



# AAM Women in Coaching Project

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Authored by: Justine B. Allen



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Justine Allen

School of Sport, University of Stirling

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## Executive Summary

Scottish Hockey's Business Plan 2008 – 2014 highlights the need to support individuals to improve and develop their coaching skills and knowledge through qualifications, mentoring and continued professional development. A workforce audit (Lyle, 2007) and the **sportscotland** Women in Coaching Programme (**sportscotland**, 2007) provided evidence that women are underrepresented in coaching roles in hockey in Scotland. This report examines the current status of the hockey coaching workforce in Scotland and development experiences and needs of women coaching hockey in Scotland

## Project Overview

The project involved three phases:

1. Current status of the coaching workforce.
2. Coaches' experience and needs analysis.
3. Women into coaching programme development and monitoring.

This report presents the findings from phases 1 and 2 of the project.

## Phase 1: Current status of coaching workforce

In 2012, the Scottish Hockey Membership Survey was conducted and completed by 1617 members. Of these members, 363 (22.4%) indicated involvement in coaching. These data were used to examine the status of the hockey coaching workforce in Scotland. Analysis of these findings indicates:

- over half (55%) of the coaches indicated that they worked in more than one coaching environment;
- the largest number of coaches worked in the youth environment (N=239), followed by the children environment (N=187) and the adult participation environment (N=151);
- two-thirds (N=254, 70%) indicated that they had a hockey coaching qualification;
- 1 in 5 (19.1%) coaches are qualified to lead coaching sessions (i.e., level 2 or higher);
- twice as many men compared to women are actively coaching;
- most women are coaching in the children and/or youth environments;
- only 1 in 5 coaches in the adult and performance environments are women;
- a lower proportion of women compared with men are qualified to a lead coaching level (i.e., Level 2 and above).

## Recommendations

- Develop strategies to encourage coaches to become qualified to lead sessions (i.e., Level 2 or above), particularly women.
- Identify unqualified coaches and foster engagement with coach education courses and continued professional development opportunities.
- Actively promote coaching in the adult and performance environments, particularly to women.
- Provide on-going development opportunities for coaches working in children and youth environments (e.g., CPD activities tailored for these coaching environments).
- Promote coaching as a role for women in hockey.

## Phase 2: Coaches' experiences and needs analysis

Ten women who were currently or had recently coached in the adult, talent development, or performance coaching environments participated in a semi-structured interview to explore their coach development experiences and needs. Five themes emerged from the analysis of the interview data:

**Favourable conditions.** Being known in hockey, the club, or district as a high level player and/or for having a background in coaching or teaching were facilitating factors when it comes to being approached and asked to begin to coach and for opportunities to progress. Availability of coaching opportunities, a need for a coach, was also an important contributing favourable condition.

**Development opportunities.** These coaches engaged in a range of traditional development opportunities. Practical coaching experience, whether through working with squads or teams, or as part of coach education and workshops, were considered the most valuable for their development. Opportunities to discuss and share ideas about hockey and about coaching, including observation and analysis, were also highly valued.

**Personal support.** The coaches received, or desired, support from a range of individuals such as SH coach manager, mentor-coach, peer-coaches, coaching team, a partner or friends. Central to quality support was the development of a trusting relationship where coaches did not feel that they were being judged by the person or people they spoke and worked with.

**Constraints, challenges and recommendations.** The stage or time in coaches' lives in relation to family and work commitments and priorities may provide opportunities to coach but may also constrain their involvement. These priorities can and do change in coaches lives, therefore coaches may 'come and go' from the workforce. Perceptions of the experience, knowledge, qualification and commitment required for coaching in different environments and knowledge of available opportunities may be limiting coaches' desire to change coaching environments.

## Recommendations

- Identifying, recruiting, and deploying coaches, whether beginners or more advanced, would benefit from structured and planned processes within clubs, districts, and nationally.
- Processes should be developed to openly and widely advertise and promote coaching opportunities.
- The coach development model and coaching pathways in hockey in Scotland and Great Britain should be clarified and promoted.
- The demands of coaching in different coaching environments should be clarified and promoted to encourage coaches to consider working in alternative, particularly adult and performance coaching environments.
- Developing coaching networks, mentors and peer-coaching buddy systems to provide personal support should be central to a structured approach to coach recruitment and development.
- Strategies should be developed to foster coaches' continued learning and engagement with educational opportunities.
- Creative ways to engage coaches in practical experiences that extend their sport-specific and general knowledge and coaching skills should be developed and promoted.
- How coaches can up skill and re-engage in hockey and coaching after an absence should be considered and supported.

# AAM Women in Coaching Project

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## Background

Women are underrepresented in sport at every level of participation and role. Coaching is no exception (LaVoi & Dutove, 2012; **sportscotland**, 2006; Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, 2008). In Scotland, only 8% of women coach at the National and Olympic level (**sportscotland**, 2007). In contrast in team sports, such as hockey, nearly 50% of attendees on introductory coach education courses and those delivering within Children and Youth sessions are female. Scottish Hockey wish to support women to coach across all coaching environments linked to the Coach Development Model (GB Hockey).

Scottish Hockey's Business Plan 2008 – 2014 highlights the need to support individuals to improve and develop their coaching skills and knowledge through qualifications, mentoring and continued professional development. A workforce audit (Lyle, 2007) and the **sportscotland** Women in Coaching Programme (**sportscotland**, 2007) provided further evidence that women required assistance to progress through the coach pathway. Scottish Hockey would like to progress the initial **sportscotland** programme.

## Project Overview

The project involves three phases:

1. Current status of the coaching workforce.
2. Coaches' experiences and needs analysis.
3. Women in coaching programme development and monitoring.

### Phase 1: Current status of coaching workforce

Aim: To establish the current status of coaching workforce in Scotland.

How: Analysis of data collected by Scottish Hockey through:

- 2012 Membership survey;
- Scottish Hockey database.

Outcomes:

- Populate the coaching model with the numbers of men and women coaches.
- Identify priority area(s) for a focused coach development programme.

### Phase 2: Coaches' experiences and needs analysis

Aim: To establish coach development needs in priority areas for women coaches.

How: Identify coaches in priority areas and determine coaches' development experiences and needs.

Outcome:

- Evidence-based identification of coach development needs for priority areas
- Findings feed into the development of AAM Women in Coaching Development Programme

### Phase 3: Programme development and monitoring

Aim: To develop and monitor the AAM Women in Coaching Development Programme for priority area(s).

How: Identify and recruit women coaches onto the programme. Engage coaches in a series of workshops and professional development opportunities. Assess impact on coaches during the programme.

Outcome:

- Evidence-based assessment of the impact of the programme on women coaches in Scottish Hockey.

## Hockey Coach Development Model for Great Britain

The coach development model for hockey in Great Britain contains five coaching environments which have been identified as:

- Children 5-11 years. These are children participating in junior club or school hockey activities.
- Youth 12-18 years. These are young people involved in school or club activities that are not linked to the performance player pathway.
- Adult participation. These are individuals over 18 years involved in club sessional hockey for participation purposes.
- Talent development. These are athletes participating in performance player/club environments.
- High performance. These are athletes competing at the elite level.

Within each coaching environment the model identifies four coaching roles:

- Assistant coach – assists higher qualified coaches delivering coaching sessions under supervision
- Coach – plan, deliver, and review coaching sessions
- Senior coach – plan, implement and review annual coaching programmes
- Master coach – oversee and review long term coaching programmes and systems

## Phase 1: Current Status of Coaching Workforce

In 2012, the Scottish Hockey Membership Survey was conducted and completed by 1617 members. The data presented here describes the information gained about members who reported engagement in coaching hockey in Scotland.

### All Coaches

Of the members who completed the survey, 684 (42.3%) were men, 573 (35.4%) were women and 360 (22.3%) did not indicate their gender. In relation to coaching, 363 (22.4%) members indicated involvement in coaching. The coaches ranged in age from 16 years to 69 years with an average age of 36.5 years. The average ages of coaches working in children, youth, and talent environments were slightly lower than those working in adult and performance environments (see Table 1).

Table 1. Average age (years) of coaches working in each coaching environment.

	Children	Youth	Adult	Talent	Performance
<b>Average Age</b>	35.8	36.2	39.6	36.6	41.3

### Coaching Environments

Over half (55%) of the coaches indicated that they worked in more than one coaching environment. The largest number of coaches worked in the youth environment (N=239), followed by the children environment (N=187) and the adult participation environment (N=151). Fifty-two coaches reported working in the talent development environment and 31 coaches reported working in the high performance environment (See Table 2 and Figure 1).

Table 2. Coaches reporting working in each coaching environment.

	Children	Youth	Adult	Talent	Performance
<b>Total</b>	187 (28.3%)	239 (36.2%)	151 (22.9%)	52 (7.8%)	31 (4.7%)

Note. Coaches reported all the environments in which they worked. Therefore the number of coaches over-represents the actual number of people coaching.

