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From prospects to professionals

Maximising the opportunity for talented young sportspeople via the independent sector

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01 Foreword from Sir Peter Lampl

The sloppy form of the England cricket team so far this summer has inevitably produced a burst of the kind of anxiety with which followers of sport in this country will be all too familiar. Coming after a depressing Six Nations for the England rugby team, the under-performance of sides representing two of our three great national sports is altogether deflating.

But it also makes the publication of a new and unprecedented report which I commissioned last year feel extremely timely. If you examine the handful of unquestionably bright lights that still shine in those current teams such as the Lions captain Itoje, and at some of the up-and-coming youth talent such as Harry Brook, the potential next England cricket captain, you will notice they frequently have one thing in common: they were educated in the independent sector, many of them on dedicated scholarships that identified top level talent. The Team GB Olympic squads are also littered with public school talent many of which are on scholarships.

My work in education over the past quarter of a century has made me acutely aware of the incredible facilities available at our public schools. They are, without question, world class. Walk through public school grounds counting, for example, the number of cricket nets, and you quickly run out of fingers. Vast playing fields, well-laid pitches, indoor practice areas, floodlighting… it's all there. And high quality coaching staff to match it, too.

However, I also noticed how often, away from the schools themselves, the excellence of these facilities was remarked upon negatively – held against the independent sector as part of the privileged opportunity it offers only to the wealthy few which is not the case.

That framing of the debate felt unhelpful to me, and I wanted to see if we could think about the situation more pragmatically. So I asked a team of researchers to find out the full impact the independent school sector has

on talent pipelines in sport and to discover how those facilities could be used more effectively in the national interest.

I also wanted to try and put to bed for good the idea that British sporting fans have even the slightest interest in where the individuals that make up their national teams went to school. I always suspected they didn't, and it seems I was right: the polling in this report shows the public wouldn't care if the entire England cricket team learned their stuff at Eton and Harrow, if they could only bring the Ashes home every now and again.

It follows logically that if we want to maximise the performance of the country's potentially world class teenage sports stars, we need to make sure they get access to world class coaching and facilities. Now, even if the Treasury found a spare couple of billion for school sport down the back of the Downing Street sofa, it still wouldn't result in thousands of acres of rugby and cricket pitches and a new army of high quality full-time coaches. Yet the public schools already have those things. So what if we concentrated on finding ways to ensure those potential teenage sports stars had access to the facilities that already exist?

Let's be clear, many of these schools have generous bursaries for talented sporting youngsters who wouldn't otherwise be able to afford their fees. But the distribution of these bursaries is, at best, unstructured and at times inaccessible. Individual school level recruitment strategies are often based on traditional or individual networks into local clubs or friendship groups. They are certainly not a national, managed pipeline, identifying and offering places to all the most talented young rugby players and cricketers the country has to offer.

Secondly, these bursary programmes are unsurprisingly under pressure since the regressive imposition of the 20% VAT on school fees. The number of students winning free or discounted places on the basis of their sporting talent is decreasing. So now is the perfect moment to build a different vision for this important route into elite sport.

We have set out an alternative. For inspiration we looked overseas: to North America. The draft system into US colleges, with its bursaries for the most talented young sports people, has become the defining pipeline for all aspiring American Footballers, basketball players and baseball stars. We feel confident we could do something similar with British public schools and their incredible sporting set-ups.

At its simplest, this would be a national bursary scheme, administered independently. Modelled on the wider Open Access scheme for independent schools that I have long championed where parents pay according to means, the arrangement would offer students with identified sporting potential a full five years at a leading independent school at potentially zero cost to parents depending on means. Modelling for 500 national

means-tested sporting scholarships from ages 13 to 18, with 100 scholars graduating each year, we estimate the project would cost just £14m per year, paid for by a combination of national sporting bodies, philanthropy and possibly national government. And we feel sure that this would lead to a major injection of fresh talent into County Cricket or the Rugby Premiership, or the British Olympic and Paralympic teams.

This isn't a scheme that would work for everyone – and in no way does it seek to overshadow or undermine the wider outstanding efforts made by grassroots clubs, sporting bodies and state schools to open up opportunity and widen access, as well as provide elite pathways, for young people across the country in sports. These efforts are exceptional and should continue. I see this proposal as a wider partnership model between independent schools, state schools, clubs and national governing bodies, that would widen the funnel of opportunity and strengthen the whole sporting ecosystem.

Excitingly, our polling shows that the public backs the idea – and some of the biggest names in independent education have rowed in behind the concept too. This is an argument for being pragmatic: people want national teams to be strong, but they also want opportunity to be fairer too. This is what we seek to do

The new sporting stars that the scheme would identify would have been picked on their merit, had their skills honed at some of our best institutions and represent the Best of British. Who knows, they might even win a test match or two.

Sir Peter Lampl was the founder of the Sutton Trust. Since setting up the trust in 1997, Sir Peter has contributed more than £100m to the cause of the trust through his direct giving and his time. He also founded the Education Endowment Foundation.

02 Methodology

Although there are many sports where the question of independent school over-representation is raised, this report has chosen to focus on men's rugby union, both men and women's cricket, and certain Olympic sports.

This is a reflection of the extent of independent-school over-representation in each, the disparity of opportunity for English-domiciled students, and the size of the commercial market for the sports in which independent-school attendees are over-represented. Nonetheless, we believe that the findings from this research could also apply to other sports and could inform interventions across a range of sports in due course.

This over-representation was made evident in the Sutton Trust's recent Elitist Britain 2025 report.[1] This report highlighted that 59% of England's men's cricketers had attended an independent school, 50% of women's cricketers, 36% of men's rugby players and 33% of Olympic medallists at Paris in 2024[2]. These figures were the highest of all sports examined.

Chapter	Profession/sector	Independent	change since 2019	Grammar	change since 2019	Comprehensive	change since 2019	International	change since 2019	Population	Known	% Knwon
Sport	Football (Men)	5%	+1%	1%	-3%	93%	+4%	0%	-2%	80	74	93%
	Cricket (Men)	59%	+16%	0%	-3%	32%	-11%	10%	-1%	41	41	100%
	Rugby (Men)	36%	0%	4%	-5%	49%	+2%	11%	+3%	113	110	97%
	Rugby (Women)	9%	-4%	1%	0%	80%	-2%	9%	+6%	106	75	71%
	Football (Women)	4%	+2%	5%	+5%	85%	-9%	5%	+1%	69	55	80%
	Cricket (Women)	50%	+15%	4%	-11%	46%	-4%	0%	0%	32	24	75%
	Olympic Medallists (Paris 2024)	33%	+2%	8%	0%	52%	-6%	7%	+5%	131	122	93%
	Paralympic Medallists (Paris 2024)	20%		4%		73%		3%		117	96	82%

[1] Elitist-Britain-2025.pdf

[2] *Based on: for men's and women's cricket England squad players who have taken part in an international match between Feb 2024 and March 2025; for men's rugby, based on Six Nations squads for 2025; for the Olympics, those who medalled at the Olympics in Paris in 2024*

It should be noted that there is a nuance to these figures in that some students will have received a scholarship to attend independent school. For cricket, the England and Wales Cricket Board's Talent Pathway Action Plan[3] from October 2024, which monitors County Age Groups cricketers, sets this out for both boys (left) and girls (right), with private bursary defined as those who have received a scholarship of 90%+:

AGE GROUP	STATE	PRIVATE	PRIVATE-BURSARY
U13	54.6%	44.9%	0.5%
U14	55.4%	43.8%	0.8%
U15	54.3%	45.2%	0.6%
U16	55.4%	44.2%	0.4%
U18	54.5%	43.9%	1.7%

AGE GROUP	STATE	PRIVATE	PRIVATE-BURSARY
U11	62.4%	37.6%	0.0%
U13	54.7%	45.0%	0.3%
U15	54.9%	44.3%	0.8%
U18	60.0%	39.1%	0.9%

To compile this report, we have conducted extensive qualitative research with Heads and Directors of Sport in independent schools, senior staff in national governing bodies and sporting academies, and professional sporting institutions. This has been supplemented by a nationally representative quantitative poll of n=1,937 which was conducted between 20th to 22nd February 2026 and from which all the charts and statistics referred to in this report come[4].

All quantitative data analysis was conducted by Kingsley Woldegiorgis of Public First. Qualitative research was undertaken by Ed Dorrell, Will Yates and Angus Boobbyer of Public First.

All conclusions (and errors) are that of Public First alone.

[3] *Talent-Pathway-Action-Plan-FINAL.pdf*

[4] *Full data tables can be found at: publicfirst.co.uk*

03 Executive Summary

1. **A WIDE VARIETY OF ENTRYPOINTS** | It is clear is that there is no one set way to become an elite sportsperson. For some, what made the difference was their local club or where they went to school; for others, it was down to their home environment and the support of a family member. It also differs according to sport. For rugby union for instance, owing to the physicality now needed in the game, it is regarded as a 'late maturation' sport which can be taken up in teenage years. For others, particularly batters in cricket, talented youngsters will need to start at an earlier age.

2. **TALENT PATHWAYS** | Depending on where you live in the country, the school you go to and the coaches involved, the route to the professional game can look very different. Talent pathways vary from school to school, county to county, and club to club. Some sporting academies will cultivate particularly close relationships with a small pool of schools, while others will focus on broadening their entry routes and partnerships more widely beyond an historically narrow base. What is also clear is that there is not one recipe for success. Talented youngsters need to be treated on a case-by-case basis and the best possible programme put in place for their individual needs.

3. **A STRONG INDEPENDENT SCHOOL OFFERING** | Some of the largest independent schools have almost professional class facilities and expertise that can support top young sporting athletes. With full time ground staff, indoor facilities which operate all year round and full-time ex-professionals with knowhow and a network within each game, such schools themselves operate as pseudo-academies in their own right, providing the perfect environment for talented young sportspeople to hone their skills and be set on the right professional pathway. Alongside this, sport is built into the culture of many independent schools in a way that is hard for state schools to replicate. The curriculum prioritises sport, a longer school day and / or boarding makes it more deliverable, and budgets are higher. All of this ensures every child has the opportunity and time to play whatever sport they are passionate about.

