

# Junior Competitions Review Update



Many thanks for taking the time to attend one of our focus groups and, or completing the online surveys as part of the review of our Junior Competitions Framework. Your feedback has been invaluable in shaping our work and we are excited about the opportunity to grow participation and deliver better experiences for our young players through a revised competition programme.

This short paper has been produced to give you a high level summary and update of the feedback you gave, the decision taken by the Board of England Hockey to date and our planned next steps.

The core objective of our review was to increase participation in Junior Competitions by providing more relevant competition opportunities in both club and school environments. We are excited about the prospect of delivering more, better experiences for our young players through a revised competition programme.

As part of this review, England Hockey sought feedback from schools, clubs and competition organisers to help to shape the future offer in England. We had 230 responses to the Schools' survey, 231 responses to the Junior Clubs' survey and 55 responses from junior competition organisers. Respondents were asked to consider a proposed indicative new model, shaped by focus groups, for Junior Competitions.

To recap here is a link to the documentation for the model which also details the work undertaken in designing the model. <http://www.englishockey.co.uk/news.asp?itemid=34526&itemTitle=Junior+Competitions+Review&section=22>

Within the Schools and Junior Clubs surveys we had a good spread of respondents across the three categories of club and school including elite, intermediate and emerging. There is no evidence that the data is skewed by one particular group or area of the country.

## ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY RESULTS

Your survey responses told us that the following core principles and approach should underpin the future development of a revised Junior Competitions Framework:-

- Provide a competitions framework to support the development of young players from beginners to elite that will increase and widen participation.
- Offer a tiered competition programme to give better playing experiences for more young players. Tiered competitions are where different levels of competition are set up to meet the needs and standard of teams/players.
- Provide a competitions framework with regular fixtures utilising junior leagues where these exist and stimulating them where they do not.
- Provide a competitions framework where travel distances are commensurate with the level of competition.
- Develop and apply regulations that are appropriate to the tier of competition, particularly relating to player eligibility and players playing in different competitions and age groups.
- Reflect new opportunities and a changing sport and hockey competition landscape, e.g. small sided games and festivals.
- Reach out to new markets and raise awareness of the new opportunities.

You also indicated that the following measures would be useful to support the future delivery of a revised Junior Competitions Framework:-

- Access to an online competition and results management system
- Development of a central entry portal
- A centralised marketing campaign to include marketing templates etc.
- Resource to support the delivery of local and area competitions activity

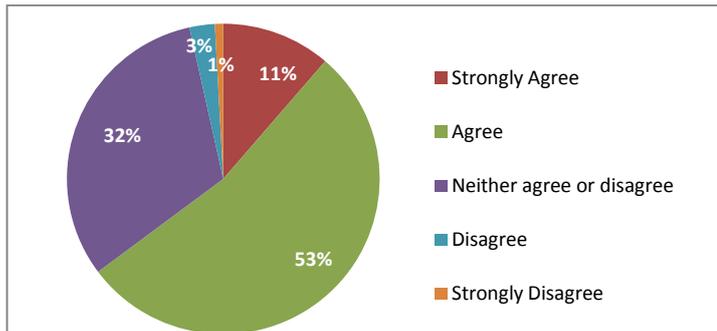
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A summary of the responses to a number of key questions is included below.

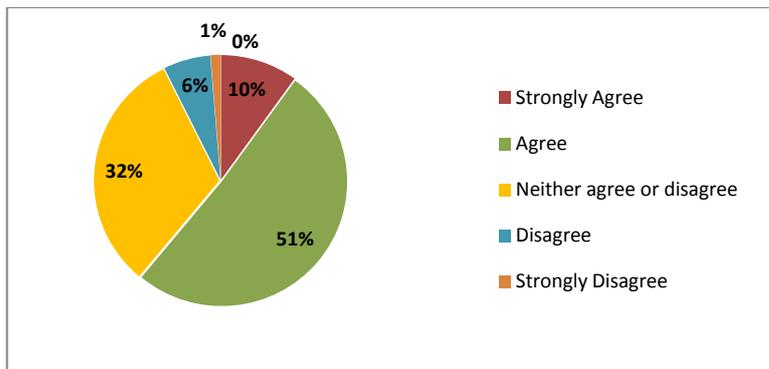
## 1. Do you think that the model programme (see link above) will give a more appropriate range of competition activity and increase participation in the Junior Competitions programme?