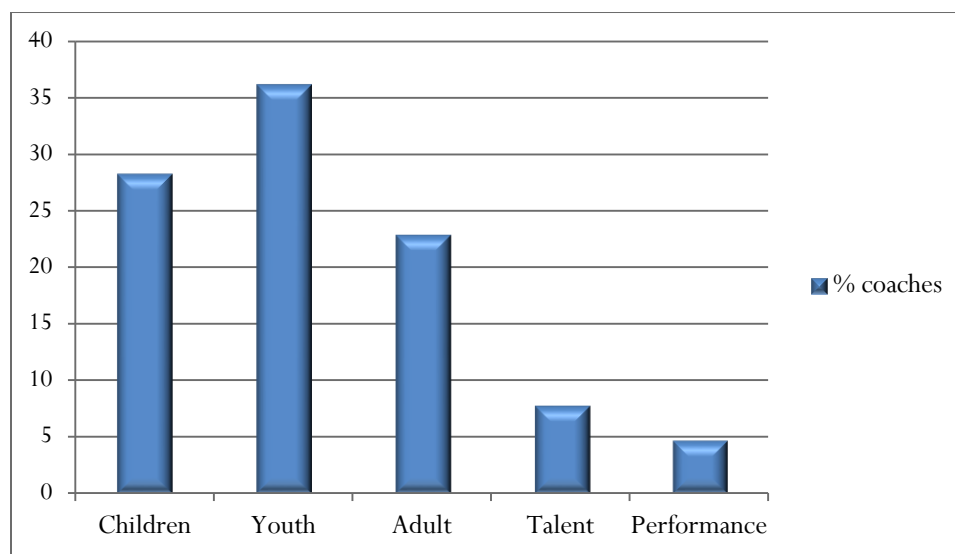


Figure 1. Percentage of coaches reporting working each coaching environment



## Men and Women Coaches

Of the individuals reporting engagement in coaching, 221 (60.8%) were men, 133 (36.6%) were women and 9 (2.5%) did not indicate their gender. The average age for men coaches was slightly older (38.5 years) than women coaches (33.5 years). The average ages of women coaches working in children, youth, and talent environments were lower than men coaches working in those environments and lower than those coaches working in adult and performance environments (see Table 3).

Table 3. Comparison of average age of men and women working in each coaching environment.

	Children	Youth	Adult	Talent	Performance
<b>Women</b>	33.0	33.4	38.7	31.9	40.8
<b>Men</b>	38.3	37.9	39.8	39.1	41.5

## Coaching Environments

Of the 133 women coaches, just over half (N=69, 51.9%) indicated coaching in more than one environment. Three-quarters (75.9%) of women reported working in the children or youth environments compared with a little over half the men coaches (58.3%).

Table 4 and Figure 2 show the proportion of women compared with men working in each coaching environment. In the children environment the proportion of women compared with men is approximately equal. However, in the youth and talent environments, 1 coach in 3 is a woman. While in the adult and performance environments the imbalance is even greater where only 1 coach in 5 is a woman.

Table 4. Comparison of men and women working in each coaching environment.

	Children	Youth	Adult	Talent	Performance
<b>Women</b>	86 (47%)	87 (37.3%)	31 (20.9%)	18 (35.3%)	6 (20%)
<b>Men</b>	97 (53%)	146 (62.7%)	117 (79.1%)	33 (64.7%)	24 (80%)
<b>Total</b>	183	233	148	51	30

Note. Coaches reported all the environments in which they worked. Therefore the number of coaches over-represents the actual number of people coaching.

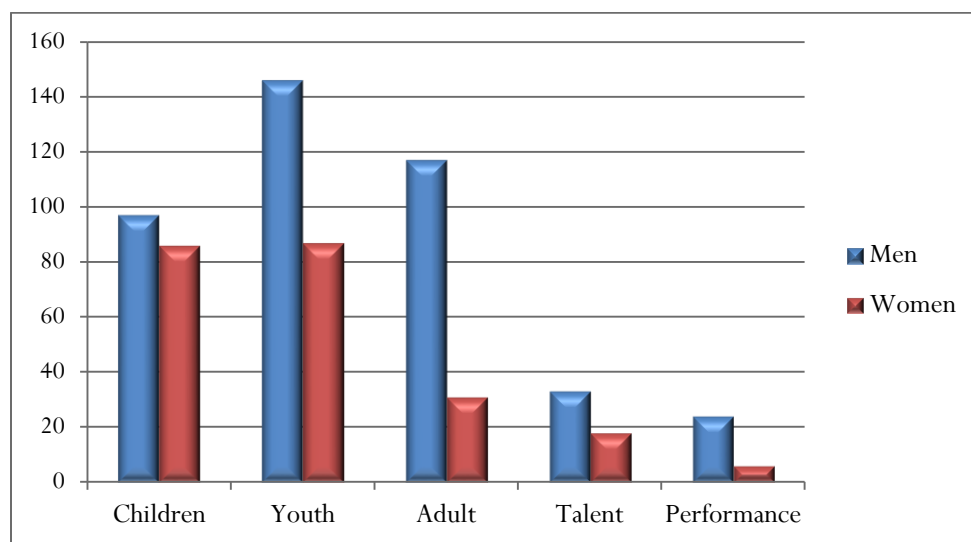


Figure 2. Number of men and women reporting working in each coaching environment.

## Coaches' Qualifications

Of the 363 coaches completing the membership survey just over two-thirds (N=254, 70%) indicated that they had a hockey coaching qualification. The remaining 109 coaches (30%) did not report having any qualifications. For 236 of these coaches further information about their coaching qualifications were obtained from Scottish Hockey records. Of the 236 coaches, one third have no coaching award. Nearly half of the coaches (46.6%) are qualified as assistant coaches (i.e., leaders or level 1) and only 1 in 5 (19.1%) of coaches are qualified to lead coaching sessions (i.e., level 2 or higher) (See Table 5).

Table 5. Coaches' level of qualification.

Qualification	All
<b>To Assist</b>	110 (46.6%)
<b>To Lead</b>	45 (19.1%)
<b>No award</b>	81 (34.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>

## Coaching Environments

The proportion of coaches qualified to lead (i.e., level 2 or above) increases progressively across the environments from children to performance: children (16.0%), youth (19.4%), adult (31.9%), talent (51.5%) and performance (75.0%) (See Table 6 and Figure 3). Those qualified to assist remains relatively similar across the coaching environments (between 41.8% and 54.4%) with the exception of only 15% of coaches in the performance environment qualified to assist only. In the children, youth and adults environments one quarter to one third of coaches are not qualified. This figure is lower (less than 20%) in the talent and performance environments.

Table 6. Coaches' level of qualification and coaching environment.

Qualification	All	Children	Youth	Adult	Talent	Performance
<b>Leaders</b>	25 (10.6%)	15 (12%)	12 (7.7%)	9 (9.9%)	1 (3.0%)	-
<b>Level 1</b>	85 (36.0%)	53 (42.4%)	61 (39.4%)	29 (31.9%)	13 (39.4%)	3 (15.0%)
<b>Total Assist</b>	<b>110 (46.6%)</b>	<b>68 (54.4%)</b>	<b>73 (47.1%)</b>	<b>38 (41.8%)</b>	<b>14 (42.4%)</b>	<b>3 (15.0%)</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	34 (14.4%)	16 (12.8%)	21 (13.5%)	22 (24.2%)	14 (42.4%)	10 (50.0%)
<b>Level 3</b>	8 (3.4%)	3 (2.4%)	7 (4.5%)	4 (4.4%)	3 (9.1%)	4 (20.0%)
<b>Level 4</b>	2 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (2.2%)	-	1 (5.0%)
<b>Other</b>	1 (0.4%)	-	1 (0.6%)	1 (1.1%)	-	-
<b>Total Lead</b>	<b>45 (19.1%)</b>	<b>20 (16.0%)</b>	<b>30 (19.4%)</b>	<b>29 (31.9%)</b>	<b>17 (51.5%)</b>	<b>15 (75.0%)</b>
<b>No award</b>	<b>81 (34.3%)</b>	<b>37 (29.6%)</b>	<b>53 (34.2%)</b>	<b>24 (26.4%)</b>	<b>6 (18.2%)</b>	<b>2 (10.0%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20</b>

Note. Coaches reported all the environments in which they worked. Therefore the number of coaches over-represents the actual number of people coaching.

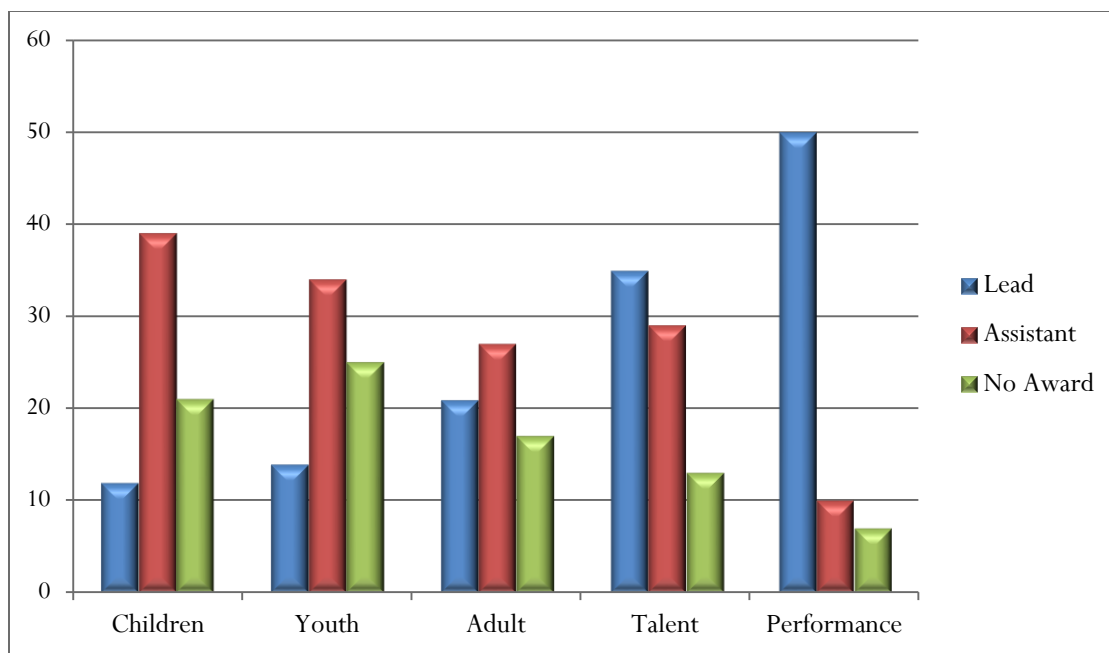


Figure 3. Percentage of coaches working in each coaching environment by coaching qualification.

