updated.
- **Language & behaviour** – Agree expected behaviours in line with England Hockey's Code of Ethics & Behaviours (Respect) and challenge any behaviour that contravenes this.
- **Duration & Timing of calls** – Schedule

calls at an appropriate time and ensure that the length of the call is not excessive. Avoid unnecessary calls.

- **Personal details** – Avoid sharing personal details such as phone numbers and email addresses
- **Reason for calls** – Video conferencing and livestreaming platforms should not be used for personal calls between coaches/team managers and young people. Ensure parents/guardians are aware of the reason for the call
- **Recording calls** – Calls with young people should not be recorded, especially if the young person is not aware or has not given consent to be recorded.
- **Call Settings** – when setting up calls with young people, ensure you check the joining settings. If you are able to set default settings on the platform you are using, we strongly recommend that the following settings are used:
 - Mute Participants on Entry – **On**
 - Screen Sharing – **Host Only**
 - Allow Annotations – **Off**
 - Disable Private Chat – **On**
 - Allow Participants to Use Whiteboard – **Off**
 - Remote Control – **Off**
 - Kick User Out – **On**

Where possible it is advised that more than one adult (18+ years) is present on any call, regardless of whether the call is made to a large group of young people, or on an individual basis.

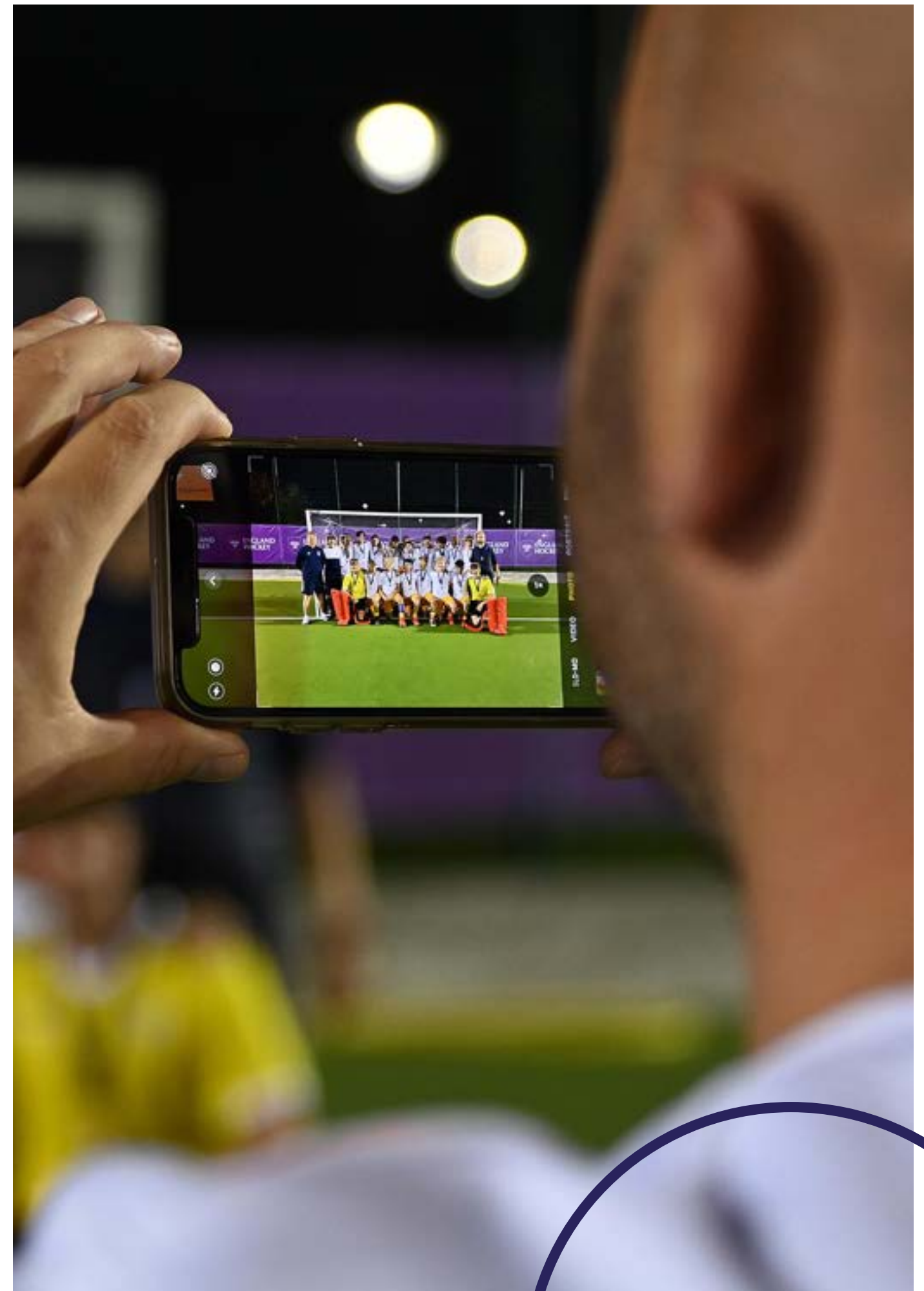
Zoom-Bombing

England Hockey are aware that video conferencing platform Zoom has experienced an increase in hijacking of calls if the host settings are not controlled. Information on how to prevent Zoom-Bombing can be found [here](#).

Further information

Further guidance on the use of livestreaming or video conferencing from the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) can be found [here](#).

If you are concerned about the welfare of a young person, you should contact your Welfare Officer or England Hockey's Ethics & Welfare Team at safeguarding@englandhockey.co.uk



WHATSAPP

UPDATED MARCH 2022



Good Practice for Using the App

What is Whatsapp?

WhatsApp is a popular instant messaging app, which lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have 1-1 conversations as well as group chats.

The app is being increasingly used within hockey as a useful communication tool. This guidance recognises good practice for using the app and highlights some risks when using it with u18's.

Dos And Don'ts Of Using Whatsapp

Dos

- Have a coach set the group up (allowing admin rights)
- Ensure the group has at least 2 adults
- Tell athletes what the app is/isn't to be used for
