



OPENING UP MORE  
GOLFING OPPORTUNITIES



2002 2002 2002

GOLF CLUB MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE 2002

**Results Booklet**

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# INTRODUCTION



The EGU and ELGA consider it crucial to measure all of their activities and obtain feedback on a regular basis from organisations and individuals who are helping to develop the game. Following on from the Millennium Census in 2000 which concentrated solely on junior issues, the recent Golf Club Membership Questionnaire 2002 included aspects specific to adult membership in order to assemble the clearest and most accurate picture of golf club membership in England.

The main aims of the research:

- To assess current membership structures within affiliated golf clubs in England.
- To monitor membership trends over time.
- To highlight the effect that current initiatives have in attracting people into the game and onto golf club membership.
- To identify where resources are best focused in the future.

The EGU and ELGA strongly believe in investing in junior and adult golf development and many initiatives within the current 'Get into Golf' structure have already started to have a positive impact. This structure forms the base of the golf development continuum, for people of all ages - which provides a clear pathway from introduction into the game all the way through to golf club membership and beyond.

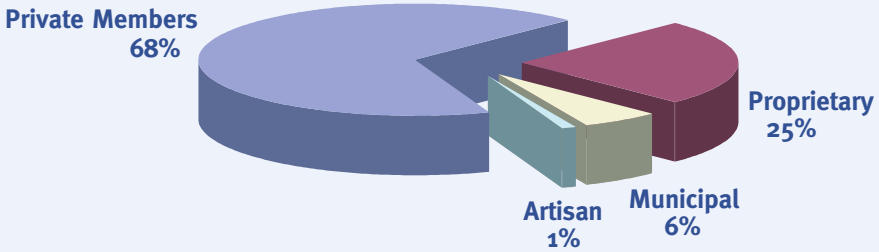
The Golf Club Membership Questionnaire is just part of on-going research every two years to ensure that there is a comprehensive record to enable the measurement of progress over time and aid strategic planning. This booklet aims to provide you with relevant information that will hopefully stimulate action or simply question what is being done to help the game of golf move forward at grass roots level.



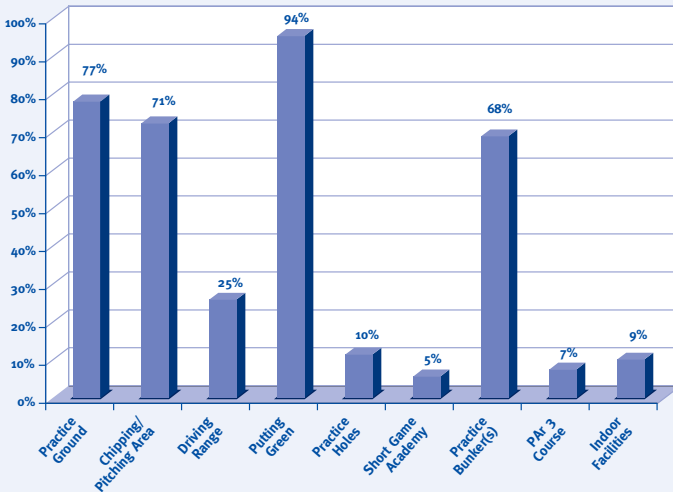
# GENERAL

Out of the 1,896 golf clubs that are affiliated to the EGU and ELGA, a total of **50%** (954) returned the document. In terms of any survey this is a good response and provides enough information for a worthwhile study, however it is disappointing that so many clubs failed to respond and hopefully this does not show a lack of enthusiasm for the development of the game.

## Golf club type who returned questionnaire



## Practice facilities available at golf clubs






The average number of holes at golf clubs is as expected: 18 holes

**86%** (818) of golf clubs employ a secretary or manager, of which **70%** work full time

**84%** (804) of golf clubs employ a fully qualified PGA professional, of which **98%** are male

## COMMENT:

-  Facilities and professional staff are crucial to the development of the game and it is important that standards are maintained and that opportunities exist for both newcomers and members.
-  Are our golfing facilities up to standard?
-  Are many facilities simply not able to accommodate beginners or junior golfers?