### Men and Women Coaches

From the membership survey, the proportion of men coaches who are qualified (70.6%) is similar to the proportion of women coaches who are qualified (71.4%). However, because there are more men coaching (nearly twice as many as women) there is a greater proportion of men compared with women who reported having a coaching qualification (61.4% cf. 37.4%). Also a greater proportion of men compared with women reported having no coaching qualification (59.6% cf. 34.9%) (see Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of men and women coaches' qualification status.

	Qualification	No qualification
<b>Men (N=221)</b>	156 (61.4%)	65 (59.6%)
<b>Women (N=133)</b>	95 (37.4%)	38 (34.9%)
<b>Total</b>	254	103

Note. The percentages do not add to 100 due to the coaches who did not report their gender.

When comparing men's and women's level of coaching qualification, a similar percentage of men and women were qualified to assist with coaching (see Table 8 and Figure 4). However, men (23.2%) were more likely than women (13.2%) to have lead coaching qualifications.

If only those who have qualifications are compared (i.e., those with no award are excluded from the calculations) the majority of women are qualified to assist only (80.3%) with only 1 in 5 (19.7%) women coaches qualified to lead coaching sessions. In comparison, 1 in 3 (35.1%) men have lead coaching qualifications. These figures are similar to those for all coaches recorded on the Scottish Hockey database (qualified at level 2 or above 32.8% men cf. 20.9% women).

Table 8. Comparison of men and women coaches' qualifications.

Qualification	All	Men	Women
<b>Leaders</b>	25 (7.5%)	16 (7.6%)	9 (7.7%)
<b>Level 1</b>	85 (25.4%)	45 (21.3%)	40 (34.2%)
<b>Total Assist</b>	<b>110 (46.6%)</b>	<b>61 (43.0%)</b>	<b>49 (53.8%)</b>
<b>Level 2</b>	34 (10.2%)	24 (11.4%)	10 (8.5%)
<b>Level 3</b>	8 (2.4%)	6 (2.8%)	2 (1.7%)
<b>Level 4</b>	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.9%)	-
<b>Other</b>	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.5%)	-
<b>Total Lead</b>	<b>45 (19.1%)</b>	<b>33 (23.2%)</b>	<b>12 (13.2%)</b>
<b>No award</b>	<b>81 (34.3%)</b>	<b>48 (22.7%)</b>	<b>30 (25.6%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>91</b>

Note. The figures in the men and women columns do not all add to equal the All column figures because not all coaches reported their gender.

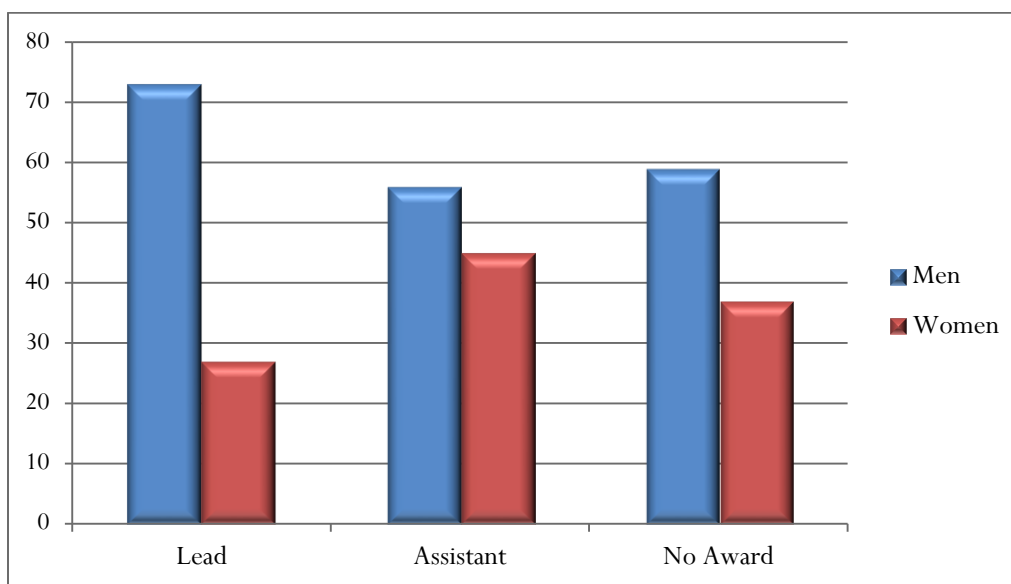


Figure 4. Comparison of coaching role for men and women based on qualification (Lead, Assistant and No Award).

## Summary and Conclusion

Almost twice as many men compared with women are actively coaching. The majority of coaches work in at least two coaching environments and often more. Coaches range in age from 16 to 69 years with an average age in mid-to-late thirties. Men coaches tend to be a little older than women coaches, this is particularly evident in the talent environment. Over half of the coaches currently coaching in Scotland work in the children and youth environments, with three-quarters of all women coaches working in these environments. A quarter of all coaches work in the adult environment. However, only 1 in 5 of these coaches are women. There is a similar low proportion of women coaching in the performance environment. In summary women are underrepresented in hockey coaching in general and in all coaching environment except the children environment.

With regards to coaching qualifications approximately two-thirds of coaches report having a coaching qualification. However, less than 1 in 7 coaches has a qualification that is appropriate for lead coaching (i.e., Level 2 or above). The talent and performance environments are the only coaching environments where there are more coaches with lead coach qualifications than assistant coach qualifications. Those with lead coaching qualifications are much more likely to be men than women.

It is important to note that the level of qualification could be verified for only half of the respondents. This was due to insufficient information provided by the survey respondents resulting in not all respondents being matched to Scottish Hockey records to establish their level of coaching qualification. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with some caution.

Analysis of these findings indicates that:

- over half (55%) of the coaches work in more than one coaching environment
- the largest number of coaches work in the youth environment (N=239), followed by the children environment (N=187) and the adult participation environment (N=151)
- two-thirds (N=254, 70%) of coaches have a hockey coaching qualification
- one-third of coaches do not have a coaching qualification
- 1 in 5 (19.1%) coaches are qualified to lead coaching sessions (i.e., level 2 or higher)
- twice as many men compared to women are actively coaching hockey in Scotland
- most women are coaching in the children and/or youth environments
- only 1 in 5 coaches in the adult and performance environments are women
- fewer women compared with men are qualified to a lead coaching level (i.e., Level 2 and above).

## Recommendations

- Develop strategies to encourage coaches to become qualified to lead sessions (i.e., Level 2 or above), particularly women.
- Identify unqualified coaches and foster engagement with coach education courses and continued professional development opportunities.
- Actively promote coaching in the adult and performance environments, particularly to women.
- Provide on-going development opportunities for coaches working in children and youth environments (e.g., CPD activities tailored for these coaching environments).
- Promote coaching as a role for women in hockey.

## Phase 2: Coaches' Needs Analysis

The aim of this phase of the research was to identify the development experiences and needs of women hockey coaches in Scotland.

### Participants

Fifteen women who, were currently coaching, or had recently coached, in the adult, talent development, or performance coaching environments were identified by the Scottish Hockey Coach Education Development Manager. These coaches were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview to explore their development experiences and needs. Ten coaches agreed to participate in the study. Their demographic information is presented in Table 9. The coaches ranged in age from 26 to 59 years ( $M = 43.4$  years). The average coaching experience was 21.6 years (range 4 to 37 years). Only one coach had less than 15 years coaching experience. All but one coach had Hockey Level 2 coaching qualification and four of the coaches had Level 3 coaching qualification. Three coaches had educational backgrounds in sports coaching or sport science. Four had education and qualifications related to teaching. Seven of the coaches had worked with national squads and all but one of these 7 coaches had coached National League Division 1 or 2. The other three coaches had coached district teams and/or senior club teams. The highest playing level these coaches attained as athletes were: four played for Scotland in Senior or U21 teams, two played for Scotland in Masters teams, four played National League 1 or 2 club teams.

Table 9. Coaches' demographic information.

Demographic		
<b>Age</b>	M = 43.4 years	Range: 26 to 59 years
<b>Coaching experience</b>	M = 21.6 years	Range: 4 to 37 years
<b>Educational background</b>	Sports Coaching/Science	3
	Teaching	4
	Other	3
<b>Coaching qualification (highest)</b>	Level 3	4
	Level 2	5
	Level 1	1
<b>Coaching environment*</b>	National squads	7
	National League club	8
	District	2
<b>Playing experience</b>	Senior/U21	4
	National League club	4
	Masters	2

\* Number is greater than the number of coaches because the coaches have worked in multiple environments.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' coach development experiences and needs. The interviews were semi-structured to provide rich, thick description of the participants' experiences (Burgess, 1982; Fontana & Frey, 2000). In keeping with a semi-structured interview and qualitative research protocol, the interviews were conversational in nature. This process allowed for rapport to be developed between the interviewer and participants which supported the expression of the participants' point of view (Burgess, 1982). Discussions in the interviews focused on

topics such as how the participant got involved in coaching and progressed, their experiences with coach education and continued professional development, support received, challenges faced and desired opportunities for further development or involvement.

## Procedure

Approval to conduct the study was granted by the School of Sport Research Ethics Committee, University of Stirling. The interviews took place in locations convenient to the participants. They lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. To protect participants' anonymity they were each given a code (e.g., Coach A).