- Inform parents of its intended use
- Get the team to agree how the app is to be

used i.e. only hockey orientated content

- Keep language appropriate
- Ensure members have a mechanism to report inappropriate content

Don'ts

- Assume everyone is on WhatsApp
- Use the app for private messaging
- Use the app to replace formal feedback

Concerns For Using Whatsapp

Individuals having access to everyone's number. In some environments this may allow individuals to contact each other in a negative way e.g. bullying in a performance environment.

Individuals not using WhatsApp. If a member of the team doesn't use the app, will they miss out on important information?

This guidance should be applied to all equivalent social media/group communication apps.



YOUNG PEOPLE IN ADULT HOCKEY

UPDATED MARCH 2022



England Hockey believes that all young people should be provided with opportunities to improve their hockey, aiming to inspire more, better, happier players.

Young individuals playing club hockey are often introduced to senior teams and development sides, allowing them to gain experience playing with and against older players. This step up can be pivotal to their hockey playing career; however, sometimes decisions can be made hastily without proper consideration for the young person involved.

It is important to remember that young athletes are not 'mini adults' and therefore certain considerations must be taken into account. This guidance intends to ensure that all hockey players, both adults and young people, can have a positive and enjoyable experience within hockey. So, what do you need to consider?

When considering the individual, there are certain areas that should be explored such as; Is it right for the individual? Why is the young person playing in a senior team? What support do they require? What support does your club currently have in place for young people? What additional support do you need to consider?

There are many reasons why young people may play hockey in adult teams, therefore we must consider the reality of why they are involved. There may not be a junior section for players to join, therefore the only option for them to play may be in an adult team. This may be a development team encouraging young players to 'step up' into a more challenging environment to improve their skills. In some cases, young people might play in senior teams to make up numbers. Whatever the reason for involving young people in senior teams, it is vital that they receive a positive experience which will help them develop and grow as people and players. These young people are the future of the game and therefore they should be encouraged, supported and developed.

