



ANNUAL REPORT

2026

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2026



INSPIRE



BUILD



SUSTAIN



Chair's Welcome - George Wilson

On behalf of the Ulster Hockey Board and team, I am delighted to present the Annual Report for the 2025/06 season. This year has reflected consistent advancement and highlights our shared dedication to sustaining and growing hockey across all key aspects of activity in the province. As an organisation, we continue to make progress in a manner that aligns with the aspirations of our members while responding to the changing landscape of the sport.

We are mindful that clubs across Ulster operate within varied environments and encounter differing pressures. Reconciling these perspectives can be complex; however, the positive engagement, honest communication, and collaborative spirit demonstrated throughout the season have been highly encouraging. While challenges such as financial pressures, league structures, and the continued need to elevate hockey's profile persist, there are strong signs that the sport is moving forward positively both on and off the field.

From both participation and performance standpoints, the season has delivered significant encouragement. Participation numbers have risen again, while Ulster's presence at provincial and national levels remains highly competitive. Schools and clubs throughout Ulster have achieved notable success in Irish competitions, underlining the quality, ambition, and commitment that exists within the province. Across senior and junior age categories, Ulster players continue to contribute strongly within Ireland squads and the Elite Athlete Pathway, demonstrating the effectiveness of our player development structures. From grassroots entrants to elite performers, the dedication shown by players, coaches, managers, officials, and umpires has been exceptional, and we congratulate all those who have represented Ulster with distinction on the national and international stage.

The increase in active participation has been supported through focused development programmes and strong collaboration with clubs. Club support structures and workforce development initiatives have continued to make a measurable difference, expanding reach and creating greater opportunities for engagement. Increased media exposure at both regional and national levels has also played an important role in enhancing the visibility of hockey and generating fresh commercial interest. Programmes such as Club 1896 have further strengthened the sport's reputation while deepening relationships with sponsors and partners.

This progress has been reinforced by a broad portfolio of participation and development initiatives. These have included youth activity in schools and clubs, outreach and good relations programmes, community camps, participation in further education settings, and the continued implementation of talent coaching and talent development pathways from U13 through to U21. Together, these programmes have widened access, strengthened player pathways, and reinforced our commitment to inclusion, ensuring hockey remains accessible, welcoming, and relevant to communities across Ulster.

The continued expansion of income streams, combined with prudent financial management and the maintenance of appropriate reserves, has strengthened Ulster

Hockey's financial sustainability and positioned the organisation well for the future. Alongside this, our sustained focus on governance, best practice, and active consultation with members has ensured that Ulster Hockey remains accountable, responsive, and strategically aligned with the needs of the game.

We remain sincerely appreciative of the support provided by our sponsors and funding partners throughout the 2025-2026 season. In particular, we wish to recognise Sport NI for its ongoing core investment, alongside the many valued partners referenced throughout this report. Their support has enabled us to maintain and expand key activities, while strengthened partnerships with local councils have created additional opportunities for community engagement and development.

I would also like to formally express our gratitude to Maggie McKnight for her dedication and service during her term as President, and to offer our very best wishes to Harry McNeill as he assumes this important role.

As we conclude the season, we do so with gratitude for all that has been achieved and with confidence in the future direction of Ulster Hockey. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the Ulster Hockey staff, volunteers, coaches, committee members, officials, umpires for their commitment, enthusiasm, and service. We look forward to building on the successes of this season and approaching the year ahead ready to embrace the opportunities it will bring.

Yours in hockey,



George Wilson

Chair - Ulster Hockey Board

About Ulster Hockey

Office Bearers 2025/26

President - Margaret McKnight (Raphoe Ladies Hockey Club)

Vice-President - Harry McNeill (Mossley Men's Hockey Club)

The Board of Ulster Hockey Ltd:

Chair - George Wilson

Vice-Chair - Peter Kelly

Finance Director - Adrian Murphy

Director of Participation & Development - Christine Aiken

Director of Coaching & Pathways - VACANT

Director of Welfare & Inclusion - Chloe Gillard

Director of Communications & Marketing - Sarah Little

Independent Director - Lizzie Holden

Independent Director - Gareth Herron

Ulster Hockey Staff

Chief Executive - Marc Scott

Head of Talent & Pathways - Dr Shirley McCay Oly MBE

Head of Development - Jonathan McMeekin

Head of Commercial & Business Operations - Nicki Bayes

Head of Clubs & Domestic Hockey - Ian Hughes

Head of Inclusion & Diversity - Amanda Morton

Communications Manager - Andy Morrison

Talent Officer - Hannah Brownlee

Finance & Administration Officer - Natalia Blach

Inclusion & Diversity Officer - Eamonn McFerran

Workforce Development Officer - Michelle McMillan

Youth Development Officer - Jack Kyle

Content Creator - Ellen Lyle

Domestic Hockey Officer - Ali McNeill

Schools Outreach Officer - Harry Templeton

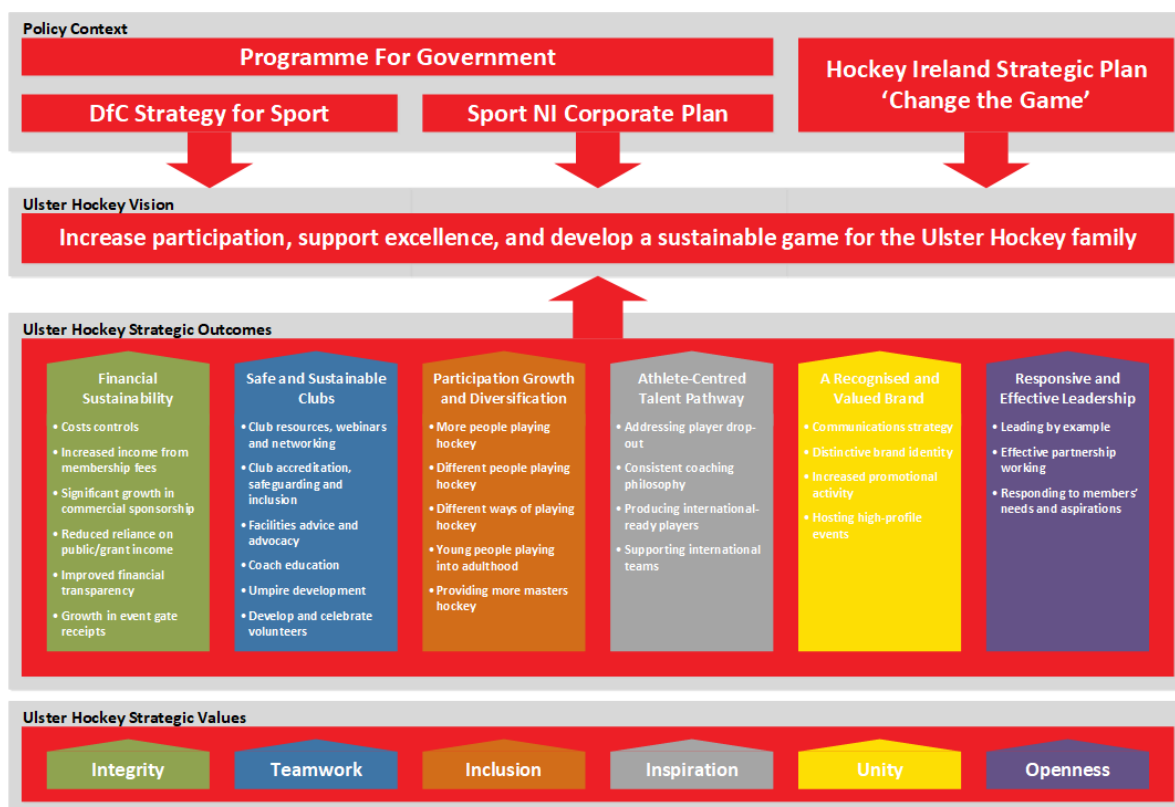
Designated Safeguarding Children Officer - Hilary Reid