In all three categories you told us that you agreed and strongly agreed with the proposed new model with a low level of disagreement.

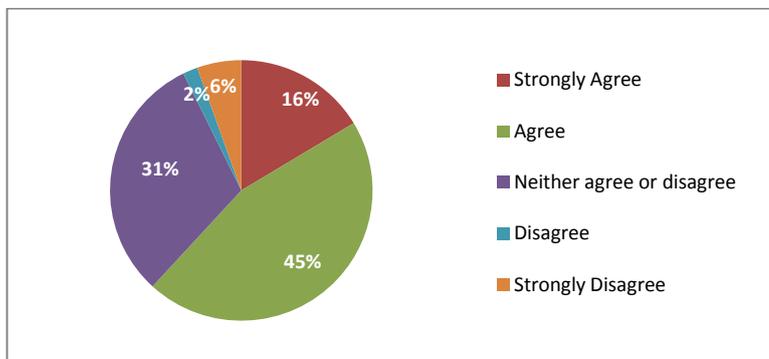
### Clubs



### Schools



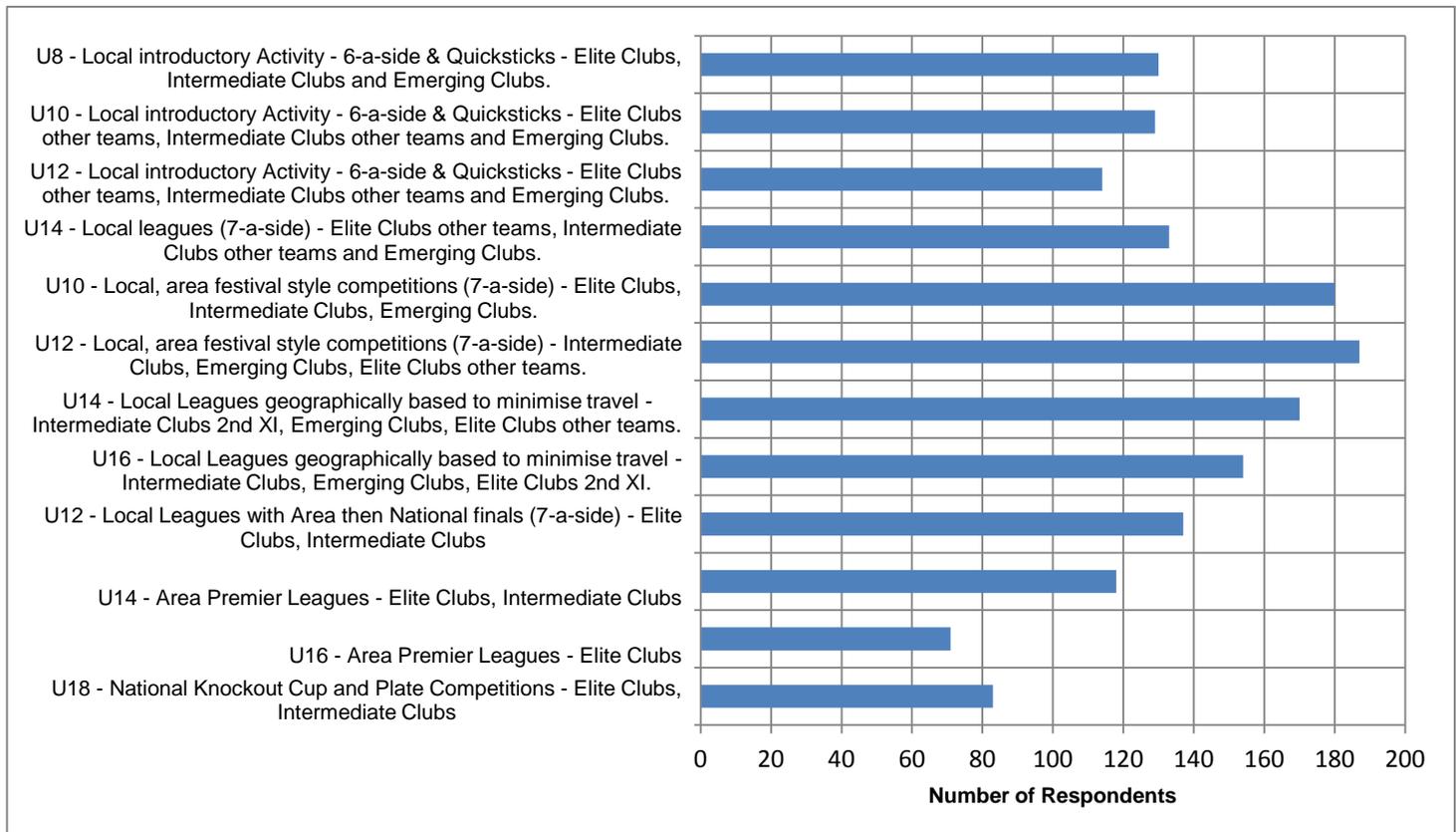