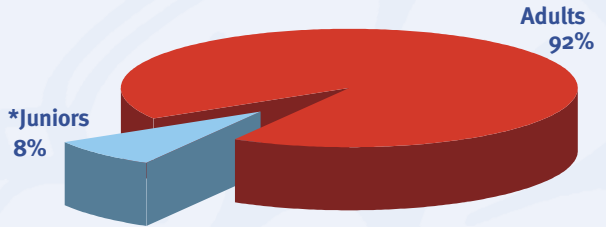
# MEMBERSHIP

In England there are 740,000 male golf club members and 140,000 female golf club members at 1,896 affiliated golf clubs.

## MEMBERSHIP/TYPES

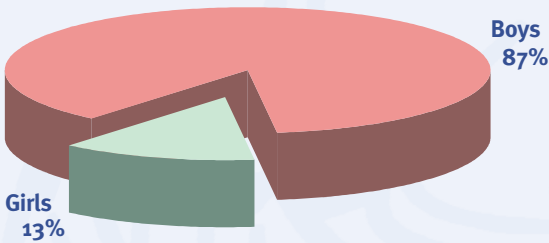
In 2000 the Junior % was exactly the same

### National breakdown of junior to adult membership



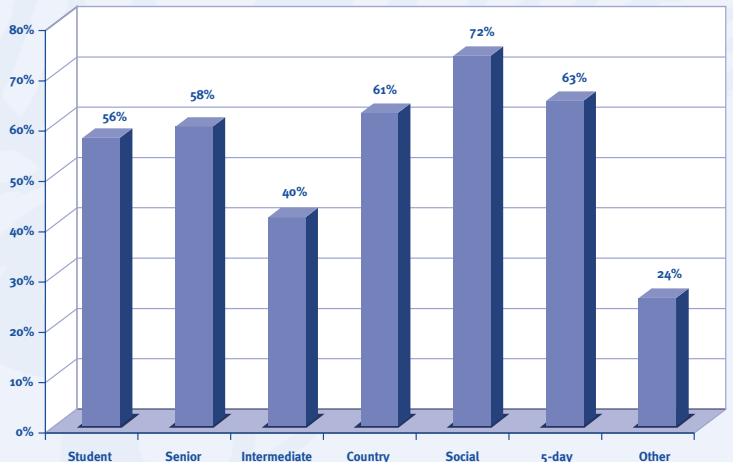
\*Juniors are defined as under 18 years of age

### National breakdown of junior boys to girls



In 2000 Boys 89% and Girls 11%

### Percentage of golf clubs with other types of membership

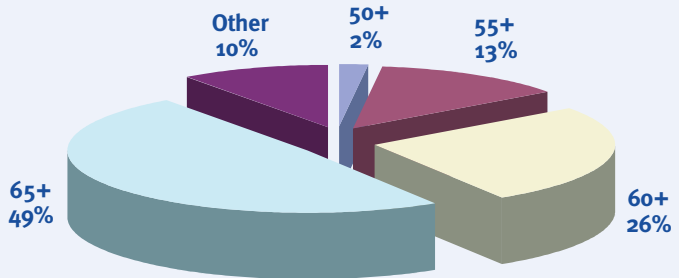


## Definition of a senior golfer within golf clubs

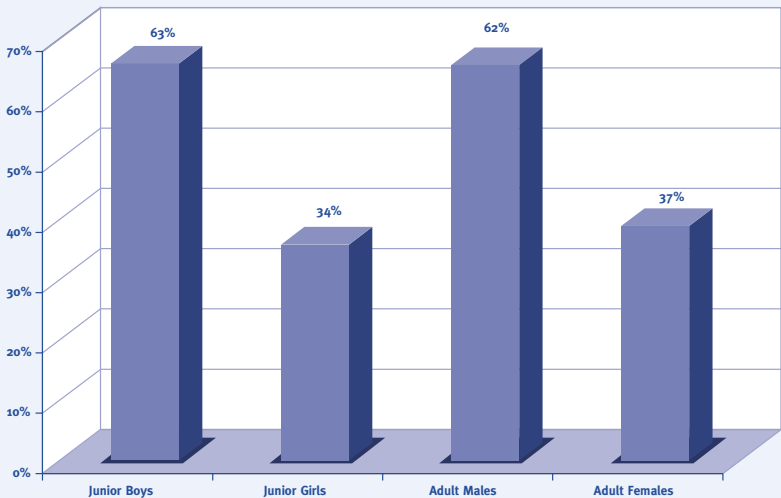
The average minimum/maximum age of intermediate membership is: 19 years/24 years