Strategic Framework

In 2021/22, Ulster Hockey consulted extensively with Board members, staff, volunteers and players - young and old - to identify the key issues and challenges facing the organisation and priorities that need to be addressed in the short, medium, and longer-term. Throughout the process, it was clear that stakeholders' concerns were centred on sustaining the expectations associated with modern club activities, including administration, coaching, umpiring and increasingly, statutory obligations.

This process has resulted in a Strategic Plan, adopted in August 2021 and launched in November 2021 at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, designed to establish outcomes, objectives and related actions for the development of Hockey in Ulster over the period 2021 and 2026. It aims to ensure sustainability amongst all clubs and provide targeted growth in those priority areas identified in the plan. The emphasis on creating sustainable clubs and offering focused support for key initiatives over the lifetime of this plan emerged from a detailed engagement and consultation process, with the following strategic framework developed.

As we come towards the conclusion of the strategic period - we have extended the strategic objectives into 2026/27 to align with the prospective multi-year funding approach by Sport NI - it is clear that we have achieved the majority of the planned objectives across each of the strategic outcomes, resulting in the development of a healthy foundation for continued growth in the sport.



Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

Through our strategic plan we want to inspire more people to get involved in hockey and more people to stay involved in all aspects of the game. Our Vision is therefore to:

**Increase participation, support excellence
and develop a sustainable game for the Ulster Hockey family.**

Mission

Ulster Hockey is responsible for the promotion and development of lifelong participation, delivering a quality experience and supporting clubs that allow both individuals and teams to enjoy, engage and excel at all levels in the sport. Our plan is to keep working towards this Mission Statement:

INSPIRE involvement, **BUILD** capacity and **SUSTAIN** Clubs

Values

We have set ourselves a challenging and stretching vision. As momentum builds it will be increasingly important to draw upon values that build unity and purpose. With our people as our richest asset, our values will set the standard for how we work together in delivering the vision.

Our values will help the organisation grow as a hockey family and will set us apart. Bringing our plan to fruition through respectful engagement also ensures that we stay true to our founding values as we build our future vision together.

We Identified the values that best capture the spirit and culture of Ulster Hockey following in-depth consultation with our Board and Staff. Six broad areas emerged as important and distinctive to Ulster Hockey.

These are encapsulated within our values and articulated as:

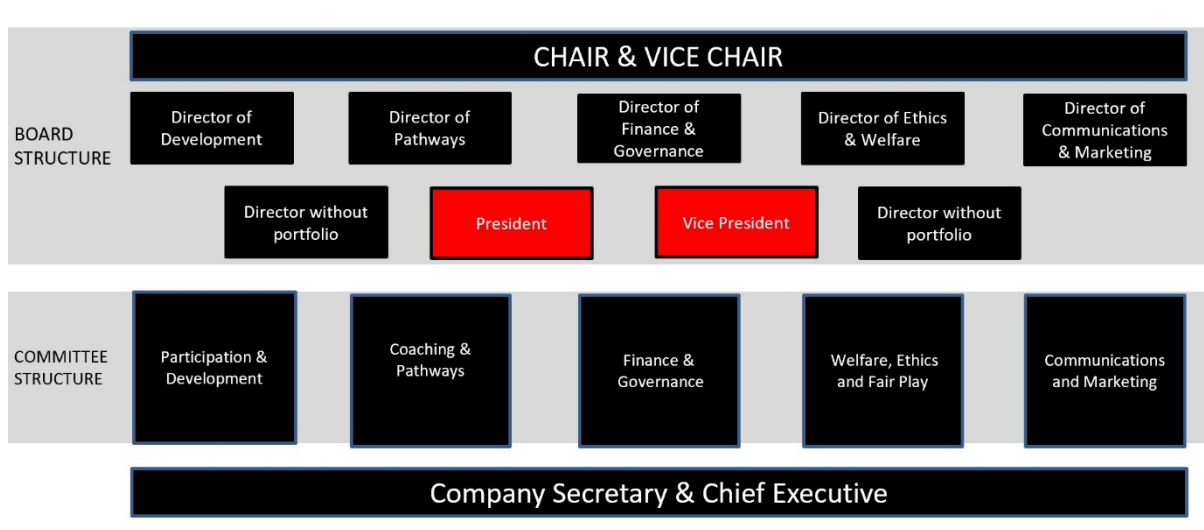
- **Inclusion**, which means we are respectful.
- **Integrity**, which means we are responsible.
- **Inspiration**, which means we lead.
- **Teamwork**, which means we are collaborative.
- **Openness**, which means we are engaging.
- **Unity**, which means we are pioneering.

As we deliver our Strategic Plan, Ulster Hockey will continue to evolve and grow. We will regularly review our values, vision, and mission to ensure they reflect the organisation we want to be. all our decisions.

The Structure

In parallel with the strategic development, Ulster Hockey has reviewed its legal structures and has been operating as an incorporated structure, Ulster Hockey Ltd, since April 2021.