### Organisers



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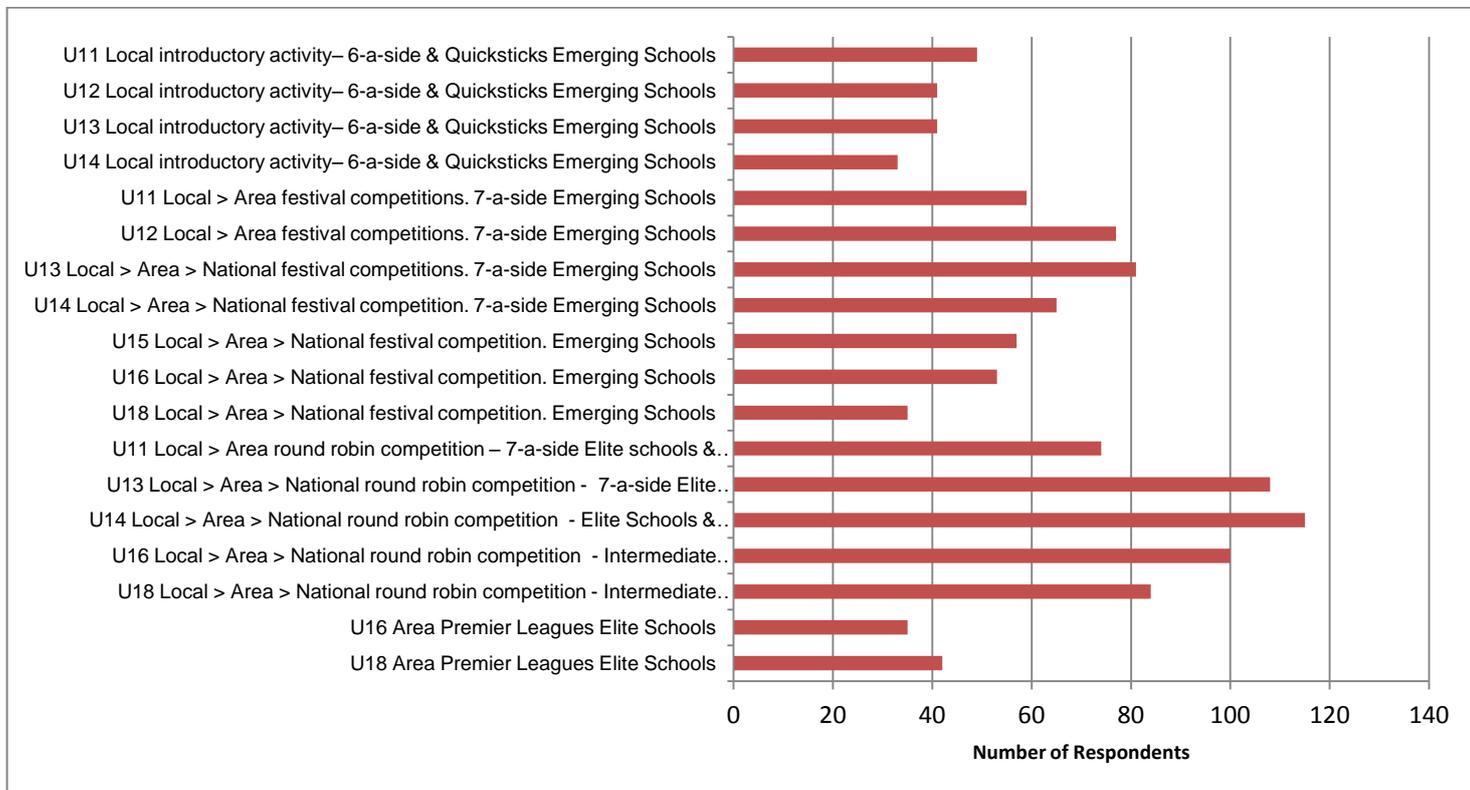
Looking at the proposed model programme for competitions please indicate all of the competitions you think would be appropriate for your Club