55% (528) of golf clubs have student membership, of which 58% (305) have an age limit, with the average figure being 22 years

55% (528) of golf clubs have increased membership allocation within the last two years:



## Golf clubs increasing membership allocation in last two years per category



### COMMENT:

- Percentage of junior membership is 8% and is still low compared to other European Federations – should communication and investment in junior initiatives be increased further?
- The number of junior girls is still very low and must be addressed.
- Should more golf clubs offer an intermediate or student membership to help retain more youngsters?
- Is seniors golf taking priority over junior golf and with golf clubs offering reduced fees for seniors, is this having a financial impact on golf clubs?
- With golf clubs creating more memberships, does this mean they are becoming more accessible with greater opportunities or is it a case of them financially having to do so to survive?

## MEMBERSHIP/VACANCIES

### Golf club membership vacancies

75% (716) of golf clubs are actively seeking more members

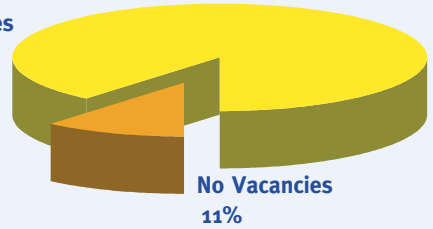
53% (507) of golf clubs said they would like assistance with this

54% (518) of golf clubs already run initiatives to attract new members

56% (534) of golf clubs have requested that their vacancies be included on the EGU website

11% (107) of golf clubs said they receive assistance from their County Union/Association