## Data Analysis and Reporting

The transcripts for each interview ranged between 5 and 16 pages of single-spaced text. The transcribed data were coded and thematically organised by the research team. Initial themes for coding were developed by the research team after initial reading and discussion about the content of transcripts. The data were coded under 15 first order themes. These were then reviewed and refined by the research team to develop the final five higher order themes.

## Coaches' Development Experiences and Needs

The analysis of the interviews revealed five higher order themes. These were: Favourable conditions, development opportunities, personal support, constraints and challenges, recommendations. Each theme is described in turn along with the lower order themes.

### Favourable Conditions

Coaches described similar conditions that precipitated their initial involvement in coaching and their subsequent progression. Conditions favourable for starting to coach included having an interest in coaching, a gap or availability of a coaching opportunity, possessing transferrable skills, previous playing experience, timing in playing career, being known or knowing the 'right' people, confidence, and being asked. Many of these conditions also contributed to the coaches' progression into different coaching positions and different coaching environments.

### Interest

Many of the coaches indicated an interest in coaching, seeing it as a way to stay involved in a sport they enjoyed and give something back.

*I knew that I really wanted to go into coaching... I was more motivated in terms of what I wanted to achieve and it wasn't because anybody came and said yeah, "can you come and do this for us?" It was, "I'm going to do this". (Coach D)*

*I stopped playing... I then had a year off and then thought, I wasn't missing playing so I thought right I'll get back in to the sport, how can I do that, so I started coaching... I played for so long and I loved the game that I thought well... since I'm not playing at that level anymore I didn't wanna step away from it completely so it was just how else could I...could I help out or be a part of it and then coaching was obviously the next step. (Coach H)*

*I've always been very fortunate in my experiences as a player, that I've always had people that have supported me. And as I said earlier it's something that I felt I wanted to give back and I wanted to be involved in. (Coach B)*

*It's about giving something back. That was why I got into coaching in the first place is...you're giving back, something back to the sport you love. (Coach F)*

However, for some, coaching was an expectation of their work.

*I'm not sure if I really wanted to go into coaching, but ... I was..., a young P.E. teacher, working in a private school. I had the S1s, that was my job to coach the S1's because I was the hockey person in the school, (Coach E)*

### **Transferrable skills**

Skills that assisted the coaches in their transition into coaching came from two main areas: their experience with hockey and other sports; and education and employment background. Several coaches were interested in sport in general, participating and spectating. This provided opportunities to develop observational and analytical skills and also to learn about coaching and the demands of sport. Many of the coaches had pursued either sport-related education and employment or physical education-related training and employment. This education provided valuable knowledge of the demands of sport, the coaching process, teaching and practical experiences working with learners. Experiences in sport, education and/or work provided valuable skills they could transfer to their coaching.

*I like watching other sports, I love watching what people do and what managers do and their influence they can have on their teams and you know that type of thing, so you can definitely have an influence on what's going on and I quite like that side of it. (Coach C)*

*A very close link between the sort of teaching and coaching thing... In terms of, you know, wanting to be a P.E. Teacher and be heavily involved in playing hockey, I think the natural progression was just to then be...erm...become involved in coaching (Coach I)*

*I got involved in kind of coaching schools teams ... I can use the experience I've gained in teaching to help me in the coaching ... I think having the degree has helped me, you know, being able to reflect on that quite a lot and review it throughout the time that I've worked. (Coach B)*

### **Playing experience**

Most of the coaches interviewed played to a high level and enjoyed their involvement in hockey. This experience in the sport and the experiences with being coached encouraged them to begin to coach. It also provided some insight into the requirements of the role as a coach.

*The fact that I've done my Level 1 I would say that if I hadn't I would still be where I am now [coaching the squad] if I didn't have that bit of paper as well because the playing background is massive. (Coach H)*

*Playing at that level and then just...obviously with my background being in sports, that's kind of how it's come together. (Coach G)*

These positive experiences are contrasted by those of one coach who did not play to the same level and found it harder to get involved in coaching.

*I was a very ordinary player and, as a result, the coaches of the time wouldn't accept that I could actually coach. That was a huge barrier. (Coach D)*



## Time in playing career

For many participants coaching was seen as a natural progression after playing and a way to give back to the sport and stay involved.

*They had been looking for a coach and I was obviously at the end of my playing career and just looking, kinda, for a fresh challenge. So I thought, "Well nothing to lose. (Coach G)*

*I played and I coached. But then I realised it was probably not a good idea to do both. So when I became serious about coaching, I stopped playing. ... after I got to a certain age I thought I would still like to be involved in hockey, so the most natural thing for me was to coach. (Coach A)*

*In terms of, you know, wanting to be a P.E. Teacher and being heavily involved in playing hockey, I think the natural progression was just to then be...erm...become involved in coaching... I've been quite unfortunate with a bit of a...an injury... so again, for me, it's all been a good way of maintaining being involved, although not being able to play. (Coach I)*

For one coach it was important to have considered the level of commitment required and whether at this point in her life she was prepared to make the necessary commitment.

*Although we talk about Scotland being a small place, two and a half hours to every game and two and a half hours back is a huge commitment. So at that time in my life I was prepared to make that commitment and, yes, it's long, the whole season is long. (Coach D)*

## Gap/opportunity

Initial involvement in coaching and progression into different coaching environments (i.e., school, club, district, or national) was most often because there was a gap and a need for a coach.

*What happened was the club were struggling for coaches and I volunteered (Coach H)*

*Biggest mouth, loudest, probably most experience and also I don't want it to fall down so I'll take it up and go with it but yeah, through default, nothing official. (Coach C)*

*They were looking for other potential people. They didn't really have a bank [of coaches]... because I had my P.E. qualifications and obviously a knowledge of the sport... (Coach E)*

*I think there aren't many coaches who can actually coach in the daytime. So I've been fortunate from that point of view that there aren't loads of us. If there were loads of us then it might be a different story. There wouldn't be enough work for everybody. (Coach F)*

## Being Asked

In most (but not all) cases an important facilitating factor to begin to coach and progressing into different coaching environments was being asked to coach often by someone they knew.

*I think somebody just asked me and I said, "Yeah that's fine. I'll do it," and it just went from there. (Coach F)*

*I was asked sort of to come along and ...and help out and pretty much from then I would say...I've been kind of involved in helping out with the District. (Coach I)*

*I actually think it was because someone asked me to do some subbing for another club 'cause I was hanging around and that was literally it and so I did some subbing on and off a little bit of coaching at half time and generally it just got bigger from that ... when I got my level 2 ... I got asked to do coaching for the district so I did ... and then I got asked if I would like to apply for the Under 18's, Under 16's so I did. (Coach C)*

*I was asked to go and coach a really young team who were in... National League, and... it was just the right time for me to come in, you know, a fresh face, some new ideas. Just out of... my college course, played at that kind of level (Coach G)*

These invitations often came about because the person was known in the area due to their playing career in hockey and/or their employment (i.e., teaching or sports coaching).

*...you have a teaching degree plus... you were known in the area, that was how my involvement came about. (Coach B)*

*... obviously the club knows me, they know who I am, so it was easy for me to get involved... because people know me and I've been around for quite a while, I then got approached to coach the 15's and 16's at District level and then from that approached for the National stuff (Coach G)*

### **Confidence**

Many of the coaches talked about or indicated the importance of being confident in what they were doing as a coach.

*I had the knowledge and background experience to be able to say, "I can do this". (Coach D)*

*...certainly confidence was my thing. It's like...not sure if this is right and stuff. (Coach F)*

*I probably should have been an assistant before I was a coach... that would have been a much better pathway than jumping straight in. Not that I didn't enjoy doing [it] but when you reflect back on, you know, I wasn't kind of ready for doing that. (Coach E)*

*When you start coaching at Senior Level, ... so they're obviously National 1, you get challenged a little bit more, so you have to make sure that you're that little bit more organised, you're that little bit more confident, everything's a little bit more planned so that when you come to...you've got answers for their questions. (Coach H)*

*Would I feel confident coaching elite athletes at the moment? No, definitely not. Would I like to? Yes. (Coach C)*

Most coaches were in a supportive environment which helped them to feel confident, however, some also recognised that the environment was not always so supportive.

*If I hadn't had my club, been part of a club at such a young age, I don't think I would have found it as easy to go in to a new group of people and do what I've done. ... the fact that I've been around they've had the confidence to say right she does actually know what she's talking about, we'll give her a shot...so they've had the confidence to do that. (Coach H)*

*You've got to have a great deal of resilience because other people will put you down the whole time ... And you've got to be very resilient to then be able to say, "I know why we're doing this. We're going to take this*

*team forward, you know, and these are the ideas to go with it". And that's why I think a lot of people do find it quite difficult to stay in coaching for any length of time. It doesn't matter how successful you are, at some point people will still say something pretty down about you ... and are you good enough to do that? So you come back to the quality and the confidence and putting yourself out there. (Coach D)*

In one case the coach preferred working with younger players because it was a more positive environment.

*Actually, coaching-wise, I prefer coaching the young ones. Yeah, I probably get more enjoyment out of coaching the young ones. They don't give you any lip like the older ones do. (Coach F)*

In summary, a combination of an interest in sport and coaching, having skills that could transfer to the coaching role, being known in their area due to their playing career and/or employment, being at a point in their lives where priorities were shifting away from playing and an available opportunity appeared to contribute to involvement in coaching. However, these factors also contributed to receiving an initial invitation to coach and the confidence to get involved and continue their involvement. Conditions favourable to beginning to coach and progressing included:

- a gap or available opportunity to coach
- transferrable skills
- playing experience
- time in their playing career
- being known or knowing the 'right' people
- being asked
- confidence
- supportive environment.