4. **BUT AN OFFERING WHICH IS COMING UNDER PRESSURE** | The constraints that independent schools are now feeling mean that 'fully funded' scholarships (particularly into sixth form) are now less common and means-tested bursaries are much more applicable. Indeed, some schools – to meet rising costs – have been forced to reduce the scholarships and bursaries they offer, though others continue to view them as a key part of their offering.

5. **PUBLIC PRAGMATISM AROUND THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS** | While public and media discussion about pathways into elite sport often places significant emphasis on school background, sometimes framing the balance of state and independent education in adversarial terms (i.e. the "over-representation" of privately educated sportspeople), the UK public takes a more pragmatic view. In our polling, most believe that sporting success depends on a wide ecosystem of support – from family encouragement and personal motivation to local clubs and school coaching – rather than schooling background alone. At the same time, many recognise the advantages that independent schools can offer through their resources, facilities and expertise. The public therefore sees an opportunity to harness these strengths more widely, with strong support for schemes that would allow talented young sportspeople from state schools to access independent school environments, funded through a shared approach involving the sector itself, government and philanthropy.

6. **THE TRANSFORMATIVE OFFER OF SCHOLARSHIPS** | In other countries around the world, from the collegiate system in the US to the Nordic programme, scholarships are baked into how elite young sportspeople progress. They are championed and seen as a vital stepping stone into professional sport. In the UK, views on scholarships to independent schools vary widely. 57% of the public, however, would support the offering of scholarships to independent schools to talented young sportspeople from state schools in order to help them develop their sporting ability.

7. **A NEW NATIONAL SPORTING BURSARY SCHEME** | There is the opportunity to maximise the opportunities offered by our independent schools via a national bursary scheme which helps send talented young sportspeople through them – with contributions from the sector, as well as by philanthropy, sporting bodies and the Government. This would be modelled on the wider Open Access scheme for independent schools long championed by Sir Peter Lampl. We estimate a new national scheme, open to anyone for a full five years at leading independent schools opting in to such a scheme, and paying a contribution of 25% for a full tuition and boarding scholarship, would cost around £28,000 per scholar per year (assuming a parental means test of a further 25%). A hypothetical scheme that offered 500 national sporting scholarships from ages 13 to 18 (100 scholars graduating every year) would cost around £14m a year in steady state.

04 Where it all begins

A wide variety of grassroot entry points

All those in the professional game will be able to reminisce on their childhood days and when they first fell in love with the sport they now play. Every journey is a deeply different and personal one. Some would have fallen into it; others would have actively pursued it from a young age. Some would have been childhood prodigies, others late bloomers. Almost everyone will be able to remember a teacher or a coach, a team or a childhood hero that made a big impact and set them off in a direction that would ultimately lead to the professional game. One of sport's great joys is that everyone's story around 'making it' is different and there are so many characters involved along the way.

Our polling for this report indicated that the development of young sportspeople is widely understood to be shaped by this broad ecosystem of influences. Family encouragement is most commonly identified as playing the biggest role (56%), followed by an individual's own motivation and talent (48%) and the contribution of local sports clubs (46%). School sports coaching is also seen as a crucial part of this mix (40%), alongside more formal structures such as professional or elite academies (24%). Taken together, these findings suggest that schooling background is seen as only one element within a broader network of support that helps young talent progress.

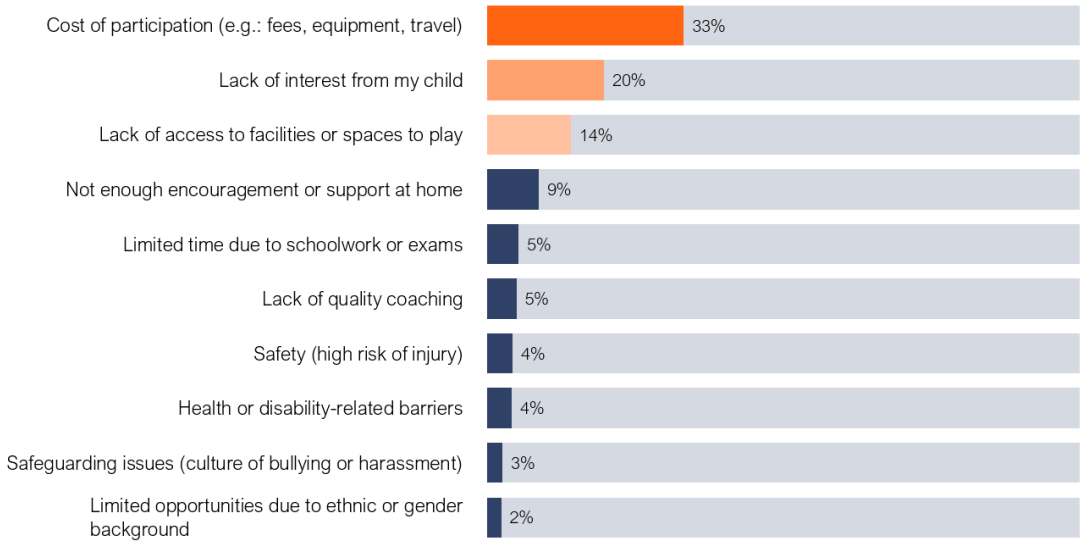
Which of the following do you think plays the biggest role in supporting the development of a young sportsperson?



To take each of these influences in turn:

1. **Family** | Many of those we spoke to referred to the influence of a family member which played a central part in a professional sportsperson's development. Indeed, with our polling highlighting that the cost of participation and a lack of access to facilities are two of the top three main barriers to school-age children developing as young sportspeople, those we spoke to suggested that these were not barriers if you had someone willing and able to go the extra mile, and even take great lengths to be creative. This was particularly the case when it came to cricket and learning a technical skill at a young age.

Thinking about the barriers school-age children face in their developing as young sportspeople, please rank the following in order of most and least important | **Ranked 1st**



Case study: Hamza Shaikh, Warwickshire CCC and former England u19 captain



For Hamza, his wealth came from his father's creativity. Whether it was turning one of the rooms in their house into a training facility (see picture above) or walking down the road to hit balls on a local basketball court, the time invested by his family was central to him becoming England u19 cricket captain and gaining a contract at Warwickshire CCC where he now plays – see full video of his story here.

"Wealth is not always about finance. It looks different. For some wealth is about somewhere to play or train, or someone who's willing to throw balls at you for hours. It's about having a higher than average volume of resource – a dad, uncle or brother for instance…"

Cricket Academy Director

2. **Grassroots and clubs** | Across England and Wales there are over 5,000 cricket clubs, while England alone has 2,000 rugby union clubs and 1,800 athletics and running clubs. Investment in each varies but comes from a variety of sources including the England and Wales Cricket Board, the Rugby Football Union, Sport England, and the National Lottery.

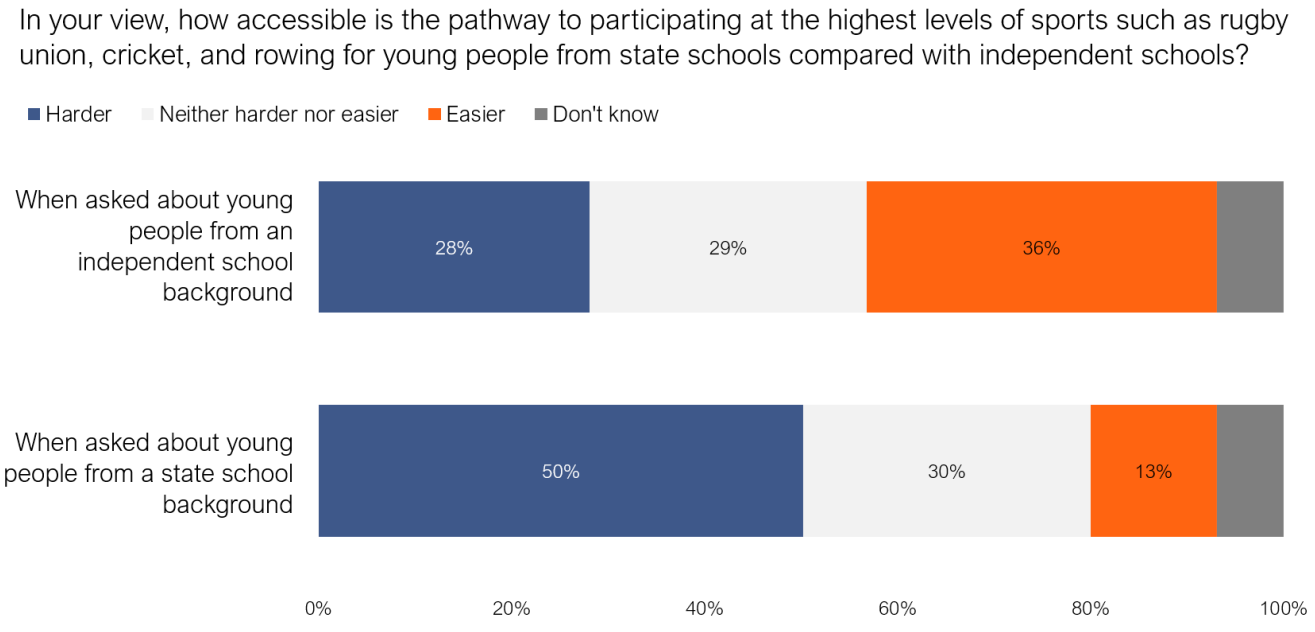
   Each sport has their own grassroots initiatives in place. Whether 'Project Rugby' for under-represented groups in rugby union, 'All Stars' for 5-8 year olds in cricket, or 'funetics', England Athletics' initiative to introduce children to running, jumping and throwing, there are many ways in which young sportspeople will have first encountered the sport they now play professionally.

   While clubs across the country – which are often seen as the bedrocks of community – play a vital role, it was acknowledged that family support remains vital to club sport engagement, while making the transition from promising young club sportsperson to a talent pathway still requires a good deal of luck, particularly if from an under-represented background. Those from more established clubs (or schools)

for instance remain more likely to 'make it', though it is clear that initiatives have been and are being put in place to broaden the funnel by which professional clubs and counties recruit.