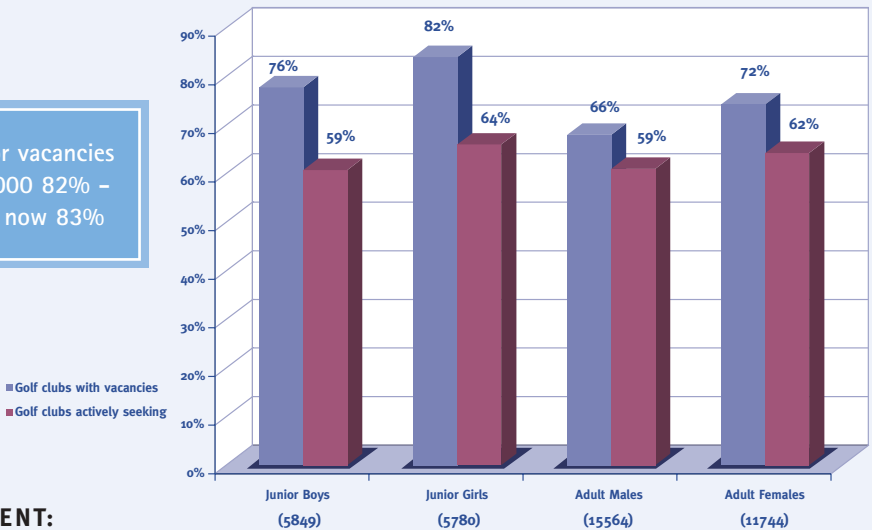
Vacancies  
89%



A total of **38,937** membership vacancies currently exist

### Golf clubs with vacancies and those actively seeking (vacancy totals below)

Junior vacancies in 2000 82% - it is now 83%

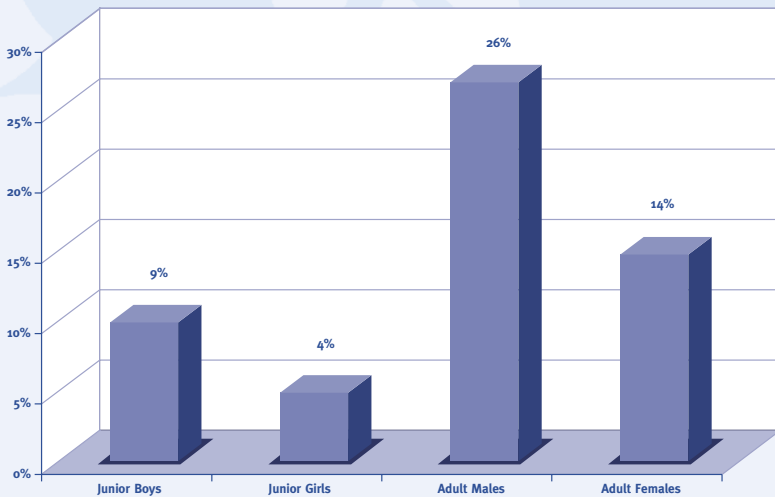


### COMMENT:

- There are high amounts of vacancies in all categories, which would seem to dispel the perception that there are no membership opportunities within golf clubs.
- So why are there so many vacancies and is this a worrying trend, or are more golfers happy to play regularly on a number of courses without committing to membership?
- Golf clubs do seem to be more active, but financially they may have to be and increasing memberships may be one factor explaining why vacancies are high.
- Percentage of golf clubs with junior vacancies are highest, but in terms of actual numbers there are more adult vacancies.
- Although many golf clubs are actively seeking more members, not all of these golf clubs want assistance or are currently running any initiatives to attract new members.



**Waiting lists per membership category at golf clubs**



Of those golf clubs that have a waiting list, **79%** also have membership vacancies – the general trend within these golf clubs being junior vacancies and adult waiting lists

#### **COMMENT:**

- 🌐 Is there anything that can be done to help golfers whilst on a waiting list?
- 🌐 Why if there are so many vacancies at golf clubs are there any waiting lists at all, is this simply some golf clubs being too restrictive?

## MEMBERSHIP/FEES

Average membership subscriptions:

Age Group	Male Average fees per annum (£)	Female Average fees per annum (£)
Juniors at 10 years	86.23	84.24
Juniors at 12 years	91.15	89.68
Juniors at 14 years	96.91	95.71
Juniors at 16 years	105.78	102.31
Juniors at 18 years	145.17	141.62
Intermediates	268.28	248.58
Adults	596.04	490.00

The minimum junior membership subscription is £3, the maximum figure is £1,725

76% (726) of golf clubs charge adults an entrance fee, the average fee is £478 male and £411 female (includes those clubs that do not charge a fee)

18% (172) of golf clubs charge juniors an entrance fee, the average fee is £16 boys and £15 girls (includes those clubs that do not charge a fee)

In 2000 28% of clubs charged a junior entrance fee

In 2000 £22.65 was the average junior entrance fee

20% of golf clubs charge their junior boys for entering the adult section and 18% of golf clubs charge their junior girls

15% of golf clubs stagger this amount dependant on how long the junior has been a member

### COMMENT:

- Is the game becoming more affordable or are membership fees just too high?
- Retention is never easy and financially there are large subscription increases from junior to adult membership.
- A high percentage of golf clubs charge an adult entrance fee and this can only be a barrier to joining, and for youngsters that wish to continue into adult membership.
- It is positive that the amount of golf clubs charging a junior entrance fee and the average cost have reduced since 2000.
- Only a small proportion of golf clubs stagger entrance fees for juniors entering the adult section, which again may be a barrier to membership.

## MEMBERSHIP / JOINING

### How are full adult members accepted:

Full Adult Members	Percentage	*Number of Clubs
Written application followed by an interview	25%	231
Proposed by any current member & interview	23%	215
Written application only	21%	194
Proposed by any current members & written application	13%	121
Other	13%	121
Proposed by Current Member	4%	36
Written application & Complete Probationary Periods	1%	8
Complete probationary periods with coaching, etiquette & knowledge of rules	1%	5