### Development Opportunities

The coaches reported engaging in a variety of coach development opportunities. These included formal coach education and CPD workshops, practical experiences, interactions with other coaches, informal self-directed learning, learning from playing and being coached. All opportunities were valued, however, coaches felt that practical experiences and interactions with other coaches were the activities they gained the most from.

They felt development opportunities were important to ensure they were keeping up to date and extending their knowledge.

*It's important that we... keep that kind of content fresh so the young players who we're working with, they have access to that. And if you're the person delivering it, I feel it is your responsibility to ensure that you're delivering the right message to whoever you're working with. (Coach B)*

They also recognised that attending a course and having the qualification was only part of being a coach. Engagement in further development opportunities and actual coaching experience were critical.

*I would say I didn't become a level 2 coach probably until two years after I did the 2 coaching course do you know what I mean? Just because I've got the bit of paper that says I am doesn't mean I am. (Coach C)*

*It's good and it's important that coaches get certificates, I think that's important, but I don't think that makes you a coach. You can have as many certificates as you want, but actually dealing with people on a*

*daily or weekly basis really is what matters and how you interact with people to get the best out of them... it's not just certificates, it's about actually looking, seeing, talking. (Coach A)*

### **Formal education and CPD**

The coaches had all completed formal coach education qualifications. Many also attended hockey specific workshops and generic CPD seminars and workshops. They spoke positively about the courses and felt they gave them confidence.

*Definitely, from that point of view, it gave me a lot more insight than I would have otherwise had as a coach... I feel that they make you a better coach and certainly confidence was my thing. It's like... 'cause it's like...uhh...not sure if this is right and stuff like that, but actually I did fine and I was beating myself up about doing the assessment even though I had done loads and loads of training sessions. (Coach F)*

*I know Scottish Hockey have been pretty good at it, you know, from the people that I've been associated with who run the coach ed in Scottish Hockey,... So I think that's good. (Coach B)*

*...generally any kind of coaching workshops that are done in the area.... So I try to update as much as possible. (Coach C)*

*...I think it's a very positive experience for me personally...it gives it a bit more robustness about your credentials and your credibility. I'm not saying that because you have that qualification you are the greatest or anything, but in terms of your own assurance and assurance to other people, you know, you've made a commitment that not only helps to improve your skills and to improve your kind of capacity as a coach, but also, you know, to the people that you are. (Coach B)*

### **Practical experiences**

The coaches felt they learned the most from their practical experiences. They provide more vivid accounts of their practical experiences and the impact on their own coaching. These experiences could be practical sessions as part of a more formal learning opportunity (i.e., course, workshop),

*We did a fair amount of sort of classroom time and I think pretty much everybody there prefers to be out on the pitch doing stuff. (Coach F)*

hockey-specific practical sessions,

*But they were practical seminars and she said some of the most simple things that just shot home to me that put out a number of technical things at a top level and that helped with me. (Coach D)*

*The sessions that [name] has done have been practical-based ones... [name] potentially will do a couple of skills and tried to get the youngsters to be doing that. Erm...and again, I think, yeah, it's pretty good to have that visual picture. (Coach I)*

*We did a workshop and it was on... And it was to do with tackling, and tackling from behind and shaving a ball off a player and you were seeing it. (Coach G)*

observation of hockey,

*I don't think there was anything that can replace actually going to a game and going to watch higher standard hockey. (Coach A)*

and coaching experience.

*just the practical side of it when you're doing it, doing the weekends. Just getting little tips from the people who are running the courses and also other coaches see how they deliver and that's always very good ...so a workshop's going to raise the awareness of those sorts of thing but you've got to then take it back to your own environment. (Coach C)*

*you can go on as many coaching courses that you like, but to be honest, if you experience it for yourself... (Coach G)*

*I've been to courses, quite a few courses through Scottish Hockey and they're good but I think to get the real benefit, you just have to get out there and learn, and learn sometimes through your mistakes, and learn sometimes through talking with other people. (Coach A)*

### **Interactions with other coaches**

All the coaches talked about the importance of having learning opportunities to observe and talk with other coaches, to share ideas, bounce ideas around, or learn from more experienced coaches. These interactions with other coaches occurred through involvement in formal learning opportunities,

*So you learn from others round about you. So parts of it was formal, but a lot of it was, you know, a lot of it is informal, you know, and having a chat with people and sharing experiences with each other basically... that kinda sharing information in terms of how to deal with tournaments and how to kinda, you know, do the analysis and do the whole kinda planning. (Coach B)*

*It's a chance to meet other coaches ...I think although you get a lot from the content obviously in a course, it's the informal chat I think that you often get a lot from, or 'Oh they are having the same issues as we are having,' or you know things are going along the same lines. (Coach E)*

*While I actually had quite a high skill level in many times of the courses, it's always valuable being there, just being in a smaller group of coaches from other countries, seeing what they knew, seeing what was different, if there was something that was going to be useful for my team's development. (Coach D)*

but also in clubs, within a coaching team,

*It was good to be an assistant and sit in a room with other people who were working out the tactics... you know, how structures were working and things. Rather than kind of sitting there yourself going, "Well I'm not very sure how this structure's". You know, it was very supportive to do that. (Coach E)*

*Well, we meet regularly. We met in December for what we're gonna do for this part of the season and we met in, sort of, July I think it was, for what we were doing for the first half of the season. And we do get together just to sort of bounce ideas off each other. So club-wise, you know, it is pretty good and there's usually maybe 12, 14 coaches turn up. So we do get good numbers as well. (Coach F)*

*We had coaches' meetings and literally we would decide ... the way as a club we wanted to play (Coach G)*

and sometimes just by the coach approaching another coach.

*I think sometimes you can learn a lot just by going to different games and talking to other coaches, and sharing information... I think sometimes you just got to be a little bit bold and talk to people and say, "Look, you know...how would you do that? This is how I'm doing it. How can I do it better?" Yeah. Yeah, so it's, I think it's really important that you share. (Coach A)*

There are challenges, however. Trust and a willingness to share ideas can be stumbling blocks to development through interaction with other coaches.

*It's difficult to fit in a 'let's catch up', I can't imagine catching up for coffee with, apart from [Coach X], anyone else, but that's a trust thing do you know what I mean? I trust him he speaks quite freely with me, others perhaps who don't know me might not do that and I've never had anyone come ask me. (Coach C)*

*Scottish Hockey, because it is a relatively small group of people who have similar outlooks, qualifications etc., if you talk about people that are bouncing ideas off each other, as I said before, if [Coach] was coaching [club name] and you're coaching [club name] and I'm coaching [club name], I don't want to sit down with you two and discuss anything, because everything that I am going to try and do is towards the team, which is trying to be committed to win trying to get to European standards. I don't want to be discussing ideas with you because that means I'm giving you the edge again, and it is always about an edge. (Coach D)*

### **Self-directed learning**

Many of the coaches directed their own learning and were motivated to seek out opportunities to develop their coaching and knowledge of hockey and sport.

*I wanted to know more about it. I wanted to make sure that I was actually saying the right things technically and I wanted to understand more tactical. (Coach D)*

*I don't just look at hockey, I look at football because I do think hockey is football, or football is hockey with a stick. So, I think you'd go to games, football games, whether it's football games or whether it's hockey games and you...I think as a coach you are probably always trying to analyse something from the game..... It's learning from, you know, you can do a session, a basketball session, that's relevant to hockey. You can do a squash session that's relevant to hockey in as much as it's good for your feet, it's happy feet. So you can look at other sports and take that...So you could take stuff from different games, maybe that's an informal way that I do it. (Coach A)*

*...it's fundamentally important to up skill and to continue, you know. I've always had that...that I'd want to try and look at the next level and look at the next level. If I've reached a level where I think, "Yeah, this is probably where I'm comfortable," then looking at different things to help keep, you know, keep that skill that you've developed...to keep that live basically. (Coach B)*

*Basically it's, you know, you have to be self-motivated to sort of go in and look at those, and there is quite a lot of resources at hand. But if you don't tap into them, then you're not going to know about them are you?... one of the reasons that I applied to work at the [another sport], was 'cause I'd never worked with elite athletes and I want to see, you know, what they did. And especially the first year I did it, it was like learning curve, "Whoosh!" It was like that. So just seeing the preparation, you know what they do just before a match. You know how they warm-up, how they get themselves together and then what happens after, you know, the nutrition. You know exactly what they're feeding themselves with. (Coach F)*

### **Learning from being an athlete**

All the coaches had played hockey and most to a high level. This experience as an athlete and being coached gave them an understanding of demands required of the athletes and some insight into the coaching process. Their experiences have influenced how they coach. It is important to note that an athlete may gain useful insight into some aspects of the coaching process such as coach-athlete interactions and game understanding, however, they are unlikely to develop a full appreciation of the roles and responsibilities of the coach.