> *"There is an element of luck as a young person in whether you make it or not. For me, it's about how do we remove or level out the luck. The pathway to the top is essentially a customer journey at which there are many stage gates. We need to ensure the leap from grassroots pathway to talent pathway is clear."*
>
> Representative from a professional sporting body

3. **Schools** | Where a young person goes to school does make an impact as it may be the place where they are first exposed to a particular sport. This is notably the case in rugby union where young people may only first encounter it at a later stage (e.g. starting a new school at aged 13). The support of teachers and the impact of coaches also make a major difference. Indeed, it can often come down to pure circumstance – what a headteacher chooses to prioritise, the culture of the school, the links with local clubs, academies or counties, or the dedication of a member of staff. There is also a clear difference between the facilities, networks and access of independent schools vs. those of state schools. 50% of people think it's harder for a young person from a state school background to access rugby union, cricket and rowing vs. 28% of those from an independent school background.



Case study: Kyle Sinckler, England Rugby and Harlequins RFC



“I went to Graveney School and my teacher Miss Long had a massive part to play in my career, her love for the game was unbelievable. She helped me out a lot as well, taking me to training in Reigate, waiting for me and dropping me home on occasions. When the rugby season ended I would be twiddling my thumbs so I'd play football or cricket to keep myself busy.

It was a weird one at the start as my friends at school didn't know what rugby was, a few came to watch me play around the age of 13 or 14 because it was close to the football club. I told them I was interested in starting a team at school and thought they would be good. They were quick and massive. I spoke to Miss Long and she said yes. A lot of my mates started playing and my advice to them was the same, 'You get the ball and you run forward. Don't worry about kicking and passing'. They enjoyed it.

It helped my rugby development to coach a game I was learning myself. I was at a state school and as I was developing I would compete against kids at private school who were training twice a week, playing twice a week and who had gym facilities available. I wanted to get to their level.

We did alright. Graveney is now one of the best state school teams in the country and they got to the Daily Mail Vase final a few years ago and they are doing very well.”

Source: My Story: Kyle Sinckler | Rugby Football Union

Talent pathways

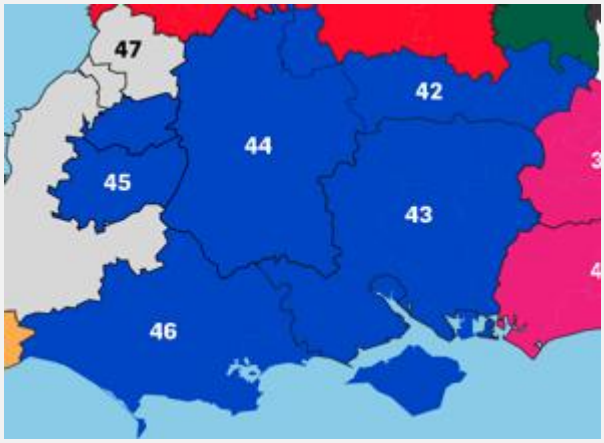
Making the leap from grassroots sport onto a 'talent pathway' is an important step in a young person's sporting development. These have existed in many different guises over the years but what becomes evident in our research is how formalised and professional they have now become.

Ultimately, the way these pathways operate is dependent on a complex web of relationships between professional sports clubs, schools, and families. They vary according to geography and sport and are often dependent on the characters involved. There tends not to be a singular way in which the pathway is managed, and the power dynamics between these institutions mean there are a lot of cogs in the wheel.

Bath Rugby:

At Bath Rugby, their academy now begins at u15s, having previously started at u13 level. Clubs are now increasingly aware of rugby being a 'late maturation' sport so it is therefore not deemed necessary or beneficial to start any earlier. A combination of club scouts, school coaches and club festivals are involved in 'talent ID' and help bring together this first player development group. These players are kept together for 2 years to 'minimise exit points' and initially are involved in one of six regional groups which involve a series of internal games. Each also have their own regional hub where relationships between independent schools and clubs are commonplace – for instance, Wellington College and Bath agreed in October 2024 to host Bath's regional Berkshire hub (number 42 on the map).

The u16s squad is then gradually whittled down to x2 hubs at Chippenham and Havant, while it is fully centralised at u18 level. Players involved in the academy set up are encouraged to stay at their respective schools throughout though conversations do take place with parents and players to determine what might work best for each of them.



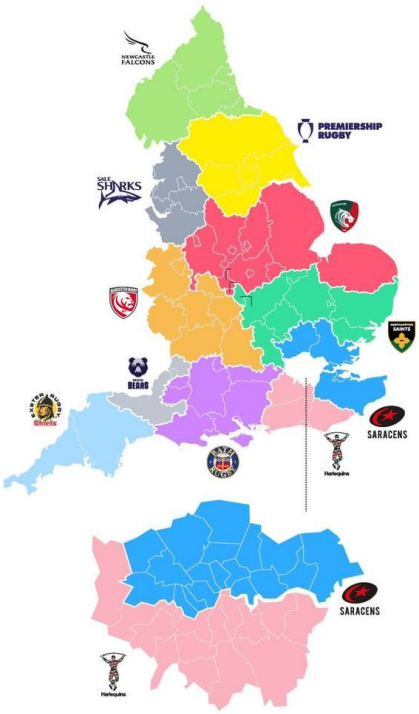
Those we spoke to as part of our research also highlighted how schools have much more control over their young athletes between the ages of 11 and 16 while those in sixth form are often closely managed. At the same time, however, there was also acknowledgement that relationships between professional sports clubs

and top sporting schools are mutually beneficial (as per the Bath Rugby example). Many factors influence how and why these relationships develop, but personal networks (such as through ex-pros taking up coaching positions at the school), mutual advantage (such as the club using the school's facilities as a training hub) and formal structures (such as scouting or recruitment catchment areas) mean that the culture of top sporting schools often influences how local professional clubs operate, and vice versa.

The interplay of academies vs. schools

It is worth taking each sport in turn. In 2024, the RFU proposed new English Premiership Academy Catchment Areas. After Worcester, London Irish and London Wasps entered administration post-Covid and relegation from the Premiership was eliminated, the lines were redrawn such that they now look like the map below.[5]

Relationships between clubs and schools within each of these catchment areas will look different and, based on our conversations, is often down to their 'perceived calibre'. Where clubs are confident that their young people are getting competitive rugby each week (at schools such as Millfield, Sedbergh or Northampton Boys), they will likely be more hands off. Where they're not, they will likely be more closely managed.



This 'perceived calibre' of schools leads to differing power dynamics. In some schools, they will be able to set the terms. In others, the Academy will set the terms. There is no one size fits all. For young people, managing 'multiple advisors' can be difficult. When offered a scholarship to an independent school, the school expects you to play. When a contract is being dangled over your head by a club or county, you are expected to comply. Ensuring that the young person is put first in this scenario was a concern raised by numerous people we spoke to. Having a former professional in place at your school, who understands these dynamics well, was cited as an important factor.

This is clear on a club by club, county by county basis. At Leicester Tigers, their players are selected for the Academy at the end of the under-16 year. Leicester then have formal Academy Partner Schools in Denstone College, Oakham School, Stamford School, Uppingham School, and Brooksby College, where their Academy players will be expected to go. This is the same with others such as Northampton Saints and Northampton School for Boys.

Notably, there seems to be less disparity between independent and state schools when it comes to rugby union. For instance, the Daily Mail Trophy for Boys u18s for 2025/26 has three non-fee-paying schools within

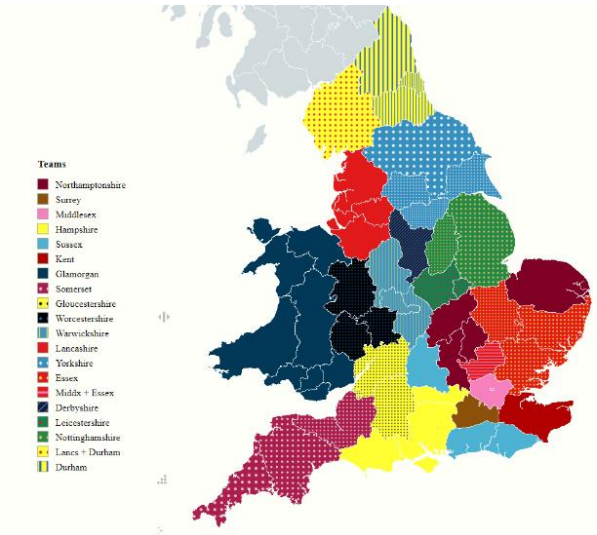
[5] *Note that this doesn't take into account new proposals from the RFU published on 26 February 2026: RFU set to confirm radical restructure of English rugby - BBC Sport*

its top 10 (Northampton School for Boys, Sir Thomas Rich's School and Campion School, Essex), while Northampton School for Boys were also crowned in March 2026 as the u18 Continental Tyres School Cup winners[6].

From a cricket perspective, with 18 first class counties vs. only 10 professional rugby clubs, the geography is more evenly spread. The map below shows all English and Welsh counties with their partnered First Class County.

Talented young cricketers will be invited to join their respective 'County Age Group (CAG)' with these typically operating from u13s to u18s for boys, while girls' programmes typically cover u12 to u17.

The way in which counties recruit young players onto their talent pathways was given a serious 'kick up the backside' by the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket's Holding up a Mirror to Cricket report in June 2023[7]. This report made 44 recommendations which counties, at the instruction of the ECB, have since taken on board. This included a series of recommendations on counties' talent pathways, including where their talent is sourced from and the access to these pathways.



The response of both the ECB and counties to this report has been instructive. Schemes such as the ACE Programme (focused on those of African and Caribbean heritage), the South Asian Cricket Academy, and MCCF (Marylebone Cricket Club Foundation) hubs are centred on widening access – while young sports people can now showcase their skills directly to counties via video trial[8]. A new state school competition, the Barclays Knight-Stokes Cup, also begins in 2026 and will see the final played at Lord's.

While these recommendations have been actioned, relationships between independent schools and counties do continue to be cultivated. It is notable that the 2026 Cricketer Schools Guide lists out the top 100 senior schools for cricket, all of which are independent, before formulating a separate section on the top 25 state schools[9]. For the top girls' schools in the country, the Cricketer's top 20 includes just 2 state schools (Denmark Road High School in Gloucester and Mayfield School in Portsmouth).