The following Board & Committee structure is being implemented:



Chief Executive's Report

2025/26 has been a positive year for Ulster Hockey where we have continued to see growth across both the organisation and the sport in general. As recently as April 2026 we have been able to announce our involvement in the Department of Education RAISE project alongside our sporting partners of the Irish Football Association, Ulster GAA and Ulster Rugby. This is significant as this represents our first formal engagement with the 'big 3' sports in the region. I have long advocated that Ulster Hockey should be spoken of in the same terms as these sports considering the size and scope of the sport of hockey locally.

This programme, which will involve delivery of sport and physical activity in a school curricular environment sees the recruitment of 3 or 4 new staff to deliver and will continue to enhance the profile and visibility of hockey across Ulster and in schools which may not necessarily deliver hockey as a core sport.

This year has not been without its challenges, however, as with all businesses and sectors, we have faced rising costs in all aspects of our operations and issues around public funding. Repeating my comments from the last 2 years, I have no doubts that our members and clubs are still being impacted by the cost-of-living increases and increased energy costs. I am thankful for the continued support of our members throughout challenging societal times.

The relatively stable business at Stormont has continued to provide an opportunity for increased political engagement and advocacy on behalf of Ulster Hockey and I have attended several All-Party Groups for Sport where the challenges facing the sector have been highlighted strongly. Ulster Hockey also had the opportunity in February to present to the Communities Committee in Stormont where we highlighted the good work taking place across the sport at all levels while also highlighting the financial and facility based challenges which our clubs and members are facing.

Across 2025/26 there have been several meetings with political representatives of all Stormont Parties where there has continued to be significant discussion around the growth and potential of hockey.

As with last year, one key area of advocacy has been around the current situation regarding hockey facilities across the Province and engagement with clubs regards their current facility provision has provided a stark position where clubs are being inhibited in their ability to grow by a lack of facilities and in some areas there is a genuine threat to the continued provision of the sport in clubs and schools due to the condition and/or availability of pitches. This message has been articulated loud and clear to the Minister for Communities and there has been positive engagement with Sport NI in this regard. I would like to acknowledge our clubs for engaging in the process of gathering the information to provide an informed overview of the challenges presented by current pitch provision. We are starting to see some movement in terms of facility development in some areas and the sport was a key beneficiary in the Department for Communities Your School, Your Club programme.

Due to a growth in the staff team, this year has seen Ulster Hockey move office to a larger premises in the same building and a decision was made to retain the existing space.

Despite increased staff and office costs, our financial performance in 2025/26 has been very positive where we recorded a further increase in income generated and returned a positive surplus. Sport NI funding has remained static; however, the position of the Central Good Relations funding is more positive as this support was continued for 25/26. At the time of this report, we await confirmation that this funding will continue into 2026/27. We also have significant challenges around the distribution of Sport NI funding which we are seeking to address with Sport NI and Hockey Ireland.

We have continued to achieve a positive financial position mostly due to our careful budgeting and strict financial management. This approach allows us to make decisions which protect the current structure when faced with unplanned funding issues. We are continuing to see our costs rise both through inflation and controlled investment. We remain committed to investing wisely in the development of the sport and are developing a sound financial base. Our positive financial position has allowed us to continue to grow the staff team to provide an efficient structure focused on best growing both the sport and the business.

The School's Committee was restructured in 2024/25 and a new unified committee to support boys' and girls' hockey has been established. This committee has bedded in over the last 18 months and continues to make a significant contribution to the administration of an essential and valuable aspect of domestic hockey.

The support from the hockey community and schools has been significant as reflected by the large crowds in attendance at the schools' finals across the year and our attendances rose significantly in 2025/26.

To continue to review and maintain open dialogue with our member schools to the betterment of the sport, meetings are scheduled in late May with both the Principals of our member schools and the Heads of Hockey, and these are planned as usual this year. These meetings provide an excellent opportunity for our schools to provide meaningful input into how the sport is developed at both an operational and strategic level.

As we reach the end of the strategic cycle, Ulster Hockey remains on track to achieve most of the targets which we set out in 2021. The Board has had a significant review of the strategic objectives, and it has been agreed to extend the current strategic focus and objectives for a further year to align our strategic cycle with the proposed Sport NI multi-year programme. 2026/27 will see a strategic engagement process with clubs and members and we would hope that we have positive and meaningful engagement with our clubs in setting the future direction of Ulster Hockey.

Through the work of our Communications Officer, the profile of Ulster Hockey and quality of coverage on social media has been significant and the feedback received has been generally of a positive nature. This has been reflected in ongoing positive engagement analytics of our social media channels. The growth of Ulster Hockey activity and expectations to promote this positively has resulted in the need to grow and extend our Communications team and I would hope that 2026/27 will see continued development and ongoing improvement in our communications function.

This year's annual report highlights both the successes of Ulster Hockey over the last 12 months and some of the challenges. We will continue to face the challenges head on to

ensure that the sport of hockey continues to grow and provide enjoyment and opportunities for participants of all ages. This often requires making difficult and often unpopular decisions, but I would like to reassure members that these decisions are always taken in the best interests of the sport and the team remain focused on the best interests of our sport and its members. In that regard, we continue to welcome constructive feedback on how we can improve and grow.

The individual achievements across the Ulster Hockey team are compiled within this report, but I wish to draw particular attention to the landmark achievement of returning to over 200 primary schools in our competition structure. This is testament to the good work across the development team and highlights the ongoing impact of the Schools Outreach Programme.

The 2025/26 season has clearly demonstrated the strength, enthusiasm, and potential of youth hockey in Ulster. With over 15,000 young participants engaged across primary school, club blitzes and league structures, the sport is thriving at every level. These achievements would not be possible without the tireless work of volunteers, coaches, clubs and schools who continue to drive the game forward.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the contribution of 2 individuals to Ulster Hockey as they both depart from their respective roles in the organisation.

George Wilson will step down from his role as Chair, and I wish to acknowledge his support and input over the last 3 years and commitment to improvement in the organisation. I wish George all the best as he pursues some specific professional opportunities which will see him to undertake some challenging projects across the globe.

July 2026 will also see the end of an era in Ulster Hockey as Dr Shirley McCay Oly MBE leaves the organisation to take up a coaching position in Belgium. The impact on the organisation and its members that Shirley has had is immeasurable and Shirley has been a real asset to the organisation as a great coach, a diligent administrator and as a fantastic ambassador. She will leave a massive gap in the organisation and will be missed greatly by all who have had the privilege to have worked with her or been involved in her programmes. Quite simply, Shirley is a legend of the sport.