It is important to maintain regular communication with young people, and their parent(s)/guardian(s),

when they are playing in senior teams and to involve them in decision making. It is advised that, as a squad, you agree a set of guidelines at the start of the season that all players sign up to.

Who is a 'young person'?

"Young people are defined as children that have not reached their 18th birthday".

Definition – from SafeGuard

Hockey is one of the few sports where young people are able to play as part of a senior team. However, regulation states that young people cannot be part of a senior team until they have reached their 13th birthday (Juniors playing in adult leagues, 2016).

Clubs/ associations should consider the differences between players of different ages, for example consider the following based on a 13-year-old player and a 17-year-old player:

- Physiological and psychological maturity
- Social media/networking
- Commitments outside of hockey – do they have exams at school, weekend or evening jobs, what else do they do?
- Impact of peer groups
- Readiness for increased physicality of senior game
- Appropriate language and behaviour
- Skill / technical ability
- Peer involvement

Young people mature at different rates, both physically and emotionally. Where an individual may be ready to play in a senior team, others may not be ready to make this step up. This should be considered on an individual basis. Consider who is responsible for making these decisions (coach, team manager, junior coordinator, Welfare Officer etc.) and what guidance they are basing their decision on, such as policies regarding inclusion and selection criteria, and make sure these are communicated to all players and parents/guardians.

Is it right for the individual?

When asked why young people play hockey, they answered for the following reasons: Inclusivity, fun, teamwork, communication, friendship. Even

in a senior team, these core values should still be prioritised.

Hockey aims to develop people as well as players. The Player Development model has been established to represent the hockey landscape and the segments that position the player at the heart of hockey and identifies the 'ideal' experiences and environments for players to come in, get better and stay in the sport. It shows how people enter, develop within and through, and interact, based on the needs and motivation of players. The emphasis is on providing great experiences and exceptional environments for players to be successful and stay in the sport.

What is the young players experience?

When young people are playing hockey in any capacity it is essential that they receive a positive experience, that they are encouraged to develop and that they are supported. The culture and environment within the club can have a huge impact on the experience young people have. Every player will have a different motivation and reason for playing therefore its essential to consider the following:

Age – Answer will be different between a 13-year-old and a 17-year-old. Some 13 years old are more mature physically and emotionally than a 14/15-year-old. Equally a promising 13-year-old may shrink in an adult environment and it might be better for them to play in their own age group with their friends.

Experience – Linking into the above, do they have enough experience in their own age group? Are they going to have a better experience playing in a senior team?

Peers – What are their friends doing? Do they play hockey to be with their friends? if so moving them away from that environment may not develop them as players even if they have the talent to play in senior teams.

Readiness to transition to senior hockey? – Is the young person ready to transition in a senior team and will they develop? If the young person is not getting any benefit from moving out of their own age group to play in a senior team the move is not justified. For some players transition to senior teams is essential and an important part of their development. Every player will be different and



transition decisions should be taken on an individual basis.

Decision to transition? - Transparency of the decision making process around transition is helpful for all involved. Who will make that decision? what factors that are taken into account? Clear guidance and communication of these factors are essential.

Culture – What is the attitude, language and behaviour towards young people like in your club? Are you creating an environment where young people can thrive? Changing rooms, social areas (e.g. bar area) and other social activities could be challenging environments for young people if they are perceived to be unwelcoming.

Support - what support is given to young people when they play in a senior team? Who is responsible for their welfare? Have someone, with the right skills, appointed to offer support both on and off the pitch and make the transition as smooth as possible.

Consider if the senior team is in a position for a young person to join – would it be productive and right for all involved? What else are they doing?