Whether it be Worcestershire CCC utilising the indoor school of Malvern College, or multiple Surrey CCC players going through schools such as Whitgift, Epsom or Cranleigh, the facilities, coaching expertise and

[6] Daily Mail Trophy for Boys-U18A in Rugby Union for 2025/26 | Schools Rugby
[7] ICEC-Report.pdf
[8] The ACE Programme Charity, Cricket Organisation | SACA | United Kingdom, Transforming lives in the UK | MCC
[9] The Cricketer Schools Guide 2026 reveals UK's best schools for cricket

culture of independent schools provides the perfect breeding ground for young cricketers to emerge – as we shall examine in the next chapter.

Surrey CCC

While only 6-7% of children in the UK go to independent school, this figure rises to over 20% in Surrey. Surrey are also second only to Yorkshire in the density of youth teams (with over 1300 boy's youth teams). This compares to 300 teams in counties such as Somerset and Warwickshire.

Surrey have now put in place a number of initiatives to widen access and talent ID, including:

1. Video submissions and assessments which enable anyone to showcase their skills – it was previously reliant on clubs and teachers / coaches. 2025 saw close to a thousand submissions. A third of these players were then invited to be seen in person which saw 43% from a state educated background.
2. The Surrey Cricket Foundation works with schools, clubs, charities and governing bodies to increase participation in the sport amongst all demographics.
3. MCC Foundation Hubs run a nationwide network of hubs, offering free-to-access training and match play to state-educated young cricketers aged 11-17.
4. Supplementary support is provided for state school players at u13-15 level – they endeavour to ensure every player gets 18 hours of extra content.
5. Surrey's Academic Cricket Scholars Programme works with state schools across inner-city London and the wider county to offer students, both male and female, the opportunity to complete their sixth form academic studies alongside access to high quality cricket coaching, strength and conditioning training, and access to the Surrey Cricket employability workshops.
6. The ACE Programme was launched in 2020 and was designed to engage young people of African and Caribbean Heritage.

"It used to be that you had to be nominated for a trial, and in that case, having a coach who understands how to do the nomination process really, really went in your benefit, but now you can enter a video via WhatsApp…we assume 99% of people have a phone and they can just send their videos in, rather than it being an official nomination process. And that's opened the doors up massively to the communities that weren't accessing it before."

- Head of Cricket Academy

"[County] have made it their task to make sure that there would be no kid in the county who is more than 45 minutes from a school with a cricket offering. It started with two schools, then it went up to six, now it's up to 12, where 12 schools get four hours of [county] coaching a week…the programme has already led to, like, four kids on [county] pathway who they'd never seen before, because coaches are seeing them"

- Cricket Journalist

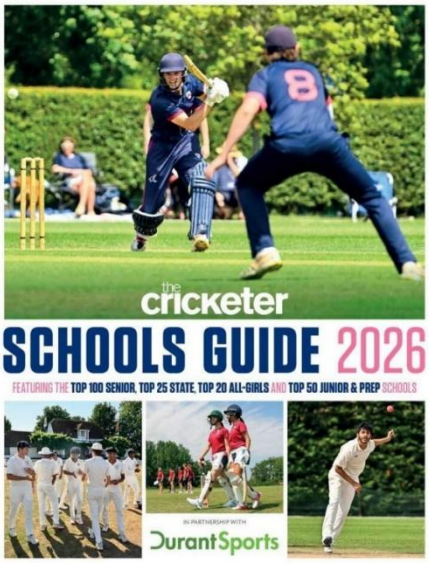
"The sports that select early, like cricket - they'll have a county programme up and running by 11. We know those coaches, and they would offer a few people forward, right? So that's how it works in cricket. It's not the case in rugby - there's no sifting until 15, right? So in rugby, we'd probably know them through our local prep schools. We also invite able players to come in on a Saturday, twice a term, just to have masterclasses. So we get to know them at age 10 and 11 and they get to know us."

Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

05 The offer of independent schools

While there are many pathways to the professional game, the independent school pathway remains a crucial one for many – and one where we think there is an opportunity to maximise impact and grow sporting talent from all backgrounds, at a time when the traditional independent offering is coming under significant pressure.

It would be easy to make this a binary issue – that independent schools have outstanding facilities and state schools do not. However, it is not quite as simple as this. Not all independent schools have such facilities and some state schools do possess outstanding facilities. We therefore refer to 'top' independent schools as those with outstanding facilities.



A strong independent school offering

A quick browse of the 2026 Cricketer Schools Guide hows the beauty of the grounds that schools possess up and down the country. Reeling off the top 100 senior schools, top 25 state schools, top 20 all-girls schools and top 50 prep / junior schools, it is an illustrative guide of the facilities that schools are able to offer.

Facilities

Grounds and facilities such as those illustrated above are only possible because of full time dedicated staff who are able to commit the time and resources necessary to upkeep rugby pitches and prepare cricket wickets, while machinery and equipment costs also play a factor with specialist equipment such as cricket rollers important. Notably, some independent schools employ up to 20 full time grounds people.

Along with the grounds themselves come indoor schools and gyms which can be used all year round, enabling skills which depend on repeat activity to be honed. This is notably the case with young batters in the English game where they are able to reap the benefits of many hundreds of hours hitting balls in the nets.

On the other hand, as budgets have been cut over the years, those in the state sector have often had to let grounds lie fallow or even sell their land for development. A 2024 Guardian report found that children at the top 250 English private schools have more than 10 times as much outdoor space as those who go to state schools[10], while budgetary pressures, the funding of infrastructure, and the upgrade of facilities often require state schools to sell off land and playing fields. An estimated 10,000 playing fields were sold off between 1979 and 1997.

Expertise

Alongside the facilities comes expertise. Many independent schools are now home to former professionals who do not have other teaching responsibilities and are able to work with small groups or offer consistent one-to-one coaching, while some schools also employ experts such as dieticians, psychologists and strength and conditioning coaches. In many cases, talented sportspeople in a pathway towards elite sporting careers are put on a dedicated programme.

[10] *Revealed: students at top private schools have 10 times more green space than state pupils | Access to green space | The Guardian*

Not only are ex-professionals able to provide their own insights and coaching, but they also have access to a huge network having spent careers in the game.

"It starts with the staffing. We've got heads of sport who are full time, who tend not to teach during the day, so they can focus entirely on developing the individuals and giving a lot of one-on-ones…The head of cricket is an ex-pro, the head of rugby is an ex-pro, the head of hockey isn't, but he's full time – that's all he does."

Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

"We are an independent school, and we're lucky to be well resourced, whether it be coaches or facilities…you've got additional sports science support, S&C support, we run an online programme touching on nutrition topics, sports psychology topics, and we're about to start working with sports psychologists to provide one-on-one conversations, particularly with those on a trajectory to sign a contract."

Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

"Schooling is big because obviously most private schools will have a head of cricket who is usually an ex-pro, usually from the county that is local to them. So there's automatic links, and it's not necessarily that they're biased towards them, but if you're picking up the phone, and it's the old captain of the club talking to you versus Mr Smith from the primary school, then you know whose opinion you'll take."

Head of Cricket Academy

"I think the whisper network definitely was a thing, and I think it probably still exists to some degree, but I think clubs are actively trying to remedy that."

Cricket Journalist

"We will look to create links with them, and relationships, so we'll take the academy boys tomorrow, the rugby guys, up to [Premiership rugby club] training - you know, we put them in the minibus and give the evening over to that, and go and create a dialogue to support our players, but also to see what else is happening. So yeah, that is an important relationship."

Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

Culture and curriculum

Sporting excellence is baked into the entirety of the culture of independent schools, not just to those on elite sporting pathways. This stems from the fact that time for participation is a core part of the structure of school life for all pupils and staff, with the curriculum ensuring multiple sessions each week and teachers also given coaching responsibilities alongside classroom duties.

While this will vary from school to school, there is no doubt this is easier for top independent schools who have round the clock access to their pupils and staff who are actively involved. The majority of top independent schools offer three sports sessions a week as a baseline – regardless of ability – with further coaching possible on top of that. This emphasis on a 'holistic education', which includes other extra-curricular activities such as drama, is a key part of independent schools' offering.

"Year groups come and go - some are strong, some are not - so we'll just do the best by them. Our priority is to provide an education for 900 [pupils], some of whom like sport and some don't, but we'll try to keep them all happy and healthy, and when those come along who are talented, we'll support them like we would anything else."

- Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

"We start from the bottom up – every child gets access to three sports sessions a week"

- Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

"The number one [factor that makes a difference] is the culture of cricket within the school. If it's a cool thing to do, and it's part of, sort of, life, like, on a Wednesday in private schools, you'll play fixtures. And even if you're rubbish at cricket, you're playing in the fourth team, you play cricket. And then if you're the captain of the cricket team, that comes with sort of clout and authority."

- Head

For state schools battling historic underinvestment in facilities and budgetary constraints on staffing and time, it is very difficult to provide an alternative offer. The Government's recent Curriculum and Assessment Review makes this clear.

"Schools are strongly encouraged to deliver a minimum of 2 hours of PE per week. Many schools meet this ambition at Key Stages 1 to 3, but evidence suggests that this drops off as students enter Key Stage 4. Teaching time for PE as a percentage of all hours taught has remained broadly stable in Key Stages 3 and 4 since 2011/12. Despite the subject's significant benefits, we heard through our Call for Evidence that, nationally, PE varies in quality. This is particularly concerning given that, for many pupils, their participation in physical activity or sport may not extend beyond their PE lessons at school. Ofsted found that, in many of the schools inspectors visited, the PE curriculum did not match the ambition of the national curriculum because some activities it specifies, such as dance or outdoor adventurous activities, were either not being taught well or not being taught at all. Evidence shows that four in 10 primary schools (40%) used external PE teachers or providers, such as coaches. In roundtable sessions held as part of the Review, we heard that the quality of these providers can vary."[11]

[11] Curriculum and Assessment Review final report: Building a world-class curriculum for all p101

Suffice to say, PE lessons for 2 hours a week – where many different options are possible (58 in total, ranging from dance to cricket) – will not produce elite sportspeople. Indeed, the Review goes on to state that 'the average time spent on one topic or activity is only 5 hours each year'[12]. At independent schools, top young sportspeople may be offered this in a day.