Respondents completing the Club survey indicated that a wide range of competitions in the indicative new model would be appropriate your club.



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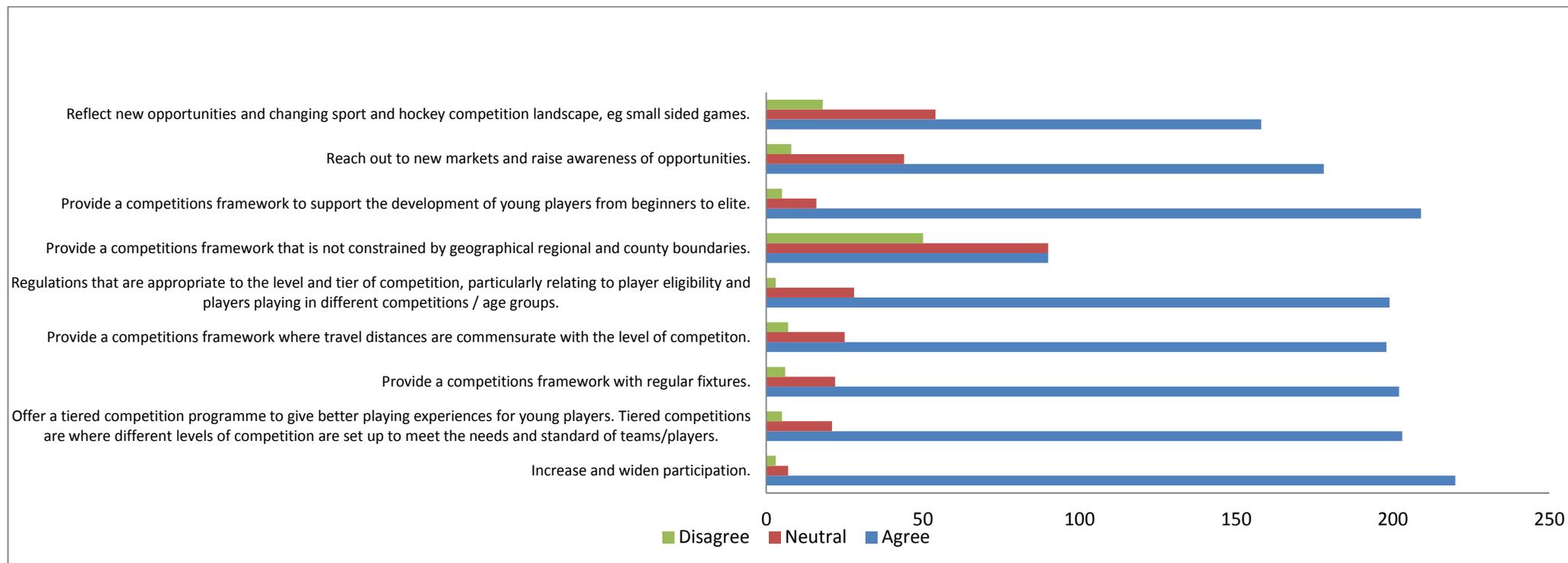
Looking at the proposed model programme for competitions please indicate all of the competitions you think would be appropriate for your School