\*931/954 golf clubs completed this section

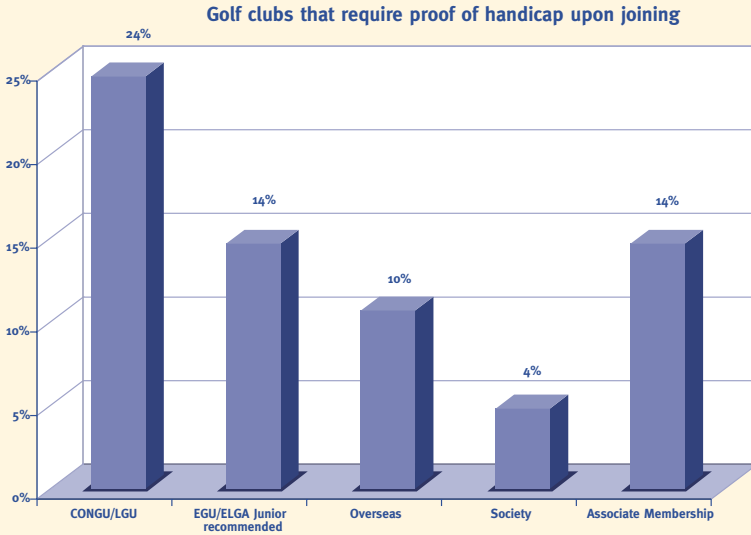
### How are junior members accepted:

Junior Members	Percentage	*Number of Clubs
Written application & interview	40%	371
Proposed by adult member & written application	19%	172
Other	18%	163
Proposed by adult member	10%	91
Complete probationary periods with coaching etc	4%	34
Parent/relation must propose them	3%	31
Written application & complete	3%	24
Parent/relation must propose them & interview	3%	24
Through links with local schools	1%	10

\*920/954 golf clubs completed this section



35% (333) of golf clubs do require proof of handicap from prospective members:



**COMMENT:**

- In many cases not knowing a member of a golf club is a real limitation to joining.
- Juniors have a somewhat easier pathway to join, but many will still have to rely on the parent's enthusiasm and help.
- Are the variety of joining processes more complicated than other sports?
- Some golf clubs have made joining easier which may be out of necessity, however having to have a handicap to join may be impossible for some and is a real barrier.



# JUNIOR GOLF

Although some junior issues have already been covered, this section provides a more in-depth evaluation and makes comparisons to the figures obtained two years ago. The development of junior golf must be seen as long-term and by addressing issues now, it will influence the game in years to come.

## JUNIOR GOLF/DEFINITION

**50%** (474) of golf clubs have a minimum age for juniors to join, with the average minimum age for boys being 9 years and for girls 8 years.

### How does the club identify a junior:

	Percentage	*Number of clubs
Under 18 on 1st January	47%	424
Under 18 on renewal of membership	32%	292
Other	13%	114
Still in full time education	4%	38
Under 21 on 1st January	4%	35

\*903/954 golf clubs completed this section

**51%** (486) of golf clubs state that junior boys must meet a certain playing standard before they can progress to the course and **49%** (471) for girls

**78%** (742) of golf clubs are willing to accept juniors who have been introduced to golf through the Golf Foundation Starter Centres/Merit Award Scheme

**54%** (512) of golf clubs hold a welcome evening for juniors of which **94%** (481) invite parents/guardians

In 2000 39% of clubs held a junior welcome evening

### COMMENT:

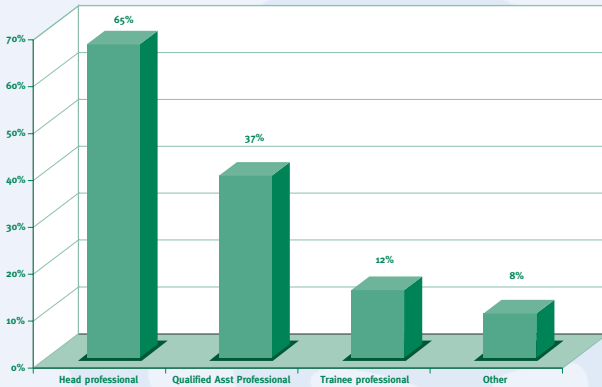
- Although the average minimum age of joining is low, should some golf clubs review their policy if they recruit at a higher age?
- Setting playing standards is acceptable, but should golf clubs try to speed up the development of juniors to enable them to achieve the standard?
- It would certainly benefit more golf clubs to hold a welcome evening for juniors if they are trying to attract junior members.