> *"Many state schools in particular are operating on shoestring budgets and providing a sports offering because of volunteers. The reality is that sport is expensive when pushing for the elite level – from paying for insurance to covering medical bills to paying for an ambulance each week. Schools therefore have to choose to prioritise."*
>
> Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, East Midlands

What therefore becomes clear – with various exceptions – is that elite young sportspeople who are state-educated tend to develop their skills not at school but in their local cricket and rugby clubs.

But an offering which is coming under pressure

Over the last 10 to 20 years, independent schools with the means to do so have offered sporting scholarships to elite young sportspeople. By bolstering their own ranks and strengthening competition, there is the hope – like academic scholarships leading to better academic outcomes – that better sporting outcomes will lead to increased reputation and further recruitment.

Independent schools after all, as many pointed out to us, are commercial businesses. The reputational benefit of having a former pupil representing their country or playing professionally can be a big pull for other prospective students. There is a reason why the notable sporting alumni of top schools are proudly and prominently displayed on their website pages.

> *"Sprinkling in some good eggs will lift up the performance of many and create a better environment for those currently at the school. Yes, there are schools where winning is the reason, but we look to do it with integrity."*
>
> *Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, East Midlands*

Although networks and relationships between schools and professional sports clubs and counties inform recruitment, those we spoke to do not routinely offer fully-funded sporting scholarships independently. This is a break from past practices. Instead, sports departments tend to work with central school admissions

[12] *Curriculum and Assessment Review final report: Building a world-class curriculum for all p102*

departments to offer means-tested bursaries to candidates who meet admissions requirements. This has the added benefit of polling well with the general public. 60% of the public would support a scheme funded by independent schools to send talented young people to independent schools, as we will examine later.

However, the current climate for independent schools is not a straightforward one:

- In 2025, the Labour Government introduced 20% VAT on independent school fees, significantly affecting school finances and what schools are therefore able to offer
- The rising cost of teacher salaries, national insurance and the Teachers' Pension Scheme adds to the erosion of schools' bottom line
- Independent schools have historically benefited from charitable status and subsequent business rates relief but this too has now been removed
- Inflationary increases, energy price rises and higher borrowing costs – which don't just affect schools – add to the financial pressure

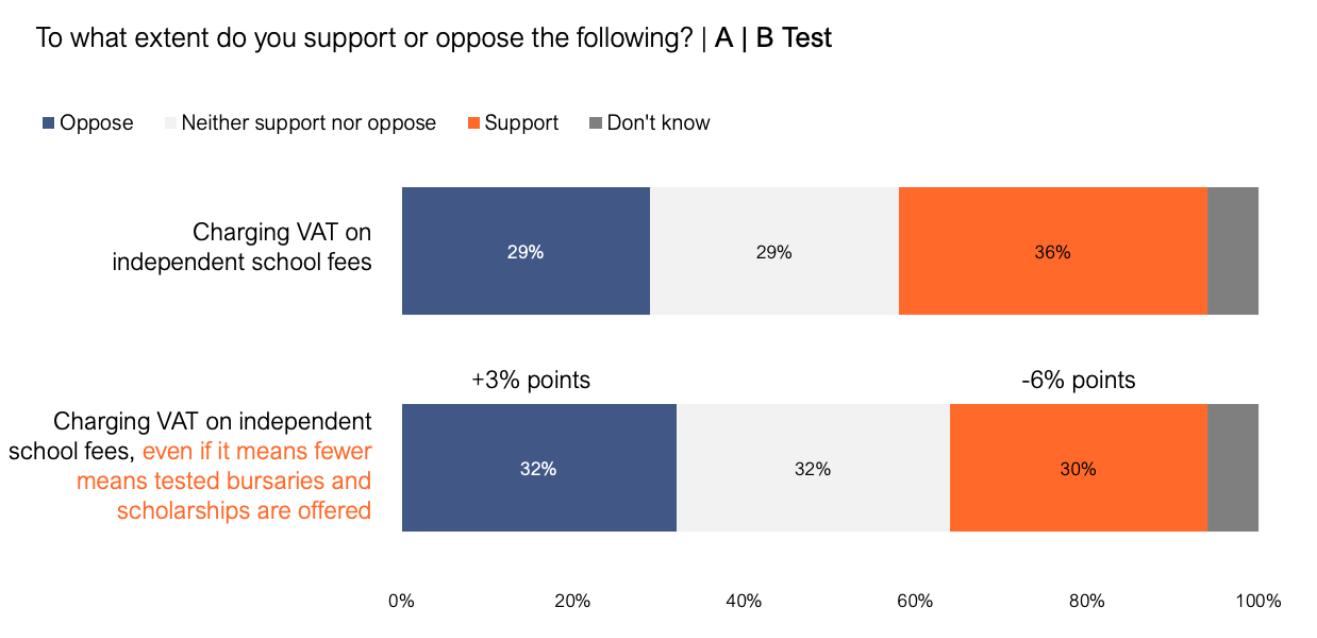
Within this context, it is increasingly difficult for independent schools to offer scholarships and means-tested bursaries. Those we spoke to suggested that schools are responding in different ways with some reducing sports scholarships and others seeing it as a pivotal battleground.

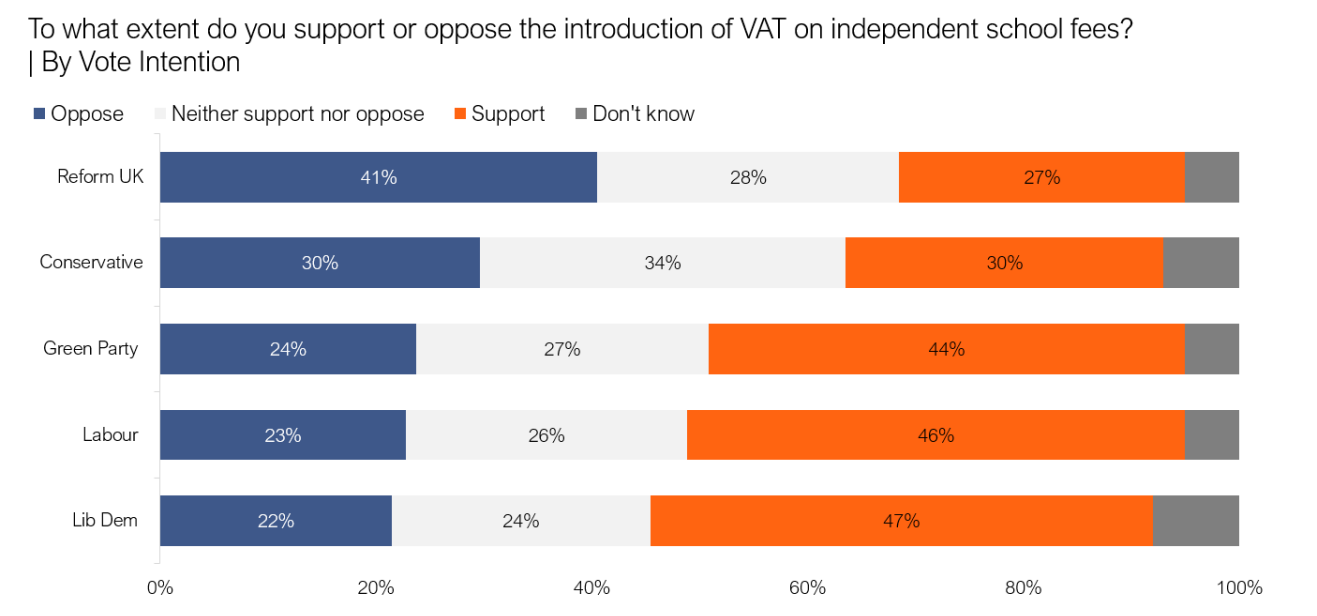
What became clear is that there is no one size fits all approach when it comes to offering scholarships. And while there are HMC (The Heads' Conference) frameworks and Independent Schools Council guidance[13], there is no regulatory body in place to assess how they are awarded. Some have suggested this all leads to a lack of transparency in admissions and recruitment processes. As we make clear in the next chapter, we therefore see an opportunity to create a scholarship which offers full transparency and is nationally celebrated.

13

It is instructive to break down those who support or oppose imposing VAT on independent school fees. 36% of the general population support it but if you were to break this figure down by voting intention, 46% of Labour voters support it while only 27% of Reform voters do.

Notably, however, the 36% general population figure drops to 30% if it means fewer means tested bursaries or scholarships are offered to independent schools.





“If you're good enough to be in receipt of a Sports Awards, then you can apply for a means-tested bursary. And that's totally honest, means tested. That judgement is made by an external company, and that can be all the way, if needs be - it’s sort of taken outside of our hands, and the school will support so finance isn't a barrier at that stage.”

- Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

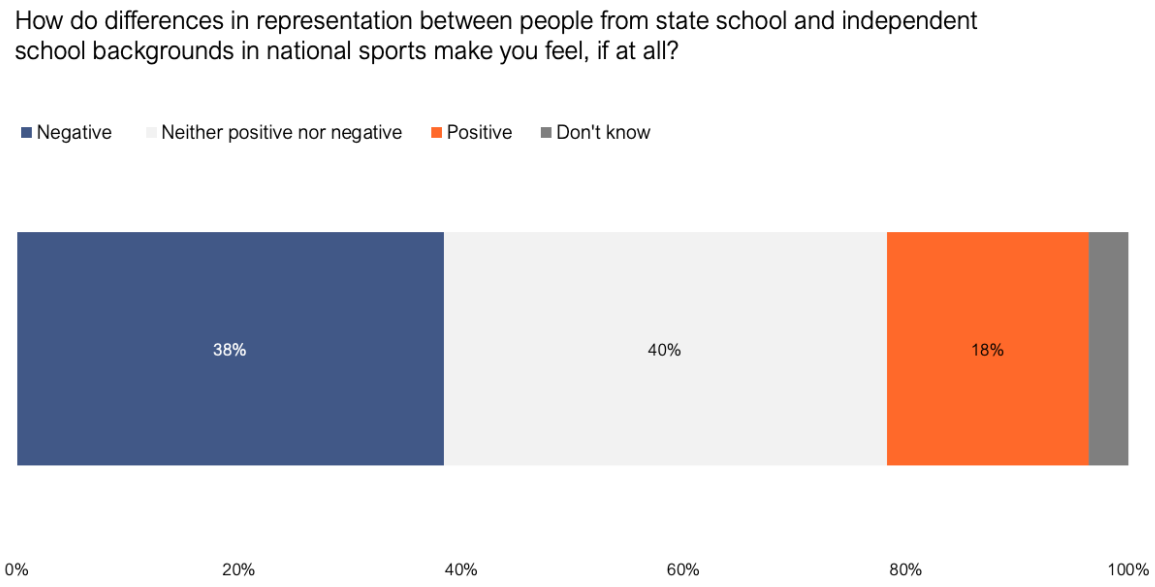
“Historically, scholarships meant monetary value - we're a fee-paying school, and therefore they offered some remuneration and percentage off. That isn't how ours work now. If you are a sports scholar or a music scholar, or an academic scholar, it doesn't guarantee any financial benefit in terms of money off the fees. That's all done through a means-tested bursary process.”