School – Does the young person also play for a school team? Consider if/when they are playing in school teams

Age groups – Are they also playing for their own age group? If playing/ training for/with their own age group as well as in the senior team this will need to be considered

Other sports – Is the young person taking part in any other sports at school/club outside of hockey? Is hockey their only commitment? Young people will often take part in a variety of different sports and activities, do not assume hockey is their only focus outside of school.

Other commitments – What else is the young person doing outside of hockey? E.g. school exams, music, drama, other activities. Don't assume that hockey is the only commitment they have.

Talented players – for more details around EH's [Talent System Framework](#)

It is important to be aware of the signs of overtraining when working with juniors (both in age group and in senior teams). Young people are often enthusiastic and want to be involved in as many different activities as possible.

Willingness to play - As with any individual stepping into a new team, it is not uncommon that young people will show a willingness to learn and be involved in all aspect of the team. In this case, it is vital to ensure that young people do not over

train and their involvement in matches is monitored as they may continue to play within their age group as well.

Parent/ Guardian expectations – Consider how you manage the expectations of parents/ guardians and how you plan to communicate with them (see communication guidance and parent / guardian engagement). Young people will often be reliant on parents/ guardians for support, transport, funding etc. and will want to ensure that the environment is one that is safe for their children.

Communication

How do you communicate with young people in your club/association?

It is important to follow the basic do's and don'ts of communicating with young people (as found in [EH's communication good practice](#)). Communication tools such as [WhatsApp](#) have minimum age limits and therefore must not be used as the primary method of communication for teams containing young people.

You should also consider how you engage with, and manage the expectations of, parents/ guardians. Regular communication is vital, do not assume that messages will be passed on to parents, inform them directly and welcome regular contact and communication as this will help develop young people within and outside of hockey. Young people will often be reliant on parents/ guardians for support, transport, funding etc. and will want to ensure that the environment is one that is safe for their children.

On & Off pitch environment

Consider the following:

- Who is responsible for young people when they are substituted, sent off or are injured?
- Is there sufficient support in place for young people during training and both home and away matches?
- Does the club have a transport policy for young people?
- Does the club have a changing rooms policy for when young people are present?
- Who holds contact details and medical data for young people & in what format?

- Has photography consent been gained for young people?
- Have the umpires/opposition been informed that there are young people playing?

Other considerations:

Playing positions and duration of play

Young players are often played in unfamiliar positions; for example, a promising young defender may be played as a 'winger' to be 'blooded' into an adult team. Whilst learning all positions is to be encouraged as is interchange through playing lines, denying young people the chance to develop their game within the increased pressure of a new environment is not helpful to their development. Playing minutes - sometimes a young player will be given brief shifts of a few minutes here and there. This is not helpful to their learning and is physically poor practice.

Appropriate language and behaviour

Players/coaches/supporters – language and behaviour

Coaching language and behaviour – should be positive, structured and inclusive. Consider how you would communicate with young people of different ages. Coaches, captains, team managers etc. Should consider how and when they communicate with young people. It may be wise to avoid singling the young person out or not communicating with them at all or making sure conversations are not 1-to-1 when speaking with young people, having someone else present may be better for both you and the young person. Would this be different for a 13-year-old and a 17-year-old?

On and off the pitch - from and towards young people

Avoid negative actions and swearing both on and off the pitch. Challenge young people if they display these behaviours. You could set standards expected of the team at the start of the season, get everyone to sign up and challenge each other if these standards are not upheld. Create a positive team experience regardless of whether young people are part of the team or not.

This also relates to changing rooms, club houses and any other social setting where young people are sharing facilities with anyone over the age of 18. Young people can become easily intimidated and feel uncomfortable in these environments. Consider the language used and behaviour towards young people – see EH's guidance on changing rooms for further guidance.

Reporting inappropriate language and behaviour

It is also important to ensure you report any behaviour that is racist, abusive, discriminatory or sexual in nature to the relevant people. Ensure that all club members and associated personnel (e.g. parents) are aware of EH's reporting policy and who they can contact if they have a concern.