Finally, I wish to thank all our members for their ongoing support of the sport and continued challenge to Ulster Hockey and wish everyone a restful summer and I look forward to seeing continued growth of the sport next season with collaboration (and challenge) with our clubs, partners and stakeholders.

Marc Scott - Chief Executive Officer

Objective 1 - Financial Sustainability

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2026</u>
Income:	£932,279	£924,719
Expenditure:	£260,826	£260,826
Operating costs:	£483,234	£595,612
Surplus for year:	£180,282	£38,961



Increased grant income from £253,166 in 2024 to £333,593 in 2025. Grant providers increased to 6

Ulster Hockey is 24% reliant on grants - a decrease from 29% in 2023.

Increased administration costs from £452,195 to £488,245

Increased staff costs from £327,676 to £370,684

Administration costs 8.5% under budget



Funding Partners 2025/26



Lead Sponsors 2025/26

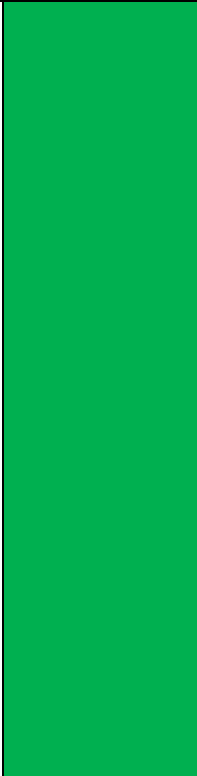
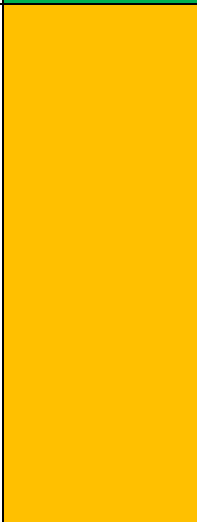


INSPIRE | BUILD | SUSTAIN

Summary of Performance against Objective 1

KPI - Diversification of income streams and financial reserves

Objective	Measurement	Target	Actual	RAG
Identify savings, economies of scale and best value for money through competitive procurement where possible. In consultation with Clubs, keep membership levies under review as we recover from the impact of Covid-19 pandemic	Level of financial reserves	£ 200,000	£330,000	
Establish a business forum where corporate and private benefactors can subscribe in support of the organisation's strategic objectives.	Commercial income as percentage of total income	10%	12%	
Identify a lead commercial partner and sponsor to generate more revenue and maximise the financial value of the Ulster Hockey brand.	New and prospective corporate sponsors / private benefactors	5	6	
Identify a lead commercial partner and sponsor to generate more revenue and maximise the financial value of the Ulster Hockey brand. Reduce reliance on Sport NI funding to insulate Ulster Hockey from the effects of potential reductions in public sector budgets.	Lead sponsorship agreement.	1	1	

<p>Identify a lead commercial partner and sponsor to generate more revenue and maximise the financial value of the Ulster Hockey brand.</p> <p>Reduce reliance on Sport NI funding to insulate Ulster Hockey from the effects of potential reductions in public sector budgets.</p> <p>Identify and secure alternative sources of public funding from a range of government departments (north and south) and related agencies.</p>	<p>Sport NI funding as a percentage of total income.</p>	<p>25%</p>	<p>23%</p>	
<p>Identify a lead commercial partner and sponsor to generate more revenue and maximise the financial value of the Ulster Hockey brand.</p> <p>Reduce reliance on Sport NI funding to insulate Ulster Hockey from the effects of potential reductions in public sector budgets.</p>	<p>New public sector grants secured.</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>7</p>	
<p>Support clubs to identify and secure to public funding for revenue and/or capital based projects.</p>	<p>Number of clubs supported in making the business case/completing application forms for funding.</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>22</p>	

Ulster Hockey Ltd - Draft Accounts

INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR END 31 MARCH 2026	2026 £	2025 £
Income		
Affiliation fees	136,776	124,006
Schools Affiliation Fees	25,438	27,678
Sponsorship	37,250	2,811
Club 1896 Income	7,351	9,440
Grants Receivable	349,056	325,007
Gate Receipts	70,551	59,235
Miscellaneous income	11,642	206,868
Legacies	0	0
Umpires Income <i>*incorporated into Dev Income</i>	0	856
Development Programme Income	<u>286,653</u>	<u>175,109</u>
<u>Total income</u>	<u>924,719</u>	<u>932,279</u>
Expenditure		
Umpires Expenditure	47,165	25,578
Development Expenditure	209,431	181,358
Competition Costs	23,752	19,320
Club 1896	10,245	28,694
Good Relations Expenditure	<u>2,873</u>	<u>5,876</u>
	(290,597)	(260,826)
Administrative Expenses		
Personnel Costs	445,756	370,684
Travel Expenses	0	0
Office Accommodation	40,731	21,440
Administration	38,847	22,220
Insurance	15,865	16,105
Marketing	11,392	11,558
Computer & Website Costs	12,130	13,561
Professional Fees	5,013	21,409
Audit fees	1,351	1,201
Sundry expenses	7,120	5,056
Small Grants Programme	<u>16,954</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>(595,162)</u>	<u>(483,234)</u>
Operating Surplus	38,961	189,219

Outcome 2 - Safe & Sustainable Clubs

Clubmark

Club Development Overview

Throughout the 2025/26 season, the club development focus has been on strengthening club capacity, increasing participation, improving governance standards, and supporting clubs to access funding and accreditation pathways.

Clubmark Accreditation

- 20 accredited clubs:



- 26 clubs working towards accreditation

Clubmark supports governance compliance, safeguarding excellence, volunteer role clarity, strategic planning capability and long-term sustainability.

After the 24/25 rebrand of Clubmark and three levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold) we now have the most clubs accredited than ever. We encourage all clubs to achieve at least Bronze level.

Club Grants & Funding Support

2025/26 Outcomes:

- 21 clubs awarded Ulster Hockey Small Grants
- 26 clubs supported in successful in Ulster Hockey and external grant applications.
- £36,000 secured in total club grant funding

This funding supported equipment upgrades, youth development initiatives, inclusion programmes, and volunteer development.

Hockey Camps

- 754 players engaged
- 24 camps delivered
- 11 venues utilized

The Ulster Hockey Camps programme continues to be a key participation and development driver, offering high-quality playing opportunities across multiple venues and age groups. Where possible, camps are delivered across a wide range of areas to reach all parts of the province.