- Director of Sport, mixed boarding school, South East England

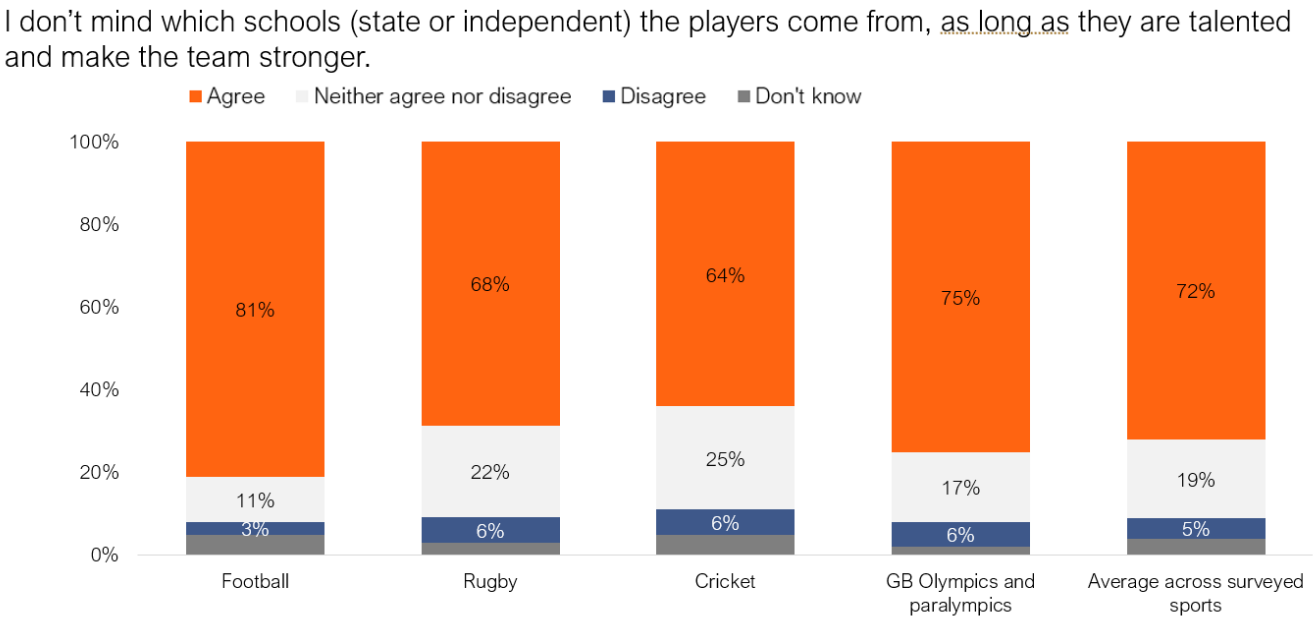
06 The public perspective on educational background of elite sport

The public debate on the pathways into professional sport is often cast in adversarial terms, reflecting long-standing arguments about the capacity of state and independent schools to nurture the next generation of talent. The polling conducted for this report suggests that the UK public approaches this question in a more pragmatic way than the discourse might imply.

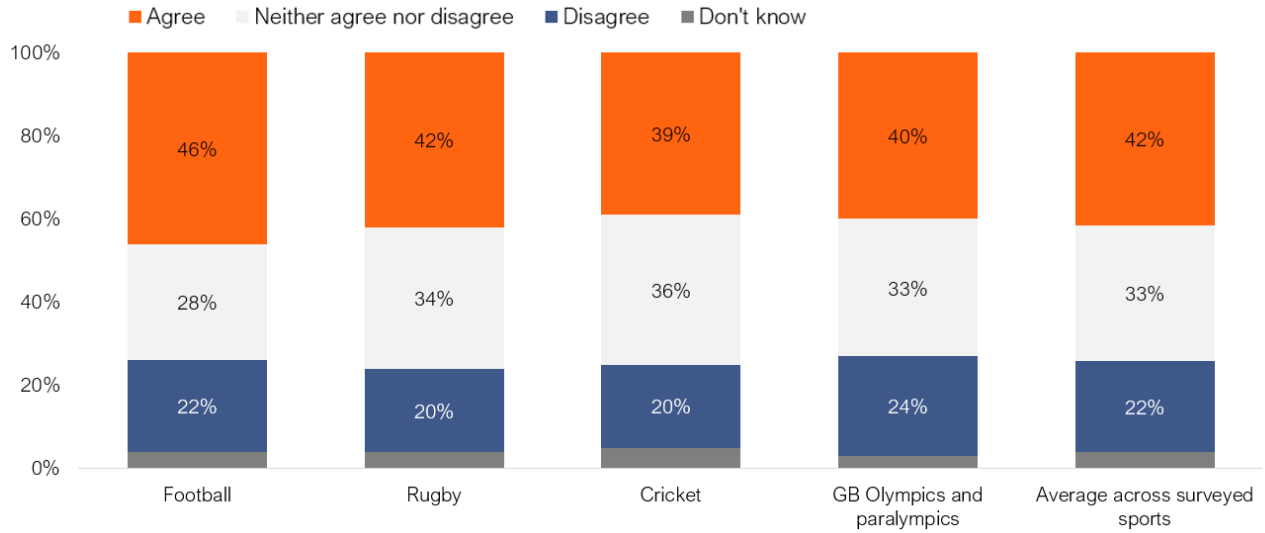
In the abstract, 38% of people view the over-representation from independent schools among professional sportspeople negatively, while 40% are neither positive nor negative.



But when focussing on the consequences, the majority of the UK population chooses stronger national team(s) over a more representative team. For men's national football, 81% of people don't mind where the players come from as long as they are talented and make the team stronger. This figure is 75% for Olympic and Paralympic athletes, 68% for rugby, and 64% for cricket.

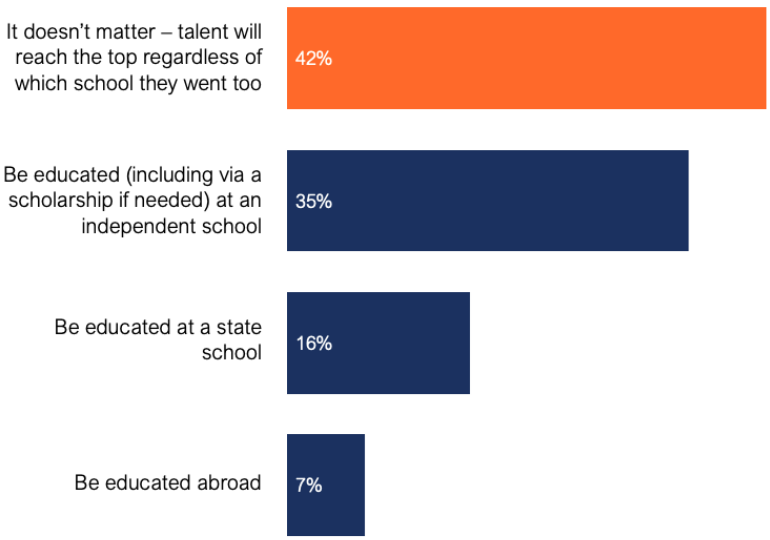


It is important that the educational background of the athletes reflects the education and background of the country as a whole.

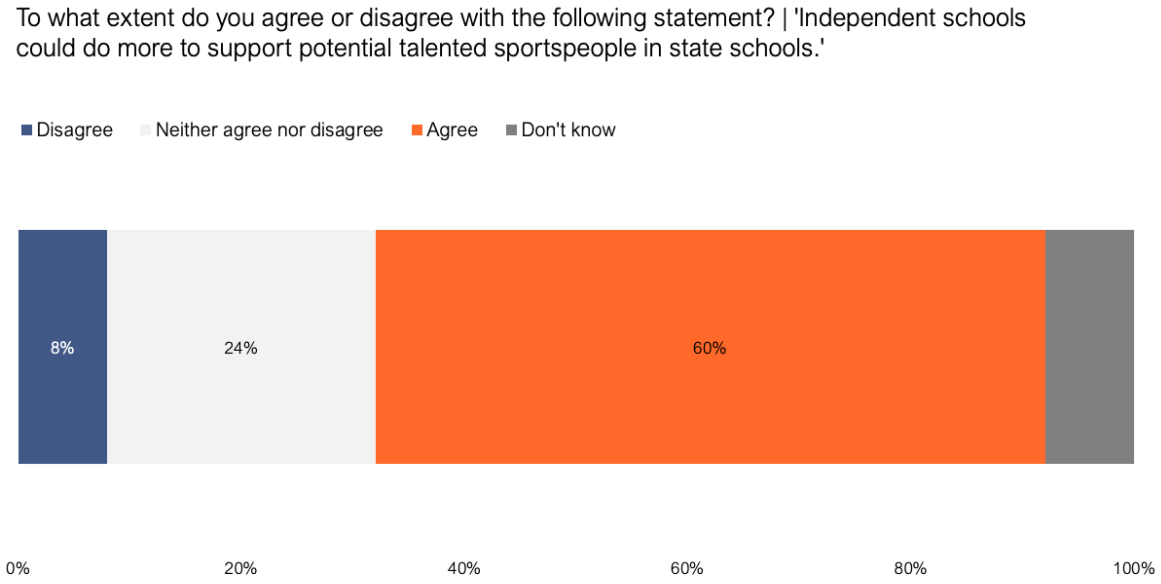


As we examined in Chapter One, the development of young sportspeople is widely understood to be shaped by a broad ecosystem of influences, not just where you went to school. When asked about the educational route of a young and talented sportsperson in rugby, cricket or Olympic sports, 42% of people believe that talent will reach the top regardless of which school an athlete went to, 35% believe an independent school is the best route, and only 16% state school.