*If I hadn't played, I wouldn't be able to coach at this level... I know what it takes for the girls to reach that level ... I know what level of intensity they need. I think some coaches who aren't in the set up or haven't played that level themselves will struggle to get that from their sessions on a weekly basis. It definitely has helped. (Coach H)*

*I think, you know, in terms of being involved and playing hockey to a certain standard myself, then there was maybe some couple of the seniors, you know, kind of Scottish players who a) I was friendly with and b) I really looked up and respected as players and I think they kind of acted as potentially kind of role models for me... so I took, you know, bits out of everything everybody either showed me or told me. (Coach A)*

*... I was influenced a lot by the players around me and I think the first main coach was [name of coach], kind of coached me, and just the style that they kind of portray... you're influenced by who you play with and maybe the coaches you've been coached by. (Coach G)*

*As a player I know for a fact that I reacted better to a coach who was not in my face, who would just talk to me one-to-one rather than be shouted down and told me I was rubbish sort of thing, and so I've seen moments of myself when I've done that when the girls have made a mistake or whatever and I've got no benefit back from it, so now I've taken that approach that...just talk to them level, get my point across so that I don't have to shout in their faces, I don't have to be angry, I don't have to be the hater and you get a lot more from it and I think I've learned. I've seen coaches who do shout and I've seen coaches who are a bit more chilled to the point, don't take any rubbish and they've got better results then. (Coach H)*

*If you've been involved with different kinds of coaches, you'd be...try and take different bits from them because obviously everybody's got their own coaching style in the way they put things across. So again, you know, you take on board the stuff and the way it's being delivered and you try and think, "Well, look. This is the way that I'd like to try and deliver it". (Coach I)*

## **Mentoring**

Not all the coaches had mentors and very few had formally appointed mentors. However, many talked about someone who fulfilled this role at some point in their development. The opportunity for a mentor was something many coaches felt would be useful.

*I still have mentors now...it's good, I trust him. He tells me the truth and the other guy that I chat with he's... given me some tips and information I need and so yeah. I think those mentors were kind of off my own back. I kind of chose them...You know, I might go with a...with a problem and...maybe about man management and [name of coach] will say, "Well, this is how I did...this how I dealt with it". But ultimately it's got to be my decision. (Coach A)*

*I knew as a player I couldn't play at that level but I also knew I wanted to coach so I asked her to help me as in like a mentor idea. So what she did was she came with me for the first couple weekends and then after Christmas went there you go. So I enjoyed that, which was good... I found that really good... just watching, you know asking me questions about what do I see? How can I improve it? You know, what's going on? What you gonna say blah blah blah blah so that was good and then listening to how she would deliver stuff. (Coach C)*

*...for me if I had somebody else to speak to about the coaching, although I had fairly different ideas about what I was going to do with the teams that I had, but somebody maybe coming in and saying that was a good job, or maybe I could do something slightly differently, might have done something. I don't know what it would have done but it's a potential. (Coach D)*

*I think it is important to have somebody that you can bounce [ideas around] and somebody that you know quite well and trust. It's being able to say what you're feeling or what you think without thinking, "Oh I wonder what they're going to think about what I'm saying?" type of thing. (Coach E)*

*...Governing Body - obviously there was a specific mentor that you were associated with, so again, if you went to a tournament that person would be there. So if you thought, "Gosh. I need a wee bit of feedback. How am I doing here?" then from my experience that person was there and guided me through, you know, quite a few situations that, you know, that I could learn from. (Coach B)*

In summary, the coaches engaged in a range of coaching development opportunities. All had completed some formal coach education with all but one coach qualified at Level 2 or above. They valued the content of the formal coach education courses and workshops. However, many coaches also recognised the importance of experience coaching was critical to 'becoming a coach'. Coach education courses and workshops were also valued for the opportunity to share ideas with and learn from other coaches through discussions and engaging in practical coaching. The coaches also gained valuable development experiences through observing, analysing, and discussing hockey and other sports at a high level and mentoring-type relationships. Trust and support were important features of these relationships. Experience as a player provided understanding of the sport and expectations for performance at a high level. Valued development opportunities included:

- Practical coaching
  - personal delivery experience including learning from mistakes
  - during workshop and courses
- Discussions with other coaches
  - during courses and workshops
  - within a club or 'coaching team'
  - with a more experienced coach
- Observing and analysing hockey and other sports at a high level
- Trusted mentoring-type relationships to check, challenge, and support
- Formal coach education developed knowledge, coaching skills, and confidence
- Experiences as a player
  - understanding of the game and skills
  - expectations for players at higher levels
  - of being coached.

## Personal Support

Coaches discussed the importance of feeling they were supported in their coaching. As one coach put it "*I mean, it's a very lonely place to be because you put everything on the line to coach a team*" (Coach A). The support coaches experienced came from a range of people including a partner, friends, teammates, club, another coach, development officer, and the Scottish Hockey Coach Education Development Manager (CEDM). The support could be practical assistance with information, planning, or coaching activities. However, it could also be a person to discuss ideas with.

*...within my club when the Development Officer was there I could speak to [him]... Colleen's [CEDM] another one I would use just for just asking I guess the admin side of stuff generally for coaching. (Coach C)*



*...support I'd get that from the club that I coach, and I've always got that from the clubs that I've coached in the past, too, there's been a good support system. If you feel things aren't, you know, going the way, maybe, that you'd planned, the support system comes from the club. (Coach A)*

*The Development Group, yeah, there's support there and they always... they're asking all the time, you know, "Is there a course you want to go on? You know, we do have some money, you know. Let us know and we'll see if we can help out." That kind of thing... With the club it's definitely there, and I know that... Colleen [CEDM] really supports the youngsters well. And I know that from the youngsters that have done the Level 1 from our club,...they rave on about Colleen and how much she's helped them. (Coach F)*

*...the coaching team therefore became a great support mechanism... We took joint decisions and I led it to do that... and the coaching team then got their own pathway developments, but it wasn't just a "We're taking there. We're actually giving back into there," and the whole team went on and developed at various different points. (Coach D)*

*...we were kind of peers and that was great as well because we could chat, we were playing, we were team mates as well. (Coach E)*

*Obviously all my mates are at [the club] ... and I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it without their support. I'm coaching [age group] and obviously they're a lot younger, so I'm fine with that. But when it comes to coaching at top end it was nice to start off having some mates there just to boost the confidence. (Coach H)*

*...my husband, you know, who was very supportive if I was going off places or, you know, I had to do weekends here, there, everywhere, you know. He was very supportive saying, "Well, that's something you want to do, so I fully support you. (Coach B)*

It was important to the coaches that there was trust between those involved and that they could share ideas and experiences freely without feeling judged.

*...so I think it is important to have somebody that you can bounce [ideas] and somebody that you know quite well and trust. It's being able to say what you're feeling or what you think without thinking, "Oh I wonder what they're going to think about what I'm saying?" type of thing. (Coach E)*

*...you will struggle but you need to find someone to go yeah I've done it, it's fine. It's the norm, it's not unusual, it's not because you're a bad coach, do you know what I mean, it's just the norm. Everyone has it, there's no coach in the world who's not a bad experience or went through a difficult time... if you could have someone you can go to and trust it might be someone within your club, then use them, definitely use them. (Coach C)*

Coaches didn't always actively seek out this support but some coaches did recognise that they did not always feel supported.

*...there was very little support apart from the coach, you did the psychology, you did their fitness, you did it all... there wasn't any other support ...I think I only was in it for a couple of years and I'm sure that was part of the problem. It was quite a pressure for volunteers because it was all volunteering. There was quite a lot expected with very little support I would have said. (Coach E)*

*...if I wanted to go out there and coach then I would do it off my own back and there's not anyone there saying 'right we can speak to work' and if you're in the set up...the Scottish programme it's every weekend and it's trips away,... it's my own holidays that I give up. (Coach H)*

In summary, personal support was not always actively sought out but was appreciated and desired. An important feature of personal support for coaches was trust and not feeling judged. Volunteer roles in the National programme may require additional support.

## Constraints and Challenges

The coaches reported experiencing a number of constraints and challenge in their coaching and its progression. These included the life course priorities, coaching role expectations and commitments, availability of coaching opportunities, access to development opportunities, and making a contribution,.

### Life course priorities

Circumstances in the coaches' lives constrained coaches' engagement and also facilitated involvement. Common constraints were family commitments and the stage of career/employment. Having a young family tended to constrain coaching involvement, whereas having older children or less family commitments afforded more opportunities to coach.

*When my kids came along, that was a problem of child care... an issue for a lot of women and I don't see why it should be worse for them when the guys have the kids as well...that's how it seems to be and so for a long time I didn't do any coaching courses because of child care issues... my youngest is 15 now, so I don't have to keep tabs on her and, you know, be there, that sort of thing. So fingers crossed I'll be able to do a bit more coaching. (Coach F)*

*I'm alright I don't have a young family or anything so I can generally just go, you know what I mean, but maybe for others it's maybe not so easy. (Coach C)*

*And then if you have personal relationships, which most of us do, you are asking people to take an awful lot on board, you know. (Coach D)*

Changes in jobs and career stages also created opportunities for some and constrained them for others.

*If you're in a career and you decide quite early on to go into the coaching scene, having maybe been a top player, which many people are, you already had time out of your job, career, you're making great sacrifices because it won't necessarily count in your favour when you go to get a promotion. (Coach D)*

*...after ten years...I think, you know, that I had probably reached the point where I thought, "My gosh. It's been a lot of great experiences." But it was very time-consuming, and there were other things in my life that then became a priority... I reviewed that and I thought I would like... I had changed my job and other things that then impacted on the time I had available. So I had to reassess and that was probably one of the other reasons why I didn't involve myself in that programme any longer. (Coach B)*

### Coaching role expectations and commitments

A consideration for many of the coaches was the time commitment involved in coaching and particularly if they were to move to a different coaching environment such as the performance environment. The coaches felt they already committed a lot of time to coaching and made considerable sacrifices. For several, moving to a different environment would require an even greater amount of time, which they didn't really have.