Forward Focus 2026/27

Going forwards, Ulster Hockey intends to continue to grow its focus of working with our member clubs and assisting them to grow and strengthen their position in their local communities. We will do so by:

- Continue camp participation with a high value for money.
- Achieve 30+ new Clubmark accreditations with 10 clubs through Silver.
- Secure PeacePlus funding for rural and boarder areas.

Workforce Development



Umpire Development

14 x Fundamentals Courses	177 Coaches
4 x Level 1 Coaching Courses	64 Coaches
1 x Level 2 Coaching Course	6 Coaches
12 x Safeguarding Courses	147 Coaches
1 x Coaching Goalkeepers Workshop	8 Coaches
5 x Working with Parents in Sport Workshop for Coaches	235 Participants
1x Autism in Sport Coaching Clinic	9 Participants
1 x Disability Inclusion	10 Participants
3 x Designated Safeguarding Officer Training course (12 participants)	37 Participants
9 x Young Leaders Award courses	119 Participants
12 Undergraduate Coach Education Programme	180 Students
1 x Coach Technical Session	10
1 x Senior Schools Coach Performance Workshop	70

23 Activities



272 Participants

Breakdown of Activities

13 x Young Umpires

161 Participants

8 x Club Umpires Workshop

152 Participants

Umpires Academy

8 Participants

Umpire Development Workshops

785 Participants

2026 Workforce Awards

Children's Coach of the Year - Richard Cooper (Instonians)

Young Coach of the Year - Erin McClure (CI Ladies)

Club Performance Coach of the Year - Matthew Bell (Queens University Belfast)

Young Umpire of the Year - Abigail Molloy (Mossley Ladies)

Club Umpire of the Year - Dylan Ramsay (Mossley Men)

Umpire of the Year - Robert Johnston (NICS)



Summary of Performance against Objective 2

KPI - More players, more teams, more umpires and more volunteers

Objective	Measurement	Target	Actual	RAG
Develop, manage and refine a portfolio of resources that provide umpires, coaches, volunteers and players with advice or guidance to help them learn and develop.	Number of courses/webinars delivered to umpires, coaches, volunteers and players.	80	94	Green
Encourage all affiliated clubs to work towards achieving Ulster Hockey's new 'Club Assurance Accreditation' to promote high standards of club governance and administration, including safeguarding.	Number of clubs registered and working towards new Club Assurance Accreditation.	20	26	Green
	Number of clubs with a valid Club Assurance Accreditation.	60	18	Red
Take a proactive role in helping to secure long-term access to local playing and training facilities by working with facility owners and operators to safeguard existing facility capacity for hockey.	Number of clubs supported by Ulster Hockey	20	24	Green
Deliver a high-quality coach education programme to enhance capacity at a club level and throughout the participation pathway.	Number of coaches accredited by Hockey Ireland - L1 to L3.	750	1140	Green
Work with Hockey Ireland to foster a consistently high standard of match officiating by	Number of umpires accredited by Hockey Ireland - L1 to L3.	175	455	Green

delivering a programme of high-quality education courses, webinars and conferences.				
Extend the existing youth panel to involve a minimum of one young person (aged 17-24 years) from each Ulster Hockey affiliated club, ensuring fair representation of views from clubs regardless size, type or location.	Number of young people (aged 17-24 years) in Ulster Hockey's youth panel or acting as Youth ambassadors in clubs	12	12	
	Number of clubs represented on Ulster Hockey's youth panel or hosting youth ambassadors	10	10	
Plan and deliver an annual event to increase engagement with the Ulster Hockey family and to celebrate the contribution and support provide by volunteers.	Delivery of annual celebratory events targeting volunteers and the entire Ulster Hockey family.	Delivered	Delivered	

Outcome 3 - Participation Growth & Diversification

Good Relations

In 2025/26 Ulster Hockey was delighted to have the Central Good Relations Funding reinstated by The Executive Office. The Inclusion & Diversity programme is a key aspect of Ulster Hockey's work, and we are making a significant impact in our local communities. As with last year, the Schools' outreach programme has continued to grow at pace and again, demand has massively exceeded available resource. Sport NI has continued to provide funding support through its Sports Systems Investment programme for a Schools Delivery Officer. A successful programme has been delivered in association with several partners including schools, local authorities and clubs.

In 2025/26 Ulster Hockey has continued to engage with the Ethnic Minorities in Sport NI organisation (EMSONI) to engage with the ethnic minority and refugee communities whilst also developing a positive relationship with Diverse Youth NI who we partnered with to deliver a 6-week programme in 2025. Unfortunately, due to staff absence, the Good Relations Programme has stalled in the latter half of the year.

An application to continue Central Good Relations funding has been submitted for 2026/27 where a further increase is included. This will allow us to continue to drive forward our Inclusion & Diversity programme.

Central Good Relations Funding:

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£22,097	£36,601	£39,087	£0	£44,914	£44,923

Good relations Programme - 300 Participants engaged.



Schools Outreach Programme

Schools Outreach Programme - 140 sessions, 32 schools, 1000 participants



Harry Templeton has been continued as our Schools Activation Officer with Sport NI providing funding support through its Sports Systems Investment programme. A successful programme has been delivered in association with several partners including schools, local authorities and clubs. In 2025/26 Ulster Hockey delivered approx. 140 sessions to 32 different schools in 4-week blocks throughout the year, allowing over 3500 playing opportunities for almost 1000 young people aged 8-15.



Hockey ID

In 2025/26 a number of Hockey ID programs have been run across the province by Ulster Hockey affiliated clubs and volunteers. Hockey ID is an adapted, highly inclusive format of field hockey specifically designed for players with intellectual disabilities.

It features simplified rules, flexible team sizes, and smaller pitch areas to ensure maximum participation, fun, and teamwork for players of all abilities. Through this initiative clubs were able to provide approx. 80 playing opportunities for participants of all ages and abilities. The successfully run program by Pegasus Hockey Club was supported by the Ulster Hockey Small Grants Programme, allowing additional funding to support their program delivery.

Hockey ID clubs



Pegasus HC



North Down HC



Larne HC



CI Ladies HC



NI Civil Service HC



(Image – Pegasus Hockey Club – Hockey ID session)

Beach Hockey

Ulster Hockey hosted its inaugural Beach Hockey event in July 2025 at Portstewart Strand and in partnership with the National Trust.

15 teams participated in the event (9 girls, 4 boys and 2 mixed)

A survey was circulated to all participants and in general feedback was extremely positive. It is planned that an extended event will take place in 2026. With some amendments to format and rules to take into consideration feedback received.