Support network

Any individual who is in a 'position of trust' over a young person is considered to be in loco parentis for the time that young person is in their care. When the young person is on the pitch, this individual may be the coach, team manager, captain or a nominated responsible adult. However, it is important to consider who is responsible for any young people within a senior team when they are in social settings such as: changing rooms, club house/bar area and other social activities.

Clubs/associations may also consider appointing a mentor for young people playing within senior teams who can support and encourage them, both on and off the pitch.

Certain individuals working directly with young people, such as coaches, team managers team captains/nominated responsible adults will require safeguarding training and may require a valid DBS certificate. Find further information regarding safeguarding training [here](#) and DBS eligibility guidance [here](#).



What if a 'young person' (e.g. a 17yo) is elected to be team captain?

Consider agreeing guidelines on what the function of communication is and challenge if anyone is using it inappropriately.

Consider appointing a mentor / named supporter to the young person so they have someone they can speak to outside of the team if they are faced with making difficult decisions or they feel uncomfortable.

Leadership at a young age should be encouraged, work as a team to support the young person in the best way possible but remember, they may need more support in their role.

Think about what the player is responsible for but also who is responsible for them. Again, this may be different based on age.

Social events

Hockey is a sociable sport, bringing together a variety of people from different backgrounds, including those who are U18. The sociable side of hockey should not be discouraged, celebrating wins and learning from losses vastly improves team cohesion and can build lifelong friendships. If there are U18's playing in your team, consider the following:

- Who is responsible for junior members at social events? – identify an individual within the team (captain/team manager etc.) who is responsible for the safety & welfare of junior members when at social events.
- Are their parents/carers present?
- Do you have contact details for a parent/ carer of that U18?
- Is the U18 in a vulnerable position where they may be exposed to alcohol?
- Could you impose a curfew for U18s to prevent them being exposed to uncomfortable/inappropriate situations?
- How could you involve U18's in social events whilst ensuring their welfare is at the forefront?

Guidance on alcohol

It is illegal for any person under the age of 18 to buy alcohol, to have an adult buy alcohol on their behalf or to drink alcohol in a licensed premise. Whilst we acknowledge that young people over the age of 15 can consume alcohol in the presence of a parent/ guardian/ carer or in a supervised environment we recommend that alcohol should not be provided to any person under the age of 18 within hockey. Alternative drink options such as soft drinks/ water/ squash etc. should be provided.



YOUNG PLAYER MOTIVATION

UPDATED MARCH 2022



It is important to consider how you can encourage and motivate young people in hockey to ensure they feel supported.

Punishments and 'Forfeits' will often discourage young people and can have many negative impacts, such as loss of confidence. It is essential to create an environment where young people feel support and that allows them to develop. If you are considering how to increase player motivation, consider the following:

Give players a sense of control

While guidance from a coach is important to keeping

players on task and motivated, allowing players to have some choice and control over what happens in the activity is one of the best ways to keep them engaged. For example, allowing players to choose the type of activity they do or which problems to work on can give them a sense of control that may just motivate them to do more.

Define the objectives

It can be very frustrating for players to complete a task or even to behave in a session if there aren't clearly defined objectives. Players want and need to know what is expected of them in order to stay motivated to work. At the beginning of the season (session), lay out clear objectives, rules, and expectations of players so that there is no confusion and players have goals to work towards.

Create a threat-free environment

While players do need to understand that there are consequences to their actions, far more motivating for players than threats are positive reinforcements. When coaches create a safe, supportive environment for players, affirming their

belief in a player's abilities rather than laying out the consequences of not doing things, players are much more likely to get and stay motivated to do their work. At the end of the day, players will fulfil the expectations that the adults around them communicate, so focus on can, not can't.

Use positive competition

Competition in the coaching environment isn't always a bad thing, and in some cases can motivate players to try harder and work to excel. Work to foster a friendly spirit of competition in your sessions, perhaps through group games related to the tasks and create opportunities for players to show off their skills.