In your view, what is the best educational route for a young and talented sportsperson in rugby, cricket or Olympic sports to follow?



But beyond the primacy of talent, this highlights the view that independent schools are a strong route for a young and talented sportsperson to take. Indeed, the UK public also wants to see this route strengthened, with 60% of people stating that independent schools could do more to support talented young sportspeople in state schools.



07 The case for a national bursary scheme

To summarise, our polling finds that:

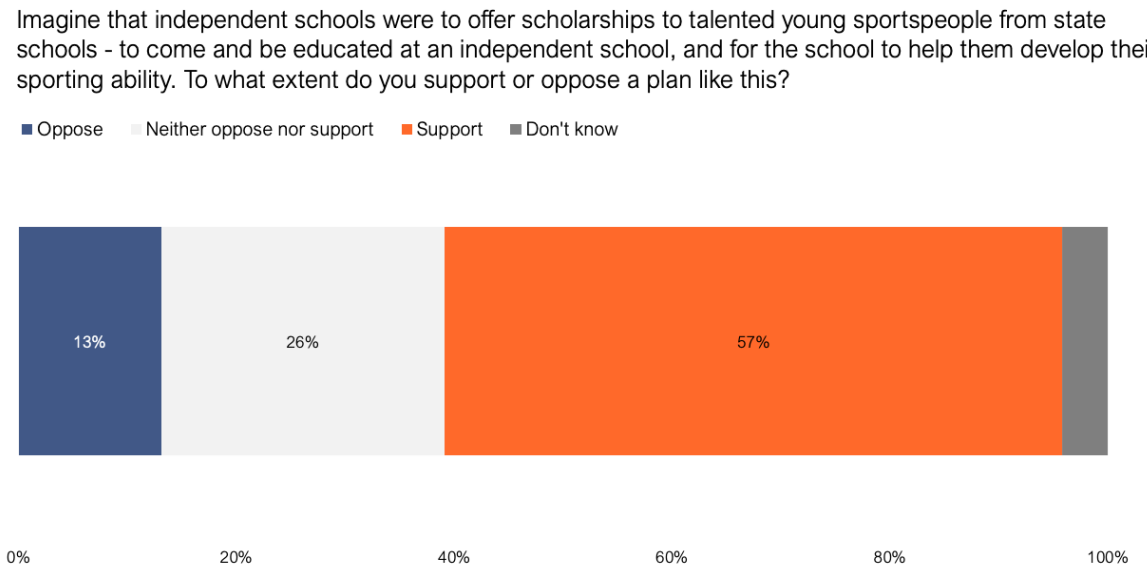
- 16% of people think it best for a young and talented sportsperson in rugby, cricket or Olympic sports to go to state school while 35% think an independent school. 42% don't think it makes a major difference.
- 43% of people think an independent school offers the best pathway to professional sport

Given this is the public perception, we suggest a means by which the opportunities independent schools offer could be maximised – to make it open to all young people who may not have the means; are not captured by the current patchwork of offers; and who may not live within an area near to a leading independent school.

We propose **a national bursary scheme to independent schools for young sporting talent, aimed at widening access and maximising opportunity for talent to progress in cricket, rugby or Olympic sports.**

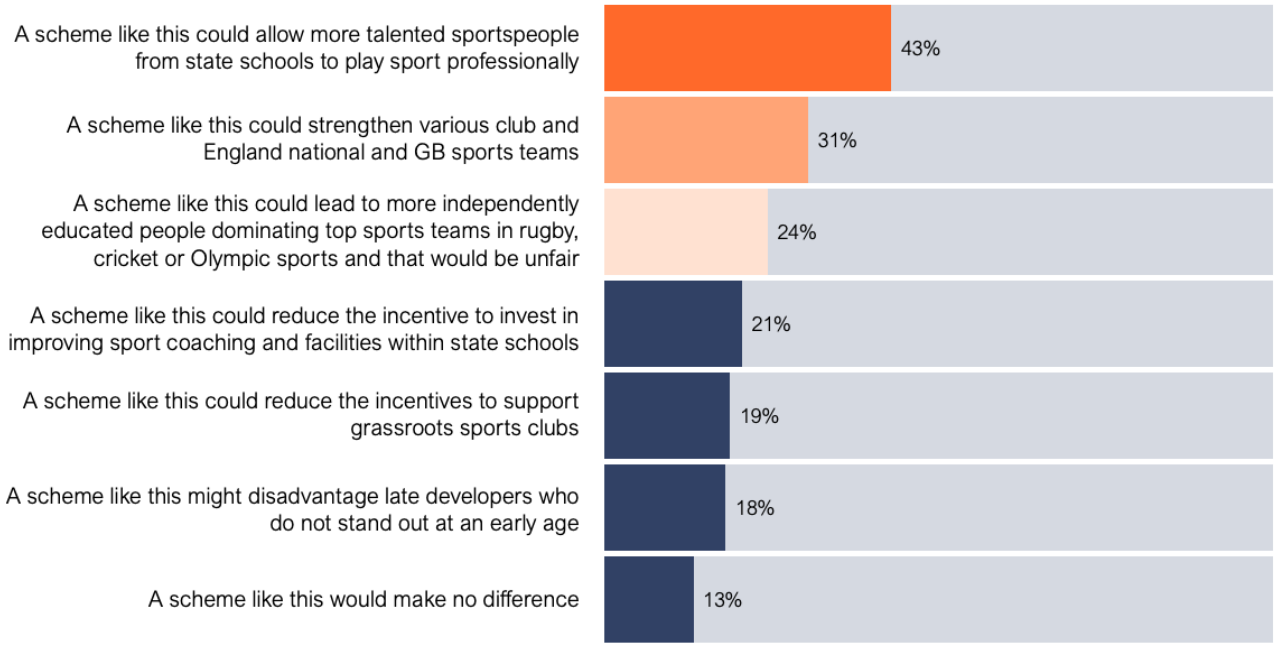
This is not to suggest replacing the various other pathways which are important for talented sportspeople (including the role of state schools, sporting academics, and clubs). Instead, such a scheme would offer an opportunity that is currently only available to those who can afford them, or to those who have been awarded existing scholarships or means-tested bursaries from independent schools. As discussed, with the offering of independent schools currently under pressure, the opportunity funnel for future sporting talent risks narrowing, at precisely the time it should be widening.

Our polling makes clear that there would be popular support for such a scheme, with 57% in support and only 13% opposing it.



When asked why they supported such a scheme, 43% of people said it gave talented sportspeople from state schools a better chance of playing sport professionally.

The previous question asked whether you support or oppose the following scenario: Imagine that independent schools were to offer scholarships to talented young sportspeople from state schools to help them develop their sporting ability. Which of the following statements best reflect the reasons for your previous answer?



That is why we propose a national sporting bursary which enables talented young sportspeople to go through top independent schools where they are provided with the facilities, resources and coaching expertise which give them the best possibility of becoming 'match-fit' for the professional game.

With independent schools' focus on a holistic education, they will also be exposed to other extra-curricular activities and be expected to maintain an academic focus (such as in the US where under-performing academically affects your scholarship).

From the perspective of the independent sector, such a scheme could offer the potential for them to utilise their assets more broadly, and show how they are contributing to the wider national goal of maximising sporting opportunity. Seen from this perspective, the goal is to turn the debate from one around independent school over-representation to one in which the joint efforts of independent schools, state schools, clubs, families and talented individuals come together in order to offer more options for sporting success, regardless of family background or geography.

An international comparison

Around the world, sporting scholarships and government backing are baked into the talent pathway and widely accepted by the general public.

In the US, the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) Divisions I and II award over $3 billion annually in athletic scholarships to nearly 200,000 student-athletes[1]. While this comes at a slightly later stage and the talent pathway in the US looks very different, sporting scholarships to top colleges are fought for and celebrated. Indeed, some of the top US sporting superstars of the last generation were recipients – from Michael Jordan at the University of North Carolina and Tiger Woods at Stanford University to Allyson Felix at the University of South Carolina and Jackie Joyner-Kersee at UCLA.

In the Nordic countries, there is a slightly different approach where specialisation tends to occur late, voluntary organisations are key, and holistic development is encouraged. Sport is viewed as a public interest and therefore receives significant state backing. For instance, the state-owned lottery operator – Norsk Tipping – gives 64% of its proceeds to sport, which helps fund everything from facilities and equipment to research and grants to sports clubs. That compares against 20% funding from the UK National Lottery.

The Marlborough Difference and the Obano-Watson Bursary

In 2020, England rugby player Beno Obano helped produce a documentary titled Everybody's Game, a film that examined race and diversity within rugby. Off the back of the film, he was contacted by Marlborough College who were inspired to create a new sixth-form rugby bursary. Obano and fellow former England rugby player Anthony Watson now help select the 2 pupils who receive the bursary each year as part of the Marlborough Difference programme, with one pupil joining lower sixth and another upper sixth each year.

"We look for someone who loves rugby but someone who is a good person, a kid who wants to do better and wouldn't otherwise have the means. It is hard when you are 16 because there are so many different influences. This is now an opportunity for them."

Beno Obano

Source: Film-maker Beno Obano on a journey of discovery

Creating such a scheme

Principles of a scheme

This scheme would be explicitly modelled on the wider Open Access scheme for entrance to participating independent schools, long championed by Sir Peter Lampl. Building from this, as a set of principles, we would suggest that such a scheme works as follows:

- The bursary scheme would be a nationally consistent scheme, branded as the "UK Independent School National Sporting Bursary" or some such
- It would be means-tested, open to all and fully transparent.
- Parental contributions would be made on a sliding scheme depending on financial ability.
- Sporting scholars would be selected at age 13, giving space to develop skills before academies are more actively involved
- The scheme would be piloted with a select few sports (given the scope of this report, we would suggest rugby union and cricket to start with)
- Schools would opt in to such a scheme, and have to agree to a set of conditions (on which more below)
- Scholars would be selected in conjunction with clubs and counties
- Schools would remain free to offer their own additional scholarship and bursary places alongside that, but ideally this scheme would be so attractive to schools and scholars that parallel schemes would not be needed

The basic premise of the scholarship is as follows.