Veterans Hockey

Veterans Hockey continues to remain stable with 24 entrants in the Veterans Blitz in 2025/26.



Registered Veterans Teams

2019 - 19
2022 - 24
2023 - 24
2024 - 24
2025 - 24
2026 - 24

Schools Hockey

2025/26 saw the structures to administer schools' hockey embedding with the rules, regulations and schedules overseen by a single schools committee unifying boys and girls hockey. Over the course of the year this committee has provided invaluable support to the Ulster Hockey team delivering schools hockey.

There has been a continued notable increase in support for both primary and senior schools' hockey, with large crowds attending matches to support our younger players and the support for schools' hockey has surpassed all expectations again in 2025/26.

At Primary school level, there has been ongoing growth of schools engaged in the sport through both the Schools Outreach Programme and the McCloy & Pearson and we have seen a number of new schools participating in competition. Ulster Hockey hit the landmark figure of over 200 primary schools participating in the competitive structure. Further analysis has indicated that a number of these schools were first exposed to hockey through the Outreach programme.

Ulster Hockey would hope that next season sees continued growth across schools' hockey at all level. It is notable that Ulster schools again returned success at the All-Ireland Schools tournaments.

Senior Schools



**35 Schools Finals
Coordinated by Ulster
Hockey or member schools:**

**19 Girls Finals
14 Boys Finals
2 All Ireland**

73 Schools took part in Ulster Hockey competition:

**Girls - 52
Boys - 21**



Primary Schools

McCloy & Pearson

**217 teams
35 Blitz Days
3,500+ participants**



INCHMARLO
RBAI Preparatory Department

**Pearson Cup Winners -
Inch Marlo**

**McCloy Cup Winners -
The Armstrong**



Ahead of the competitions, Ulster Hockey has introduced Schools Pre-Blitz events which were delivered over 44 days including around 15,700 players.



32 Primary Schools engaged in Outreach programme

140+ Sessions delivered

1000+ Pupils involved

Youth Hockey

The 2025/26 season has been a busy and challenging year for youth hockey development across Ulster. From a strong return of the primary school blitzes to a thriving club scene and the refresh of the Youth Forum, we have seen significant growth in both participation and engagement. Our aim to create inclusive, fun, and competitive opportunities for young players continues to evolve and this year's increased numbers and feedback reflect the tremendous efforts of clubs, schools, volunteers and coaches supported by the Ulster Hockey team.

60 Blitz sessions (girls) & 30 sessions (boys) at U11 & U13

**1,600 Boys participants
9,900 Girls participants**

U15 Leagues

Girls - 13 Leagues, 77 teams, 1,155 players

Boys - 3 leagues, 25 teams, 375 players



Youth Consultation

Ulster Hockey remains committed to consultation members to ensure we shape the future of our sport considering the needs of our multiple stakeholders. This includes ongoing consultation with club representatives.

2021 saw the establishment of the Youth Panel which was refreshed in 2025/26. The Forum continues to make a significant impact on the sport with the following notable successes:

- The appointment of 3 members to the Ulster Hockey staff team (Harry Templeton, Anna Pim, Hannah Brownlee)
- The progress of 1 member through the talent coaching system (Matthew Armstrong-Sanchez)
- The success of 'At the Heart of the Game' supported through the Youth Forum (Anna Pim)

The Youth Forum has continued to be an extremely successful initiative and other sports such as Basketball NI and Ulster Rugby have engaged with Ulster Hockey in the development of their own forums. It is considered that the Ulster Hockey is leading the way in the sector in this regard.

The Forum continues to deliver a useful mechanism for engaging with younger members of Ulster Hockey and it has been engaged in the consultation process around the review of competitive hockey.

In addition, Youth Development Officer Jack Kyle has engaged with clubs Youth Co-ordinators to ensure all clubs have an input into the development of youth hockey.



Summary of Performance against Objective 3

KPI - New players actively engaged and involved in the sport year-on-year

OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTUAL	RAG
Increase the number of people participating in hockey as members of Ulster Hockey affiliated clubs	Number of participant members at UH affiliated clubs & schools	12,960	14,000 (Est)	
Develop and reinforce links between schools and clubs to encourage children and young people to become part of the hockey family, by investing in professional support for coaching and coach education in primary schools.	Number of primary schools supported by Ulster Hockey to deliver the sport within the school environment.	180	217	
Where appropriate, and dependent upon resources, consider developing schools-based Youth Blitzes for children and young people to engage with and enjoy hockey for the first time.	Number of school & club based Youth Blitzes planned and delivered by Ulster Hockey.	120	95 Blitz format replaced with league structure at U15	
Be inclusive, and develop a plan to reach out to non-traditional hockey playing people and areas, through efforts such as the Good Relations programme.	Number of people engaged from within targeted areas by Ulster Hockey.	670	1300	
Consider supporting a club and/or district council to develop a pilot scheme to provide hockey to people with physical and/or learning disabilities, modelled on the Flyerz programme.	Design and delivery of pilot scheme targeting people with a physical and/or learning disability.	Implemented	Implemented – HockeyID & Schools Outreach Programme	
Explore the potential of extending the	A feasibility study conducted to test			

range of competitive outlets for year-round hockey participation, with a view to offering alternative ways to play, to include:	market demand for additional participation opportunities for both club members and new participants.	Completed	Completed	
Indoor Hockey	Successful implementation of a review of competitive hockey			
Hockey 5s				
Mixed Hockey (junior and senior)				
Midweek Hockey				
Respond to the evident demand for Veterans hockey (aged 40 and above) by organising a club/community-based programme of participation which emphasises fun and encourages social interaction.	Number of clubs entering teams into a club-community based programme of Veterans hockey for both male and female players.	20	24	

Outcome 4 - Effective Athlete Centred & Connected Pathway

International

15 Ulster players in Men's senior Ireland

5 players in Women's Senior Ireland squad

60 Ulster Players in Ireland Age Pathway

1 Ulster Players in GB&NI Age Pathway



Ulster

25 different schools and 27 different clubs represented in U16, U18 and U21 girls and boys squads





Talent Programme

Summer Camps 200 participants

U15 RDP 285 participants, 28 coaches, 5 locations

U16 Programme 50 participants, 8 coaches

U18 Programme 50 participants, 8 coaches

Summary of Performance against Objective 4

KPI - Increased number of players identified as having potential to progress from a larger number of clubs