## JUNIOR GOLF/COACHING

How often does organised coaching take place:

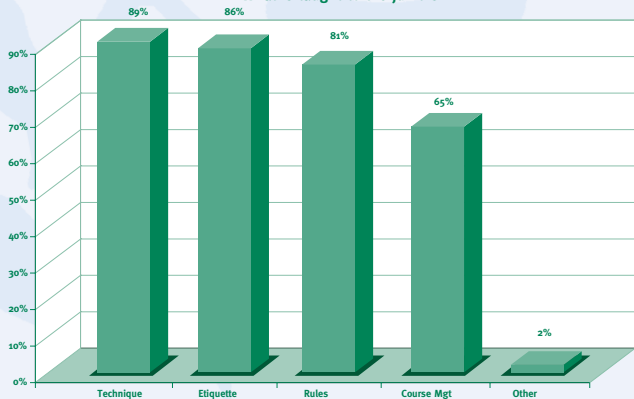
Frequency of Coaching	Percentage	*Number of clubs
Weekly	34%	309
Summer Holidays	20%	179
Other	15%	134
Summer Only	14%	126
Monthly	7%	65
Not at all	6%	56
Fortnightly	5%	47

Who coaches the junior section



\*916/954 golf clubs completed this section

What is taught to the juniors



70% (665) of golf clubs were aware of grant aid available from the EGU/ELGA to assist with junior coaching, but only 59% (394) have accessed this fund

### COMMENT:

- The amount of golf clubs that only provide junior golf coaching in the summer holidays has increased since 2000, although this is positive would juniors benefit more from regular coaching throughout the year?
- It is disappointing that not all golf clubs were aware of EGU/ELGA grant aid, as all are sent details each year, and of the ones that were aware not all have actually accessed the fund.

## JUNIOR GOLF/HANDICAPS

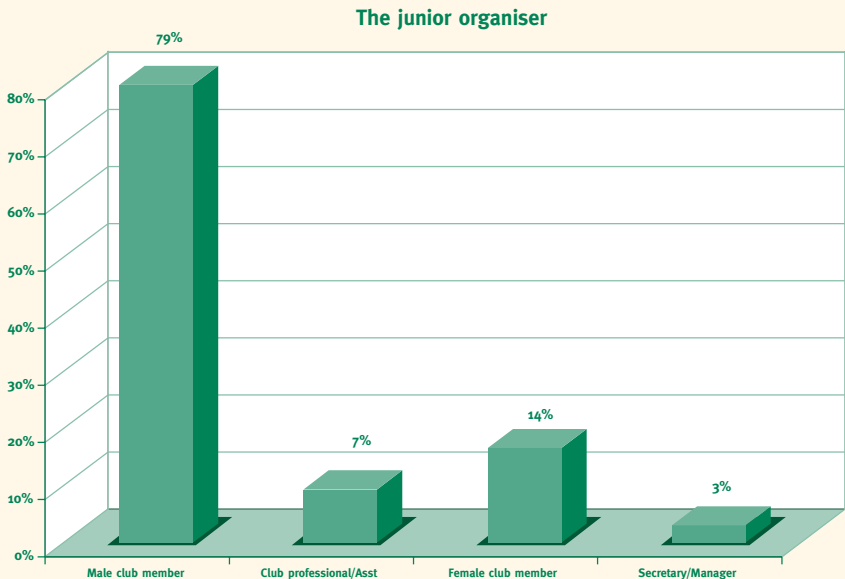
78% (746) of golf clubs operate a junior handicapping scheme for boys (of which 66% use the EGU/ELGA recommended scheme) and 70% (671) of golf clubs operate a junior handicapping scheme for girls (of which 67% use the EGU/ELGA recommended scheme)

### COMMENT:

- These are positive figures that show a 10% increase since 2000 in the number of golf clubs operating a junior handicapping scheme – this can only be a good thing highlighting that many clubs are starting to embrace junior golf more into the competitive structure.