## Junior Competitions Review Update

### Clubs - support for the principles that underpin the proposed changes

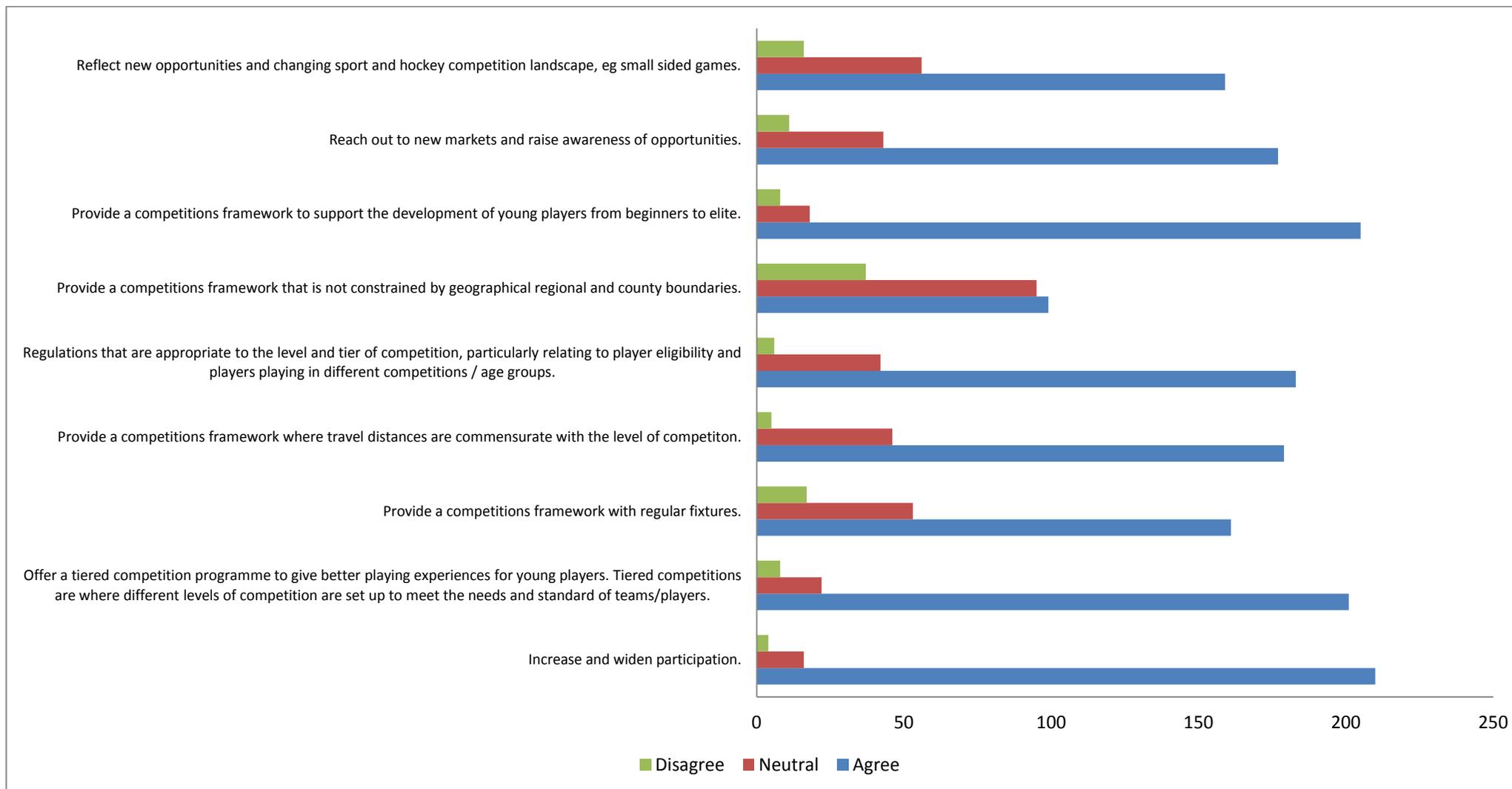
All of the principles received a strong level of support except for the one regarding flexibility of existing hockey geographic boundaries. Further consultation will be carried out prior to any decisions being made.