OBJECTIVE	MEASURES	TARGET	ACTUAL	RAG
Make athlete needs the central focus of the talent pathway by reviewing and refining the system which captures and nurtures all of the available talent regardless of type, size or location of a club or school.	Number of players from clubs-schools engaged in Hockey Ireland's talent identification and development programmes	37	60	Green
Support athletes selected to international squads by improving the quality of locally available coaching, mentoring and support services.	Percentage of talented athletes highly valuing the quality of service and support provided by Hockey Ireland and coaches on the talent pathway.	100%	100%	Green
Encourage commitment to international hockey by ensuring that Ulster hosts its fair share of training sessions and international fixtures, building on the success of the recent IRL v GBR test series.	Number of international hockey training sessions and/or fixtures staged in Ulster.	18	0*	Red

*centralised programme implemented by HI

Outcome 5 - Recognised & Valued Brand

Raising the profile of the sport in Ulster is a priority for the current strategic cycle. Hockey is undoubtedly one of the most significant sports in Ulster, and the profile of the sport must be aligned to this fact.

Ulster Hockey is acutely aware that the changing landscape of media and expectations of members has resulted in a need for ongoing development in the area of Communications and Marketing, and this was articulated at the last 3 years' AGM.

Ulster Hockey Communications Manager Andrew Morrison, with the guidance of Communications & Marketing Director Sarah Little has developed a communications strategy which is implemented and regularly reviewed.

In the 2025-2026 season, we have seen our digital footprint continue to grow, achieving significant growth in a number of key areas such as views, monthly reach and in the promotion of the Legacy Wealth Management Premier League.

This has largely been achieved through further emphasis on video content, with goal videos, post-match interviews and more becoming a regular feature on our social media platforms, contributing to a 210.9% increase in video views.

Towards the end of the season, our communications department grew with the addition of Ellen Lyle on a part-time basis, whilst we are delighted to announce that Irish International Goalkeeper and prolific content creator Ayeisha McFerran Oly has joined the team as of 20th May in the role of Communications Officer.

Total Views:

	Instagram	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Total	% Change
2023/2024	3,983,683	3,172,619	3,417,700	10,574,002	-
2024/2025	8,028,023	5,999,704	1,930,235	15,957,962	50.9%
2025/2026	15,295,373	9,058,563	691,728	25,045,664	56.9%

Average Monthly Reach (X doesn't provide this data):

	Instagram	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Total	% Change
2023/2024	13,274	43,514	-	56,788	-
2024/2025	35,806	37,618	-	73,484	29.4%
2025/2026	56,506	100,566	-	157,072	113.8%

Followers:

	Instagram	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Total	% Change
2023/2024	8,418	3,255	9,404	21,077	-
2024/2025	10,272	4,789	9,508	24,569	16.6%
2025/2026	12,265	7,242	9,404	28,911	17.7%

Legacy Wealth Management Premier League Views:

	Instagram	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Total	% Change
2023/2024	530,928	409,458	227,185	1,167,571	-
2024/2025	798,644	561,003	111,539	1,471,186	26%
2025/2026	1,638,697	1,073,533	81,467	2,793,697	89.9%

Video Views:

	Instagram	Facebook	X (Twitter)	Total	% Change
2023/2024	323,500	38,769	29,631	391,900	-
2024/2025	502,347	116,833	102,979	722,159	84.3%
2025/2026	1,160,600	1,033,889	50,924	2,245,413	210.9%

**Above data is accurate as 1st of May 2026 with each season's data spanning the timeframe of May 1st to April 30th.*

Summary of Performance against Objective 5

KPI - Increased levels of engagement in the sport, more positive media coverage at local, regional and national level and commercial interest

OBJECTIVE	MEASURE	TARGET	ACTUAL	RAG
Develop and implement a communications strategy to strengthen Ulster Hockey's profile and brand, showcase the achievements of players, teams, clubs and schools, and enhance propositions for commercial sponsors and investors.	Strategy Developed and Implemented	Initiated	In place	
Develop a distinctive brand identity for Ulster Hockey which reflects the vision and values of the organisation, in line with brand guidelines, and is used consistently in all communications and promotional activity.	Brand identity integrated with all internal and external communications	Reviewed	Reviewed	
Exploit the full range of media channels to promote the sport of hockey to the widest possible audience, emphasising the inclusive nature of the game, and drawing upon recent success at international level.	Number of new followers on social media channels:			
	Twitter	10000	9404	
	Facebook	7700	7,242	
	Instagram	6450	12,265	

Outcome 6 - Responsive & Effective Leadership

Board & Company Restructure

Across 2025/26 there has been an ongoing embedding of the Board to the structure presented to and adopted by the members in 2020. New bye-laws have been implemented having been adopted by the members at the 2024 AGM.

A new appeals policy was adopted by the Board in 2024/25, and we are delighted to advise that Leading Barrister Emma McIlveen has been appointed to this role. The new process will be implemented in full with immediate effect.

In this period there has been continued progress on the Board with the following key changes:

Chair George Wilson is stepping down from his role at the 2026 AGM and we thank George for his effort across his time as both President and Chair.

Participation & Development Director Christine Reid stepped down from the Board due to other professional and personal commitments.

Code of Good Governance

The Ulster Hockey Board alongside the Chief Executive conducted an audit of our governance structures against best practice as outlined in the NI Code of Good Governance (reviewed and relaunched in 2023). This review highlighted that Ulster Hockey has strong governance systems in a number of areas, however there are some key gaps in the system and an action plan has been developed with agreed timelines to address all areas of weakness identified. The Board has continued to monitor progress against all objectives which have been achieved.