## JUNIOR GOLF/STRUCTURE

93% (888) of golf clubs have a junior organiser, made up of:



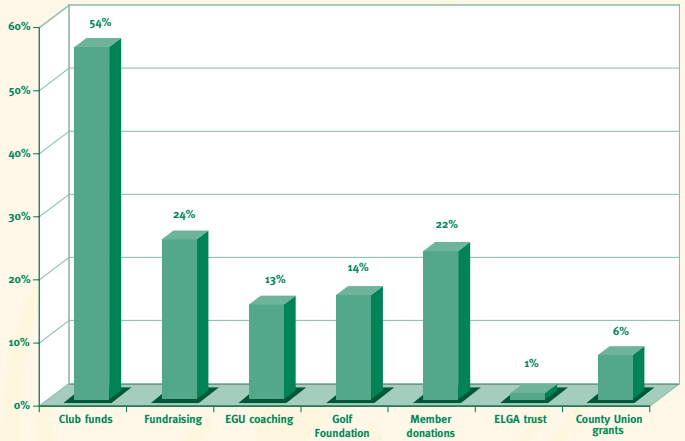
18% (174) of golf clubs have a separate junior organiser for girls, of which 85% are female golf club members

80% (765) of junior organisers receive help from other adult members/parents

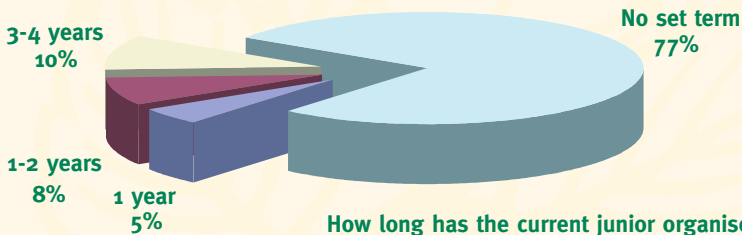
44% (420) of golf clubs have their junior organiser as a member of the management committee

### Golf clubs that have an on-going junior fund

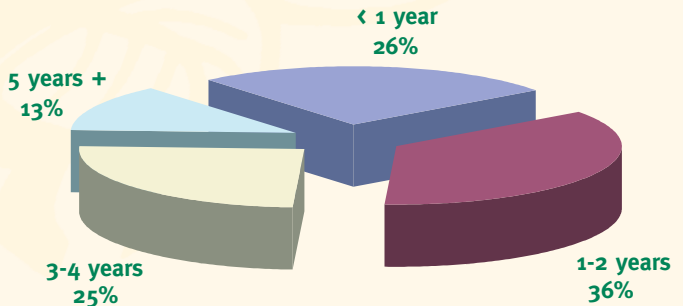
62% (588) of golf clubs have an on-going fund for their junior section and this is how it is funded:



### How long is the junior organiser expected to serve



### How long has the current junior organiser been in position



### COMMENT:

- It is important to achieve continuity within the junior section and the longer an organiser is in position the better.
- Volunteers play a crucial role, although there is not enough female input which may be one reason for the low number of girls?
- To strengthen a junior section it must be an integral part of the golf club and representation on the management committee will help.
- Many golf clubs do have a dedicated on-going fund for the juniors, but should there be even more support from other areas?

## JUNIOR GOLF/COMPETITIONS

Golf clubs that replied yes

	Boys	Girls
Can juniors enter all adult/main competitions?	54% (514)	49% (470)
Are there playing restrictions regarding juniors?	50% (475)	47% (444)

The most common playing restrictions are at weekends and in particular the mornings

Golf clubs that replied yes

	Boys	Girls	Mixed
Are there competitions for juniors only?	26% (251)	9% (84)	72% (683)
Do juniors play matches against other golf clubs?	61% (579)	12% (112)	38% (371)





The above figures have remained similar since 2000

**75%** (719) of golf clubs expect juniors to have a certain handicap before they can enter any main/adult competitions, with an average handicap of 21 for boys and 33 for girls

**19%** (178) of golf clubs have tee boxes specifically for juniors

**85%** (815) of golf clubs for boys and **74%** (703) of golf clubs for girls contact their County Union/Association if they feel they have a boy/girl with county potential

### COMMENT:

-  Should playing standards for juniors to play on the course and be allowed into main competitions, be any different to adults?
-  Golf clubs should be encouraging juniors to play competitively.
-  Equitable practice is the only way – if you are good enough then age should not be an issue.
-  It is disappointing that only a small percentage of clubs have tee boxes for juniors.

# COUNTY BREAKDOWN

It is difficult to compare county to county as each one is structured differently, with varying resources, amount of golf clubs and different geographical, social and economic factors. However, this table does show basic information on each affiliated County Union/Association. More detailed statistics on a county and regional basis may be available upon request.