*...although we talk about Scotland being a small place, two and a half hours to every game and two and a half hours back is a huge commitment. So at that time in my life I was prepared to make that commitment and, yes, it's long, the whole season is long. (Coach D)*

*I think I only was in it for a couple of years and I'm sure that was part of the problem. It was quite a pressure for volunteers because it was all for volunteering. There was quite a lot expected with very little support I would have said. (Coach E)*

*I don't think you get recognised for how much time and effort that you put in. You get your petrol paid for but you are away Friday to Sunday every weekend. You are away on trips, you are taking holidays from your job, giving up your annual leave and I think to be coaching at that level there needs to be a little bit more, I think. (Coach H)*

Several coaches felt that in order to change coaching environments (i.e., to coach in the performance environment) they would need to leave full-time employment. This may not be an option because they enjoy their careers, there is no opportunity to do their jobs on a part-time basis, and the financial implications would not make it feasible.

*... if you're looking for paid work you may not find it all within hockey. You have to maybe find it elsewhere... For people to be able to put quite a bit of time in - say it was 20 hours a week for example - to be able to do that, you would either need to be independently wealthy or somebody would have to be paying you for those 20 hours and then doing another job somewhere else. So I think, unfortunately, a lot of it comes down to funding. (Coach F)*

*...when you look at the women's pool of coaches, it is always cut down because of ... the financial constraints that are put upon, because many women don't have top jobs and can't actually afford to take a long weekend out of their job three weekends in a row - because that's what the international scene demands... if women are employed, that trying to get time off from their employer now is a really big sticking point... I think people then don't take the higher level coaching jobs because they are volunteers. You're losing out financially because you've got to take time off and you may well be losing out in career opportunities. So I think those are big minuses. (Coach D)*

### **Availability of coaching opportunities**

The availability opportunities and transparency appointment processes both constrained opportunities for the coaches to change coaching environments and develop further as coaches. Specific examples of barriers for the coaches included lack of coaching qualifications, lack of openly promoted coaching appointments and conflicting competition schedules.

*...obviously if you don't have the bit of paper you can't progress so that's obviously one. Two is obviously, just those vacancies being promoted ... It's all very much a sort of whose around at the time get asked. And they need to open it up to the wider and not so much have an interview, but have a look at whose all out there, more than right I know a guy I'll ask him and if he says no then it's on to the next sort of thing...it seems to be that if you speak to the right people at the right time, you're in. Whereas a lot of these roles aren't advertised or advertised widely... Things are never really promoted. (Coach H)*

One coach raised an issue with conflicting competitions schedules. She highlighted that many competitions are played on the same day so the opportunity to coach or observe is restricted to the league they are currently involved with. "I'd like to go and see Division 1 indoor but I can't 'cause I'm at Division 2. I'd like my team to go and see Division 1" (Coach C). Not only did this occur at a national level but also district level competitions. She commented: "Same day. So unfortunately what happens is as a club we have probably our three main coaches... umpires, most experienced players all away and when my second team's playing I have literally one adult and a lot of kids and that's a struggle" (Coach C).

## Access to development opportunities

Most coaches had received financial support to assist with coach development opportunities. However, whether this support extends to the higher level coaching qualifications is a potential constraint for coaches. As the level of coach education increases, the cost, time commitment, and likelihood of having to travel to attend also increases, whilst the frequency of courses decreases. These factors were considered and were of concern for a number of coaches. In addition, the small numbers of coaches in the regions limits the number of courses and workshops available to coaches. This can mean that coaches have to travel some distance to attend.

*...they've [the club] set aside money for guys to go on their coaching courses and do their umpiring badges and stuff like that and obviously I work full time, I've got a house, got bills to pay and if you didn't have that little bit of support from the club to say right we'll pay half or...maybe wouldn't do as well with the coaching as what we have done. (Coach H)*

*they're not anywhere near the money that you pay 'cause I think Leaders is only about 15 quid and then gradually it goes up to hundreds of pounds, and that's where there could be a barrier for a lot of people. But when I had sort of made enquires to as to the Development Group, they said, "Oh we'll pay for it for you." I was like, "Oh great! That's smashing!" So, that could be a big factor for a lot of people. (Coach F)*

*...you're going to struggle to get a level 2 in the area just because of that [low numbers of coaches]. So people have to make a definite I wanna do it so it's going to be four days, it's going to be travel, it's going to cost money, I wouldn't do it. ... and I think people because it's a couple of weekends away that might put people off. (Coach C)*

## Making a contribution

The coaches were not seeking recognition for their contributions but rather seeking recognition that they were part of, and importantly involved in, the wider player development process. This led some coaches to feel that they had more to contribute to hockey in Scotland but this was not always valued or utilised effectively.

*...even in my time as a district coach I had no input or no communication with my performance institute ...the old institute coach never spoke to me once, yet he had some of my athletes. These coaches don't speak to clubs and we're having a similar situation within the district where we have performance coaching and other sessions that are going on that people are invited to but clubs are not kept in communication... there's nothing coming back and as a club you always worry about that because you see your athletes disappearing off then they come back with and... why have they suddenly changed their hitting technique, you know?... or we'd like them to come to performance coaching... so I sent an email going what are you doing, what's the purpose, what criteria. I have to ask these questions where as they're not given freely and they should be given freely you know. Even to come and say oh have you got any kids you think can have a go. (Coach C)*

*I was gonna stop working with the National Groups, and I think because that was...there was a lot of change there, there was a little bit of discomfort and that feeling of not feeling you've got appropriate support. We'd had a particularly tough time, - I'm being totally honest here- and I just felt that I was kinda, "Well, that's you then," you know. You're left, basically, and I found that quite difficult and that was possibly one of the catalysts that then I thought, "Well Ok if it's...if I'm not of value anymore in this programme then I'll not do it any longer." (Coach B)*

In summary, the coaches identified a number of constraints and challenges faced by coaches in general and women specifically. These were:

- priorities associated with their life course

- young families constrained coaching involvement
- older families or less family commitments afforded more opportunity for involvement
- changing jobs can create an opportunity for more involvement but can also restrict opportunities
- expectations and commitments associated with performance coaching roles constrained involvement
  - perceived greater time commitment
  - perceived need to change employment
    - potential for financial security
- availability of coaching opportunities
  - lack of openly promoted coaching appointments
  - conflicting competition schedules
- access to development opportunities
  - low numbers of higher level coaches leads to low numbers of advanced level courses and workshops in each region
  - financial, time, and commitment costs for higher level coach education
- potential coaching contribution undervalued
  - little or no input into wider player pathway
  - questioned continued involvement.

## Coaches' Recommendations

The coaches were able to identify opportunities they felt would help them and other women to develop as coaches. These included having opportunities for observations and discussions about hockey, interactions with new people and ideas, mentoring and/or buddy system and targeting potential coaches for development opportunities.

### Observing and discussing hockey

The coaches recognised that there was a lot to be learnt from observing, analysing, and discussing hockey, particularly higher level hockey.

*...Something that I've tried to do, but I've not quite managed to do it yet, is to go along and possibly watch some Scottish sessions, you know, and ..and see what the...the Scottish Squad Under 16 or Under 18 Level are doing and how it's delivered, you know so that there's the opportunity, possibly, you know, for coaches to go and pick up ideas or even just to kind of gauge what kind of standard is required for that level. (Coach I)*

*I think a real benefit would be actually... taking that person to a game and explaining, you know, how...what the formation is, what the tactics are... I think watching video of games and asking coaches to, you know, dissect parts of the game. So, what's going on in defense? How is that working? What's going on from midfield to forward? I think it's...I think that's really important. Something that probably, apart from when I was doing the Level 3, that I've never had. (Coach A)*

*I would want to speak to someone, I know it's all very hierarchal but someone up there, higher, so whether it's a National 1 coach or you know a male National 1 coach or Scottish [coach], Gordon Shepherd, or someone to just sit down for half an hour or an hour ... just to go well I need a bit of a hand with this... I want to improve my hockey knowledge... just about making sure I'm on the right path. (Coach C)*

### **Mentoring or buddy system**

The coaches felt that opportunities to learn from and be supported by others were useful. This could be through a relatively long-term formal or informal mentoring relationship, however, it could also be through a peer 'buddy system'. This support could be from more experienced coaches, coaches working in a similar environment or higher performance level, peer coaches, a coach manager or club development officer.

*It was good to be an assistant and sit in a room with other people who were working out the tact... you know, how structures were working and things. Rather than kind of sitting there yourself going, "Well I'm not very sure how this structure's..."... You know, it was very supportive to do that. (Coach E)*

*...to try and work with somebody that's got a bit more experience... Possibly just the experience of maybe being involved with an older coach. Now whether that's an older coach through the club or whether it's, you know, the opportunity to be involved with some of the national coaches. (Coach I)*

Coach A discussed the benefits of experienced coaches working with junior coaches:

*I think it would be good if you had experienced coaches taking a junior coach to a game and saying, you know, "We'll go and watch this team. This is how they're playing," and just write down little notes of, you know, it could be, you know, change of formation, or it could be defence information, it could be attack information....I mean, it could be something really simple but I think instead of sitting down and doing theories and writing stuff, which is important, I think it's more important that you actually watch games. So taking people who want to be involved in coaching to a game,...Even, you know, getting people to come in to changing rooms with the coach to...to look at how the coach delivers a pre-match team talk. (Coach A)*

However, Coach A also saw a role for a support person for more experienced coaches:

*The only thing I would say support-wise is, yeah, you're coming off the pitch, if you need to talk to someone, it's like umpires have an umpire's manager sometimes at the games, maybe, you know, there could be somebody there for the coach if needed. Sometimes we don't need that because we can analyse it ourselves and understand it, and there are some times you just need maybe a person who's independent to say, you know, "Tell me how you feel." (Coach A)*