Summary of Performance against Objective 6

KPI - Continuous monitoring of satisfaction through stakeholder feedback and membership consultation

OBJECTIVE	MEASURES OF SUCCESS	Target	Actual	RAG
Operate to best practice standards in governance and management reflecting principles of openness and accountability, in line with the Code of Good Governance (DIY Committee Guide) to be adopted by the Board.	Self-appraisal against the five key principles of good governance.	Reviewed	Reviewed & compliant	
Continually review, adopt and implement best practice in safeguarding and anti-doping.	External review by external bodies to provide assurance statement.	Reviewed	Reviewed & compliant	
Identify existing management information datasets to support the monitoring and evaluation of progress against strategic objectives, and set meaningful targets for the improvement of data collection and management systems.	Adhering to Companies House requirements and ensuring delivery of organisational purpose.	Reviewed	Reviewed & in place	
Developing new and innovative programmes/services that harness latest technology and appeal to new stakeholders.	Evidence based performance management system of reporting.	Reviewed	Reviewed	
Identify and work with a range of stakeholders that will support the organisation to deliver its strategic objectives.	Number of new programmes and initiatives.	5	5	
Conduct a stakeholder mapping exercise to target high value	Number of new strategic partnerships established.	6	7	

partnership arrangements and mutually beneficial projects.				
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Honours

Schools - Boys

John Minnis Burney Cup

Banbridge Academy



McCullough Cup T1

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



McCullough Cup T2

Grosvenor Grammar



Burney Plate

Grosvenor Grammar



Prior Shield

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



Dowdall Cup

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



Taylor Cup

Regent House School



Richardson Cup

Cookstown High School



Ferris Cup

Wallace High School



Bannister Bowl

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



Richardson Plate

Sullivan Upper



Ferris Plate

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



Bannister Plate

Wallace High School



John Waring All Ireland

Banbridge Academy



Herbie Sharman

Royal Belfast Academical Institution



Schools - Girls

Belfast Telegraph Girls
Senior Cup

Royal School Armagh



Senior Girls Shield

Wallace High School



Senior Girls Plate

Glenlola Collegiate



Stevenson Senior Cup

Royal School Armagh



Stevenson Senior Bowl

Lurgan College



Stevenson U14 Cup

Banbridge Academy



Stevenson U14 Bowl

Cookstown High School



McDowell Cup

Rainey Endowed



McDowell Shield

Strathearn School



McDowell Plate

Royal School Armagh



Gibson Cup

Rainey Endowed



Gibson Plate

Strathearn School



4th XI Cup

Strathearn School



Junior Cup

Banbridge Academy



Junior Shield

Victoria College



Junior Plate

Royal School Armagh



Intermediate Senior Cup

Carrickfergus Grammar School



U16 High Schools Cup

Cookstown High School



U14 High Schools Cup

Cookstown High School



Kate Russell

Banbridge Academy



Special Recognition Awards - Men and Women

Carson Clarke Memorial Award

Nigel McCullough

Winifred Templeton Award

Julie Fisher

Clubs - Men

MEN'S LEAGUE WINNERS 2025-26

Premier League:

Queens University Belfast



Intermediate League:

NI Civil Service



Junior League 1: Lisnagarvey 2nd XI



Junior League 2: Lisnagarvey 4th XI



Junior League 3: Cookstown 3rd XI



Junior League 4: PSNI 2nd XI



Junior League 5A: Mossley 4th XI



Junior League 5B: Ballynahinch 1st XI



MEN'S CUP WINNERS 2025-26

Kirk Cup: Banbridge 1st XI



Linden Cup: Mossley 1st XI



Junior League 1 Cup: Lisnagarvey 2nd XI



Junior League 2 Cup: Mossley 2nd XI



Junior league 3 Cup:

Cookstown 3rd XI



Junior League 4 Cup:

NICS 3rd XI



Junior League 5 Cup:

Ballynahinch 1st XI



Anderson Cup:

Bangor 1st XI



McClements Cup:

Lisnagarvey 3rd XI



Junior Shield:

Armagh HC



Minor Cup:

Ballynahinch 1st XI



Highest Goalscorer Cup:

Ben Law (Queens University Belfast)



Clubs - Ladies

LADIES LEAGUE WINNERS 2025-26

Premier League:






Ards Ladies 1st XI



Senior 1:

Coleraine 1st XI



Senior 2:	Bangor 1 st XI	
Senior 3:	Kilkeel 1 st XI	
Junior 1:	Pegasus 2 nd XI	
Junior 2:	Queens University Belfast 3 rd XI	
Junior 3:	Queens University Belfast 4 th XI	
Junior 4:	Priorians 2 nd XI	
Junior 5:	Instonians 2 nd XI	
Junior 6:	Larne 3 rd XI	
Junior 7:	CI Ladies 4 th XI	
Junior 8:	Portadown 4 th XI	
Junior 9:	Hollywood 2 nd XI	
Junior 10:	Limavady 3 rd XI	

Junior 11: Kilkeel 2nd XI



Junior 12: Priorsians 3rd XI



LADIES CUP WINNERS 2025-26

Denman Ulster Shield: Queens University Belfast 1st XI



Senior Cup: Coleraine Ladies 1st XI



McConnell Shield: Pegasus 2nd XI



Intermediate Cup: Bangor 1st XI



Junior Cup: Dromore 3rd XI



Minor Cup: CI Ladies 4th XI



Junior League Cup: Ballymena 4th XI



Junior League Shield: Kilkeel 2nd XI



President's Cup Mossley Ladies 4th XI



Philip Duke 1st XI
Highest Goalscorer Cup: Stef Ardis (Banbridge)



LADIES PLATE and SHIELD WINNERS 2025-26

Qualifying Plate: Queens University Belfast 2nd XI



Intermediate Plate: Limavady



Junior Plate: Armagh 3rd XI



Junior League Plate: Larne 4th XI



Minor Plate: Mossley 4th XI



BOYS COMPETITION WINNERS 2025-26

Pearson Cup: Inchmarlo Prep School

















Pearson Plate: Ballydown Primary School



U11 Cup:	Cookstown Hockey Club	
U13 Cup:	Instonians Hockey Club	
U13 Plate:	Portadown Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 1:	Lisnagarvey Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 1 Plate:	North Down Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 2:	Bangor 2 nd XI	

GIRLS COMPETITION WINNERS 2025-26

McCloy Cup:	Abbey Primary School	
McCloy Plate:	Kingspark Primary School	
U11 Cup:	CI Ladies	
U13 Cup:	Rainey Hockey Club	

U13 Plate:	Pegasus Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 1:	Instonians Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 1 Plate:	Coleraine Ladies Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 2:	Randalstown Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 3:	Larne Ladies Hockey Club	
U15 Tier 4:	Club KV	
U15 Intermediate Tier 1:	Pegasus 2 nd XI	
U15 Intermediate Tier 2:	Cookstown 2 nd XI	
U15 Intermediate Tier 3:	Armagh 3 rd XI	
U15 Intermediate Tier 4:	Limavady 2 nd XI	

INDOOR COMPETITION WINNERS 2024-25

U15 Boys: Lisnagarvey Hockey Club



U18 Boys: Bangor Hockey Club



U15 Girls: Cookstown Hockey Club



U18 Girls: Coleraine Ladies Hockey Club



Senior Men: Lisnagarvey Hockey Club



Senior Women: Ards Ladies Hockey Club