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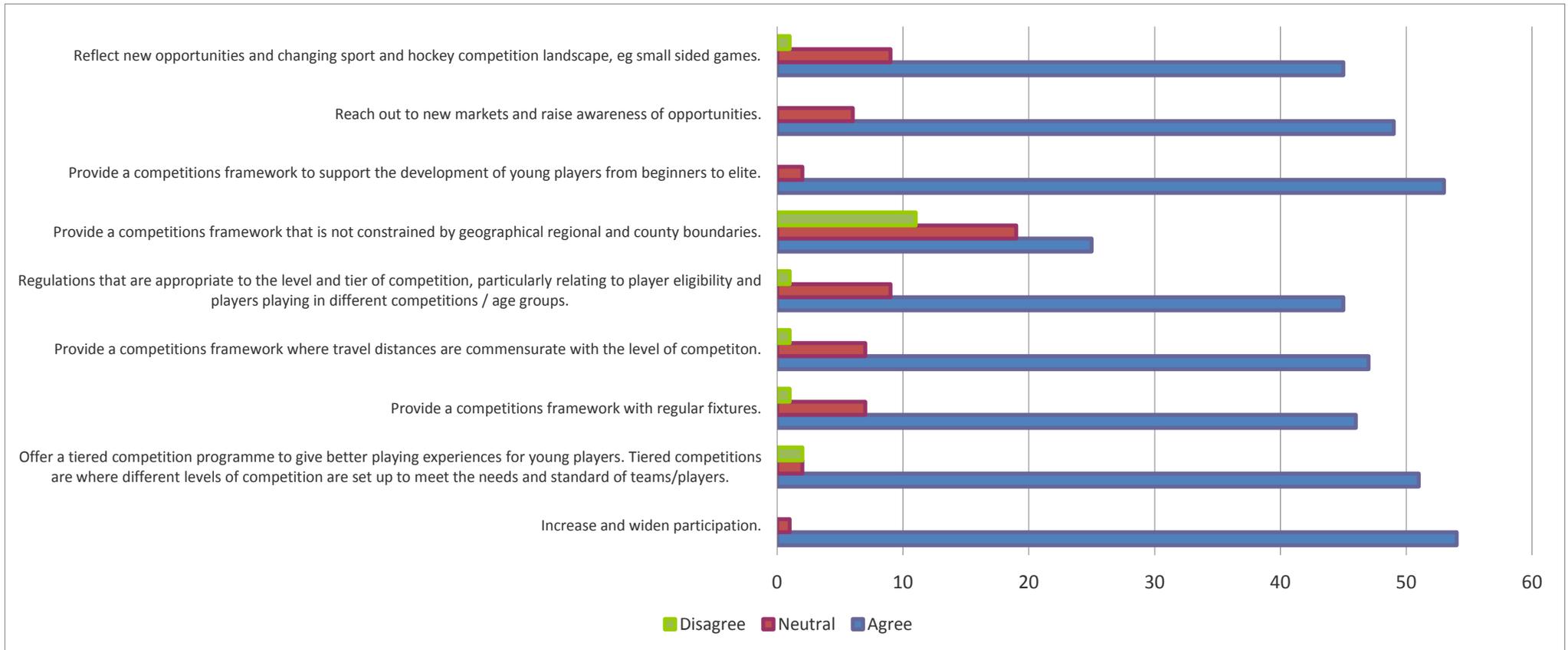
### Schools - support for the principles that underpin the proposed changes

As above all of the principles received a strong level of support except for the one regarding flexibility of existing hockey geographic boundaries. Further consultation will be carried out prior to any decisions being made.



