

FA Disability Talent Pathway

The purpose of The FA's Disability Talent Programme is to identify young players deemed to possess higher levels of ability and to place them in a developmental programme designed to produce football excellence in conjunction with personal development. The Pathway comprises of FA Disability Player Development Centres (PDCs), FA Regional Impairment Specific Centres of Excellence and FA England Impairment Specific Development Squads.

The Pathway's success is ultimately measured on the number of players progressing from County and Regional based programmes into National Development and Elite Disability Squads.

FA Disability Player Development Centres (PDC) provide a higher level coaching opportunity for players that show signs of talent in grassroots club or school settings. PDCs run for 1.5 hours per week for 20 weeks and impact players of 12-16 years of age. PDCs are used to 'confirm' and 'develop' talent in young players and support the transition to Regional Youth and Adult Impairment Specific Centres of Excellence, National Impairment Specific League Teams or into mainstream football settings.

PDCs have a focus on recruiting players that can progress to National Development and Elite Squads as highlighted within The FA's Disability Player Pathway and as shown below:

- Amputee
- Cerebral Palsy
- Deaf
- Partially sighted
- Learning Disability.

The FA supports FA Regional Impairment Specific Centres of Excellence for Blind and Partially Sighted Players as well as players with Cerebral Palsy.

FA Blind Centres of Excellence have been developed utilising and building upon the existing Area/Regional Blind Teams. The aim of these Centres is to nurture, develop and provide regular, high quality and specialised training programmes for blind players. There is an U16 and Adult Programme in each Centre supported.

Existing Regional Cerebral Palsy (CP) Teams (16+) have evolved to provide **The FA CP Centre of Excellence Programme** in season 2011-12. Regional Centres have identified and recruited an U16 Squad to complement the existing adult squad providing a direct route for players into the England CP Development Squad.

FA Regional Partially Sighted Centres of Excellence (U16 focus) have been developed across the country. Centres are based at high quality Futsal facilities with supporting programmes focused on the development of elite level 'Futsal Players'. This provision is linked to Futsal Clubs participating in the FA National Futsal League (desired exit route) and the National Partially Sighted League (additional exit route). A Fixture Programme is provided for these Centres.

At the pinnacle of The FA Disability Talent Pathway are the England Impairment Specific Development squads. Currently, these squads have a focus on developing players under the age of 23 and cater for blind, partially sighted players, players with cerebral palsy and players with a learning disability. Involvement in an England Development squad prepares selected players for full involvement in Elite Impairment Specific squads.

England and Great Britain Elite Impairment Specific squads

The FA supports the delivery of England Elite Impairment Specific squads for blind players, partially sighted players, players with cerebral palsy and female deaf players. These squads compete in European and World Competitions on a cyclical basis. The FA also takes responsibility for the Great Britain Disability Football Association which in turn supports the participation of Great Britain Blind and Cerebral Teams in Paralympic Games.