Schools who could offer all the elements of a full bursary would opt into the scheme. They would need to do so on a rolling five year basis (that is to say, pledge that any existing scholar would be guaranteed to finish their education under the scheme, from the ages of 13 through to 18).

The schools would be required to offer a place on a full service basis (on a means tested basis) – that is to say including tuition, accommodation (it is likely that many of these scholar schools will be boarding, given the need to widen access to those who don't live close to such schools), all coaching as needed, plus potentially additional support for travel, sporting kit and equipment, and so on. The school would also be required to sign up to a nationally consistent approach to recognising a duty of care around the young people who may be pulled between school, academy, county, club and family expectations. This would set out expectations around for example welfare, workload, injury management, safeguarding, and the pupil's own voice.

The school would always retain the final decision over which young person to admit, considering not only in relation to academic standards, but also in relation to whether a pupil is likely to be happy, supported and successful in that particular environment.

The funding for each place would be divided between school, parents (on a means tested basis), and the national bursary scheme. On average, we model the costs of a scheme assuming parents would contribute around 25% to a place – though for any one particular place, they could contribute as much as the full fee (100%), or as little as zero.

The school would offer up to 25% of the costs (for parents not paying the full fee), on the grounds that they would gain from having talented sportspeople among their students and alumni.

The bursary programme – whose funding is discussed below – would cover up to the remaining 75% of the costs - after any means testing from parents and school contribution.

Example 1	Example 2	Example 3	Example 4
The parents, on a means tested basis, are judged to be able to pay the full fees. They still enter this bursary scheme so as to access the support for their talented child.	The parents, on a means tested basis, are judged to be able to pay 75% of full fees.	The parents, on a means tested basis, are judged to be able to pay 50% of full fees.	The parents, on a means tested basis, are judged to be below the level at which they can make any contribution, and pay zero fees.
The school pays zero contribution (as parents have met the full fee).	The school makes a contribution of the remaining 25% of fees.	The school makes their maximum contribution of 25% of fees.	The school makes their maximum contribution of 25% of fees.
The UK Independent School National Sporting Bursary makes no contribution.	The UK Independent School National Sporting Bursary makes no contribution.	The UK Independent School National Sporting Bursary pays the remaining 25%.	The UK Independent School National Sporting Bursary pays the remaining 75%.

The bursary programme – which would be administered by a third party – would broker initial discussions between would-be students and schools, including their club / county – including making recommendations to students for suitable schools, and ensuring schools knew and understood their obligations. They would also do the means testing, and process the bursary payments themselves.

As set out above, final admissions decisions would be made by the schools themselves. Schools would not be allowed to change the rules over participation, or funding, in order to compete against other schools for

talented sportspeople – all offers under the scheme would be made on an equitable basis, with the decision in such cases being with the young person and their family.

This scheme consciously echoes the design of both Open Access, long championed by Sir Peter Lampl, and also how the highly successful Royal National Springboard Children's Foundation operates when it supports care experienced young people to access funded places at schools who opt in to a scheme (and where a combination of school funds, government funding, and Springboard fundraising meets the need of a full school place for Springboarders).

It is not a scheme that would be suitable for everyone; nor does it seek to replace or improve the myriad efforts by clubs, sporting bodies and state schools to widen access to sport for people at all levels. This is not an adversarial approach. It is simply one which seeks to expand opportunities and access to independent schools, for those who could benefit from it.

Funding

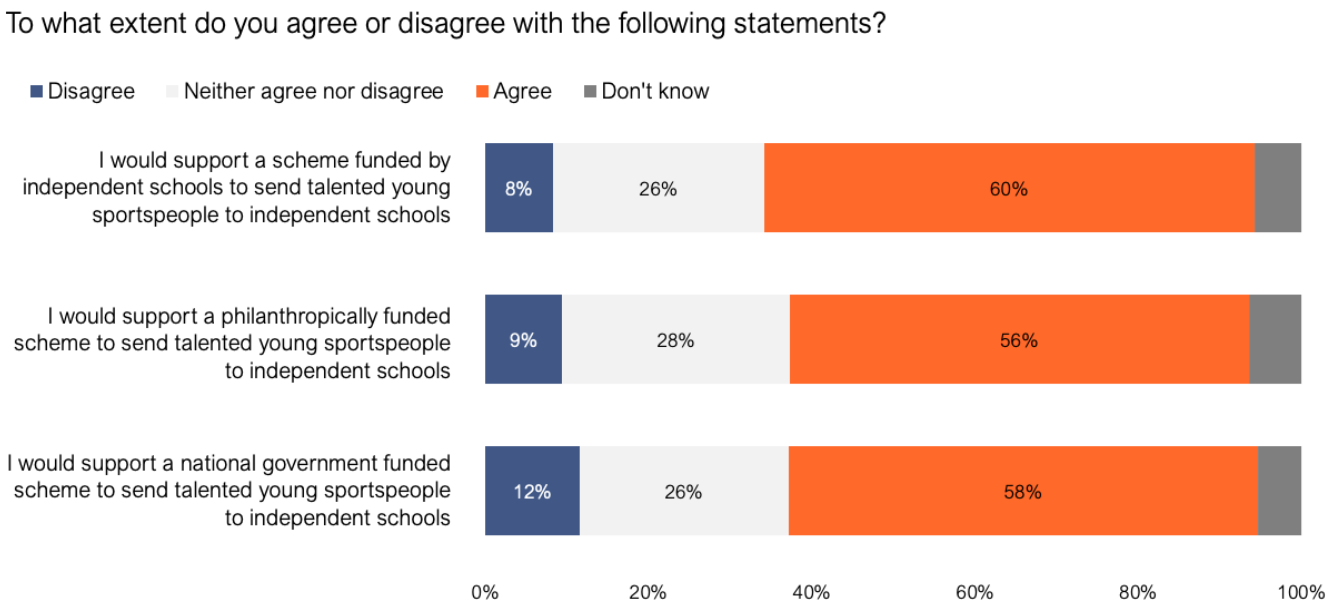
In the past, scholarships, including for sporting excellence, have come from independent schools themselves (often supported by fundraising rounds, or specific pledges and donations given by alumni in service of future sporting outreach).

However, given the context facing independent schools, we think it implausible that the sector would fund a truly scaled, all-encompassing scheme. In effect, we would risk replicating the patchwork of provision that exists now.

Instead, we envisage that a scheme would be partly funded by independent schools (we model a maximum 25% of the total cost), which we anticipate for most schools would be from existing scholarship and bursary placements offered on 100% basis to talented sportspeople. In other words, the incentive on schools to participate is that they can now receive and host four talented sportspeople for the cost of one.

On average, we model that a further 25% of the contributions would be met by parents, on a means tested basis – but for any one particular place, parental contributions would range from 100% to zero.

The national bursary scheme would meet the difference that remained after school and parent funding. Funding for the national programme could be met by government, or by sporting bodies, or – most likely – by philanthropy, or a mixture of all of them. When polled, there is broad public support for funding from independent schools themselves, philanthropy and Government.



We estimate the annual cost of a fully funded sporting bursary to be that of a sixth form boarding placement at a participating school. We have considered a number of schools who are known for their sporting excellence, and looked at their fees for 25/26 for sixth form (which are higher than for more junior years – but we assume the lower fees allow for headroom for uniform, sporting equipment, competition entry fees, travel and so on).

We then take 50% of this number for the maximum bursary cost, assuming 25% from schools and, on average, 25% from parents.

This works out as follows (all costs in 25/26 prices):

Annual cost for our basket of leading independent schools who offer sporting scholarships	**Assumed averaged annual bursary cost (50%)**	**Average five-year cost for a national sporting bursary**	**Estimated cost to a participating school over five years**
£56,754	£28,377	£141,885	£70,942

In other words, the average cost for each national sporting bursary recipient would be around £28,000 a year, plus around £14,000 from a school, and up to £14,000 from parents.

The size of a scheme would be entirely dependent on the interrelationship between places offered by independent schools; demand from scholars; and the size of the funding pot available. Of those, we think the latter is likely to be the most pressured.

If we assume a scheme that started in say September 2027 (Cohort 1) with 10 scholars, and scaled to a total of 100 entrants a year by September 2031 with Cohort 4, costs would be:

- £283,770 in Year 1 (2027/28)
- £1.13m in Year 2
- £2.5m in Year 3
- £5.4m in Year 4
- £8.2m in Year 5

Assuming the scheme continued at 100 scholars a year, then steady state costs (by 2034/35) would be £14.2m a year (with a further £3.6m coming from independent schools and on average, £3.6m from parents). At this level, 500 talented sportspeople would be graduating each year from the programme in rugby, cricket and Olympic and Paralympic sports.

The table in the Appendix shows how costs grow as numbers grow over time (again, all costs are in 25/26 prices, and assume for simplicity's sake an average parental contribution of only 25%, and maximum costs for sixth form provision, meaning total expenditure is likely to be less than this).

08 Appendix

Table 1: Scaling costs of a scheme over the first eight cohorts, and the first twelve years of operation

Cohort / Year	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	36/37	37/38	38/39
1 (10 scholars)	£283,770	£283,770	£283,770	£283,770	£283,770							
2 (30 scholars)		£851,310	£851,310	£851,310	£851,310	£851,310						
3 (50 scholars)			£1,418,850	£1,418,850	£1,418,850	£1,418,850	£1,418,850					
4 (100 scholars)				£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700				
5 (100 scholars)					£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700			
6 (100 scholars)						£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700		
7 (100 scholars)							£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	
8 (100 scholars)								£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700	£2,837,700

By year four of the scheme – 2030/31 - the scheme is operating on an annual at its full basis of 100 scholars a year, with that cohort being the first full size cohort to enter the programme. By year eight, or 2034/5, the remaining pilot years have passed through the scheme and five full size cohorts, or 500 scholars a year are being supported. The scheme then continues in steady state, with cohorts beyond cohort 8 also joining so that the steady state costs of 2034/5 are replicated.