# Junior Competitions Review Update

## Organisers - support for the principles that underpin the proposed changes



## Junior Competitions Review Update

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Based on your survey responses the Board approved the following recommendations at their meeting on 17 May 2016**

1. A new **EH National Junior Competitions Framework** to be established to provide a structure for the Junior Schools and Clubs competitions that complements the revised Player Pathway programme.
2. The needs of athletes will be placed at the heart of the programmes and all future decision making to **deliver great playing experiences**.
3. The Junior Competitions Framework will **utilise existing Junior Leagues** and stimulate the creation of new Junior Leagues over the next 3 to 4 year period at both Area and Local level delivering more **regular** competition.
4. The Framework will provide a **tiered** offer with **regulations that are relevant** to the tier of League and Competition ensuring the delivery of more **appropriate** competition. This will particularly apply to player eligibility and will both minimise mis-matches and encourage increased entries. This represents a major shift away from the current single tier competition structure.
5. There will be a greater emphasis on the use of **small sided games** and **informal activity** (festivals) as part of the new framework at all ages to support development, retention and skill development. This will be further influenced through the **variation in regulations** for different age groups and standards to support learning, specific skills acquisition and talent development.
6. The new framework will be **flexible to accommodate Local and Area needs**, e.g. the number of teams and tiers per League and Competition will be varied to minimise travel distances and respond to both demand and variations in population density and current and future hockey activity.
7. We will consult further with organisers about the best approach to Local and Area **geographical boundaries** where flexibility would benefit teams and travel time.
8. There will be **Area and National finals** where these are considered relevant to the age group, tier and number of participating teams. These are recommended to provide the focus to stimulate entries into the programmes and as the primary source of income to support the delivery of the Framework.
9. The principles of **equal opportunity** (girls and boys) and **activity relevant to ability** will underpin the Framework.
10. We will work towards closer alignment with other aspects of the game for example - calendar, regulations, facilities strategy for all who are playing hockey to include; e.g. School Games, Independent Schools Association (ISA) and Association of Colleges Sport (AoC Sport).

### NEXT STEPS

**The following work is planned for the July 2016 to May 2017 period**

1. A time limited Junior Competitions Framework Group with Terms of Reference to be established to help shape the detailed offer and modelling. Subgroups may be considered if required for specific elements.
2. The setting of clear targets and a strategic roll out programme for the 2017-2021 period to support the delivery of increased participation in the Framework.
3. The development of an implementation project plan for the 2017-2018 season and the appointment of a software provider to develop an on-line entry system.
4. Further targeted consultation on the principle of 'relaxing' geographical boundaries where required to enable increased participation in areas of lower population and minimising travel time.
5. Engaging and consulting with School Games Co-ordinators, partners, ISA and AoC Sport to shape the detailed offer.
6. The development of a detailed business model to support the Junior Competitions Framework.
7. Define the best approach to resourcing both implementation and delivery phases.

## *Junior Competitions Review Update*

8. Branding and launching the new Junior Competitions Framework in Spring 2017.
9. Promoting and raising awareness of the new programme alongside the finals of the 2016-2017 programme.

Thank you again for your support and insight which is so important in shaping the future delivery of the Junior Competitions Framework. We will continue to share planning with you as we develop the detailed offer.

In the interim please give Stephen or Lisa in the Competitions Team a call on 01628 897508 or email [competitions.info@englandhockey.co.uk](mailto:competitions.info@englandhockey.co.uk) if you would like to talk through any of this work or want to find out more about this year's competitions. Your support in helping us make the new Junior Competitions Framework a real success is important to us and we look forward to making progress over the coming months.

Thank you  
The England Hockey Competitions Team