

PARENT ZONE DISABILITY PLAYER PATHWAYS



This is a guide for parents and carers to help define the different football environments for players within the County of Essex, from Grassroots Clubs to the Para Talent Pathways.



GRASSROOTS CLUBS:
Provide a safe, fun, and engaging environment for all abilities to play football within their local area. There are a number of different options to ensure you find the best environment for each player:

- Mainstream Football
- Impairment Specific Football
- Pan-Disability Football
- Inclusive Sessions



ESSEX SOCCABILITY LEAGUE
Open-Age league that runs monthly events with small sided fixtures at centralised venues. Multiple divisions with up to four ability bandings.




PAN-DISABILITY FOOTBALL
Offers a football environment where players with a broad spectrum of disabilities and health conditions can participate together.

- The majority of recreational and competition-based opportunities in Essex play this format
- Anyone with a disability, impairment or long-term health condition (as defined by the Equality Act 2010) can take part in Pan-Disability Football
- However, blind players are directed to blind specific settings and wheelchair users can be included in recreational formats but it is not advisable in competition settings and should be directed towards Powerchair specific provisions.

DISPENSATION
Dispensation allows players with a disability or Significant Physical Development Delay (SPDD) to play one year behind the age group prescribed. To find out more information and how to apply, visit our [website](#).

MAINSTREAM FOOTBALL
This pathway is for anyone who can play football without adaptations. Disabled players and non-disabled players play together.



AGE BANDINGS
Disability football is a flexible opportunity so the age bandings have been adapted to match. Teams can be formed with 4 year age bandings and include U8s, U12s, U16s and Open Age.

IMPAIRMENT SPECIFIC FOOTBALL
Sessions where players with the same type of impairment can play together. Impairment specific football often gives players the best possible experience of the game the design of each format meets the needs of those taking part.

- Includes Deaf, Blind, Partially-Sighted, Cerebral Palsy, Powerchair and Amputee Football
- Impairment specific football offers opportunity from grassroots right through to an elite environment, including international competitions like World and European Championships for a number of formats.



PARA TALENT HUB
Talent hubs will deliver engagement sessions for players with cerebral palsy, deaf players and partially sighted players. Sessions will enable continued talent identification/confirmation opportunities and will impact younger players. Hubs will be used as a 'check point' for these players and will have robust processes to link players to appropriate mainstream clubs or impairment specific clubs.



INCLUSIVE SESSIONS
Aimed at including all, these sessions are flexible and often recreation only. Offering players with participation opportunities in preparation for integration within a competitive football environment.

COMETS PROGRAMME
This is football but not as you know it – results, stats and performance can be damned. Comets is a recreational, pan-disability football offer for disabled children aged 5-11.

For more information, please visit: [Comets Disability Community Programme](#).




ENGLAND PARA TALENT PATHWAY
One player, two journeys, Three Lions. Have you always dreamed of playing for England? The dream is on.

England Para Talent Pathway aims to find players who are 'hidden' in mainstream clubs, whose impairments may not be immediately obvious. While playing their usual format of football, we are encouraging players to engage with the England Para Talent Pathway to explore their potential and discover new ways to play the game to suit them. So they could be training with their mates one week and playing for their country the next!

The pathway is formed of a number of stages to support a player's development, from first engagements and signposting towards the correct environment to reaching the National Teams. A player at the start of their journey would attend an England Talent Day to refer players into their local talent hub.

Players who are identified at a later stage can also join the pathway through a referral link.

For more information, please visit: [Para Football Performance Pathway](#)

 Parent/Carer Checklist: Are all coaches DBS checked? Do they hold FA Safeguarding & First Aid Qualifications? Does the provider have Public Liability Insurance? What FA Coaching Qualifications do they have? Have they conducted a Risk Assessment?

Creating a united grassroots environment which delivers football For All