### **New people and ideas**

Several coaches mentioned the need to be more willing to get new people involved in hockey coaching and to be open to new or different ideas whether within hockey or from other sports. For example, Coach B made several comments along these lines:

*...because it's still a small group it tends to be the same group and it's important that we try and kind of encourage new people to come in and become involved. (Coach B)*

*...the sharing with other sports and kind of people, other coaches... So having multisport workshops, having people come together and share kind of best practice 'cause there are, you know, common themes through your coaching. (Coach B)*

*...changing some of the mind-set that it's ok to go and do coach education and it's ok to become qualified, you know, and not to be seen as, "You must be qualified in order to be insured," 'cause I think a lot of people sometimes think, "Oh well, that's the only reason why they get qualified." Whereas, you know, there's other value in it. As I say, you know, sharing best practice or, you know, just learning to take a step back and review your own style and your own methods. (Coach B)*

Coach H also commented about the importance of encouraging new people to become involved in coaching hockey:

*I think the SHU are quite blinkered in terms of accepting new people or the unknown. They are very much right, I've known her, I've known what she's done so that will be ok. I think we have to take a little bit more confidence in, in looking at what people have done previously out with or haven't seen them having a shot. I think we need to take a little bit more of a chance with some things. I think that's a big thing, ehm, because it's all very much who you know and like I said if you are in or around at the time. Which has benefitted me I guess because I have been in the know but there is a lot of good people out there who, who have gone through the levels coaching, have got all the bits of paper but haven't been attached to a club and are getting missed and I think that's quite important. (Coach H)*

### **Up skilling coaches' knowledge**

Coaches were interested in knowing more about the international coaches work and emphasis in their programmes. In addition, just making sure they were up-to-date with developments in the game, particularly if they had not been coaching or involved in hockey for a time.

*I would like, I'd like to know more higher up. So you know what are my international coaches doing... I guess from your international coaches you want them to come down to maybe your district coaches or your hockey development officers and then these people come further down at club coaches and then club coaches can go down to their internal coaches, but it doesn't come that way at the moment. (Coach C)*

*If you're out of hockey for a year and then you come back in, you can have missed quite a few major changes..., you could really maybe do with some more workshops as coaches, so that everybody's, you know, kind of seeing it from the same view point. (Coach G)*

*So it's just getting that knowledge again about, you know, where the Governing Body's priorities are and all the other different programmes that are now in, you know, there's long- term athlete development and things. There's been a lot of shift there. So for me, if I was to enter back into that field again I would... need to up skill myself and where they're at and who has responsibility for them, who is delivering in the various areas, how is it being done. (Coach B)*

### **Understanding of a coaching pathway**

All the coaches talked about their development to this point in their coaching, however, the development pathway appeared focused on advancing through the levels of coaching qualifications. There also appeared to be some confusion over the requirements of the next level of coaching qualification.

*I think like the Level 1, if people have got that then they should be allowed to coach like well that's targeting younger kids etcetera, when they move onto Level 2 it's more adult hockey etcetera and I think they've got the split of that correct. (Coach H)*

*There's a Level 3 sort of postgrad... I can't remember the full name of it, but it's a residential thing, some of the time. It costs about three grand it would be really good to do that. But then that's it...not...it doesn't just cover hockey, it covers several sports. But something like that would be good. (Coach F)*

Few had a clear picture of their ongoing development pathway. Several coaches felt they had sufficient knowledge for the level they were coaching and were not actively seeking to change coaching environments. In contrast, many of the coaches engaged in CPD and self-directed learning opportunities, however, there was little understanding of how they would continue to develop and/or change coaching environments.

*Would I feel confident coaching elite athletes at the moment? No, definitely not. Would I like to? Yes...I think I got to a point on my little coaching graph where I kinda went up and it's kind of stayed at a level, maybe gone down a little bit. I always fear that... about techniques and I'm not seeing hockey at a high enough level to bring these things back. But... I definitely think I've plateaued... I do think I struggle with now the next couple years about where to go next. (Coach C)*

*At some point if I get a bit of time back, I would like to, you know, start to look at some performance group work again...something like that you know. It's not like I'm completely put off for life being involved, you know. As I said earlier, I know what it gives me and how rewarding it can be, and I know the impact it can have on the players that you work with. And, you know, it's really good and refreshing to have that opportunity to be involved. (Coach B)*

One coach was very clear about progression in the coaching pathway and this involved moving through the age groups squads to the senior team, similar to an athlete's progression. There was an assumption that this is the way coaches progressed, however, there appeared to be no thought given to how this progression occurred as a coach and in fact if it did occur in this way.

*I would like to progress up the age groups within the international set up ... 16s... the 18's, 21's and go all that way. (Coach H)*

Three coaches suggested a more targeted and structured pathway might be useful.

*...maybe it's a case of developing something like that for young coaches that show a lot of potential so that it's a more structured, you know, pathway in terms of getting some of the coaches to be involved at a much higher level. (Coach I)*

*I think we should be targeting more with the highly aspirational girls and boys who actually, physically, would not make the top level game play... get the 18's that get through to National Development Squads and who clearly are not going to make it... the middle band, they are really the ones that you really want to target. If they have the emotional resilience and desire to want to be involved at a top level. (Coach D)*

*I think the younger coaches that are coming through have previously been players... the older ones have maybe played previously, gone away and then come back and stepped into a coaching role but again they've been around and it's nobody new... I think that's because it is so in-house. So I think the more it is advertised and the more the courses are advertised or if there was an offer with funding to help, bring that in and you would get a lot more of people interested. (Coach H)*

In summary, the coaches' recommendations for development included:

- opportunities to observe and discuss hockey
- mentoring and/or buddy support system with
  - experienced and/or peer coaches
  - experienced in similar environment and/or higher performance environment
  - coaching manager or development officer
- being open to new coaches and ideas
- opportunities to up skill knowledge
- improve understanding of development pathways.



## Summary and Conclusion

The coaches had mostly positive experiences playing and coaching hockey. There was a clear enthusiasm for the sport. Being known in hockey, the club, or district as a high level player and/or for having a background in coaching or teaching are facilitating factors when it comes to being approached and asked to begin to coach. These factors also contributed to opportunities to progress in their coaching. The fact that many of the coaches were asked to coach rather than seeking out opportunities themselves suggests that the availability of coaching opportunities, a need for a coach, is also an important contributing favourable condition. This suggests that coaches' recruitment and deployment is left somewhat to chance. Therefore, providing clear structures and planning processes would be beneficial for clubs, district, and national programmes.

The coaches in this study engaged in a range of development opportunities including formal coach education and workshops, practical coaching, discussing and sharing ideas with other coaches, working with a mentor- or peer-coach or coaching team, drawing on their experiences as a player for technical knowledge of the sport, demands of high level performance and insights into parts of the coaching process. Opportunities that were considered most valuable for their development were practical coaching experiences whether through working with squads or teams, or as part of coach education and workshops. In addition, opportunities to discuss and share ideas about hockey and about coaching, including observation and analysis, were also highly valued. These findings suggest that developing creative ways to engage coaches in practical experiences that extend their sport-specific and general knowledge, and coaching skills are likely to be well received and useful for coaches' development. In addition, continued efforts to promote the value of the range of learning opportunities available for coaches at all levels of experience are needed.

An important aspect of the coaches' development and progression was the personal support they received from a range of individuals such as Scottish Hockey Coach Education Development Manager, mentor-coach, peer-coaches, coaching team, a partner or friends. This support focused on sport-specific and coaching knowledge and skills, someone to talk to and share or bounce ideas off and in some cases financial support. Central to valued support was the development of a trusting relationship where coaches did not feel that they were being judged by the person they talked with. As part of a structured approach to coach recruitment it may be useful to develop coaching networks, mentors and peer-coaching buddy systems to provide this personal support.

There were a number of factors that challenged and constrained the coaches' engagement in coaching. Coaches' priorities at different times in their lives, in relation to family and work commitments, provided opportunities to coach but may also constrained their involvement. These priorities can and do change in coaches' lives and as a result coaches may 'come and go' from the workforce. Therefore, opportunities to up skill and re-engage in hockey and coaching after an absence may be important considerations to maintain the coaching workforce. Perceptions (potentially inaccurate) of the experience, knowledge, qualification and commitment required for coaching in different environments and knowledge of available opportunities may be limiting coaches' desire to seek out different coaching roles or change coaching environments. Clarifying the coaching pathways and expectations of different roles and in different environments may encourage more coaches to consider working with other groups in the same environment and/or in alternative, particularly adult and performance coaching environments. In addition, developing processes to widely advertise and promote coaching opportunities may encourage more coaches to consider working in different coaching environments. Fostering openness to new people and ideas may also create more opportunities for 'new' and existing coaches to work in different coaching environment. This is also likely to contribute to continued advancement of coaches' knowledge and skills and the sport in Scotland.

## Recommendations

- Identifying, recruiting, and deploying coaches, whether beginners or more advanced, would benefit from structured and planned processes within clubs, districts, and nationally.
- Processes should be developed to openly and widely advertise and promote coaching opportunities.
- The coach development model and coaching pathways in hockey in Scotland and Great Britain should be clarified and promoted.
- The demands of coaching in different coaching environments should be clarified and promoted to encourage coaches to consider working in alternative, particularly adult and performance coaching environments.
- Developing coaching networks, mentors and peer-coaching buddy systems to provide personal support should be central to a structured approach to coach recruitment and development.
- Strategies should be developed to foster coaches' continued learning and engagement with educational opportunities.
- Creative ways to engage coaches in practical experiences that extend their sport-specific and general knowledge and coaching skills should be developed and promoted.
- How coaches can up skill and re-engage in hockey and coaching after an absence should be considered and supported.

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