Offer rewards

Everyone likes getting rewards and offering your players the chance to earn them is an excellent source of motivation. Consider the personalities and needs of your players to determine appropriate rewards for your group.

Give players responsibility

Assigning players roles and responsibilities to build a community, connection to give players a sense of motivation. Players can see roles as a privilege rather than a burden and will work hard to ensure that they, and other players, are meeting expectations. It can also be useful to allow players to take turns leading activities or helping so that each feels important and valued.

Allow players to work together

While not all players will jump at the chance to work in groups, many will find it fun to try to solve problems, and work on skills with other players. The social interaction can get them excited about things in the session and players can motivate one another to reach a goal. Coaches need to ensure that groups are balanced and fair so that some players aren't doing more work than others.

Give praise when earned

There is no other form of motivation that works quite as well as encouragement. Even as adults we crave recognition and praise, and players at any age are no exception. Coaches can give players motivation by rewarding success publicly, giving praise for a

job well done, and sharing exemplary work.

Be excited

One of the best ways to get your players motivated is to share your enthusiasm. When you're excited about coaching, they'll be much more excited about learning. It's that simple.

Know your players

Getting to know your players is about more than just memorizing their names. Players need to know that their coach has a genuine interest in them and cares about them and their success. When players feel appreciated it creates a safe learning environment and motivates them to work harder, as they want to get praise and good feedback from someone they feel knows and respects them as individuals.

Help players find intrinsic motivation

It can be great to help players get motivated, but at the end of the day they need to be able to generate their own motivation. Helping players find their own personal reasons for working hard, whether because they find the sessions interesting, want to go to attend the coaching sessions is one of the most powerful gifts you can give them.

Manage player anxiety

Some players find the prospect of not doing well so anxiety-inducing that it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. For these players, coaches may find that they are most motivated by learning that struggling with a task isn't the end of the world. Offer support no matter what the result is and ensure that players don't feel so overwhelmed by expectations that they just give up.

Make goals high but attainable

If you're not stretching and challenging your players to do more than the bare minimum, most won't seek to push themselves on their own. Players need and like to be challenged and will work to achieve high expectations so long as they believe those goals to be within their reach, so don't be afraid to push players to get more out of them.



Give feedback and offer chances to improve

Players who struggle with skill acquisition can sometimes feel frustrated and get down on themselves, draining motivation. In these situations, it's critical that coaches help players to learn exactly where they went wrong and how they can improve next time. Figuring out a method to get where players want to be can also help them to stay motivated to work hard.

Track progress

It can be hard for a player to see just how far they've come, especially with skills that are not that difficult for them. Tracking can come in handy in the club or Performance Centre environment, not only for coaches but also for players. Coaches can use this to motivate players, allowing them to see visually just how much they are learning and improving as the year goes on.

Make things fun

Not all coaching needs to be a game or a good time, but players who see the coaching session as a place where they can have fun will be more motivated to pay attention and do the work that's required of them than those who regard it as a chore. Adding fun activities into your session can help players who struggle to stay engaged and make the session a much more friendly place for all players.

Provide opportunities for success

Players, even the best ones, can become frustrated and demotivated when they feel like they're struggling or not getting the recognition that other players are. Make sure that all players get a chance to play to their strengths and feel included and valued.

It can make a world of difference in their motivation.

Alternative options

Rather than performing 'forfeits' players could be given tasks to complete such as acts of kindness, such as:

- Filling a water bottle

- Collecting balls
- Carrying a bag
- Giving praise to another player

There is also an opportunity to flip the task so that the 'winners' receive a bonus – this could be double point for goals scored, a penalty stroke when given a penalty corner etc. This provides a learning focus for individuals and removes the 'punishment' element.

Sometimes, a group simply needs to know the learning focus and can be happy to self-review it based on simple targets. No need to add false motivation with consequences, the self-fulfilling drive of sensing and gaining progress should be enough - If your Motivational Climate is clear and healthy!