County	No of clubs	No returned questionnaire	%	% of Junior Membership	No of clubs with Membership Vacancies	%	No of clubs with Junior Vacancies	%	No of clubs with Waiting Lists	%	No of clubs seeking more members	%	No of clubs wanting help from EGU/ELGA	%
Bedfordshire	23	10	43	8	10	100	9	90	3	30	10	100	10	100
B, B & O	121	56	46	7	43	77	39	70	15	27	40	71	28	50
Cambridgeshire	28	15	54	8	14	93	14	93	3	20	12	80	11	73
Cheshire	100	42	42	12	37	88	32	76	13	31	33	79	23	55
Cornwall	34	13	38	8	12	92	12	92	2	15	10	77	7	54
Cumbria	33	15	45	8	15	100	14	93	5	33	11	73	9	60
Derbyshire	33	13	39	8	12	92	12	92	5	38	8	62	5	38
Devon	41	26	63	7	21	81	23	88	10	38	18	69	10	38
Dorset	34	19	56	7	18	95	17	89	6	32	13	68	12	63
Durham	44	27	61	9	25	93	24	89	9	33	19	70	15	56
Essex	77	27	35	8	26	96	23	85	5	19	24	89	17	63
Gloucestershire	40	15	38	8	13	87	13	87	6	40	11	73	7	47
Hants, IOW & Cl	88	40	45	10	35	88	32	80	13	33	29	73	18	45
Hertfordshire	71	20	28	6	18	90	17	85	6	30	15	75	14	70
Isle of Man	8	3	38	10	3	100	3	100	0	0	2	67	2	67
Kent	94	50	53	6	45	90	39	78	16	33	37	74	30	60
Lancashire	140	83	59	9	67	81	65	78	34	41	56	67	33	40
Leicestershire & Rutland	32	18	56	6	17	94	14	78	4	22	12	67	8	44
Lincolnshire	55	32	58	7	29	91	30	94	11	34	27	84	20	63
Middlesex	39	11	28	6	11	100	9	82	2	18	10	91	4	36
Norfolk	32	22	69	8	20	91	20	91	4	18	16	73	13	59
Northamptonshire	27	12	44	6	10	83	10	83	3	25	10	83	8	67
Northumberland	42	25	60	8	22	88	22	88	8	32	18	72	10	40
Nottinghamshire	32	15	47	7	11	73	12	80	7	47	11	73	9	60
Shropshire & Hereford	36	17	47	12	15	88	15	88	6	35	14	82	8	47
Somerset	31	15	48	7	14	93	15	100	3	20	13	87	10	67
Staffordshire	52	35	67	6	33	94	30	86	7	20	27	77	20	57
Suffolk	30	17	57	9	14	82	14	82	4	24	13	76	12	71
Surrey	108	53	49	6	46	87	41	77	16	30	35	66	24	45
Sussex	67	45	67	8	42	93	40	89	9	20	32	71	22	49
Warwickshire	51	21	41	7	19	90	16	76	7	33	17	81	9	43
Wiltshire	24	15	63	8	14	93	12	80	2	13	14	93	7	47
Worcestershire	37	21	57	7	21	100	21	100	7	33	17	81	13	62
Yorkshire	192	88	46	8	83	94	81	92	24	27	73	83	52	59
<b>*Average</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>56</b>

\*Please note that there may be a slight deviation in these figures compared to the overall statistics recorded earlier in the results booklet

## TARGETS

Although it is difficult to allocate resources long-term with the golfing environment continually evolving, it is important to set targets on some of the bigger issues that affect the majority of golf clubs and County Unions/Associations.

Therefore the EGU and ELGA have attempted to produce some targets for the future, that will hopefully make it easier to assess how development has progressed in two years time and give everyone involved a clearer perspective.

- To increase junior membership of golf clubs
  - To reduce the number of golf clubs that have an age limit for student membership
  - To assist golf clubs in providing more opportunities for participation and membership
  - To reduce membership vacancies within golf clubs for boys, girls, adult males and females
  - To reduce the number of golf clubs actively seeking more members
  - To continue to support all affiliated golf clubs and thus reduce those who require help
  - To encourage golf clubs to run initiatives to attract new members
  - Working with counties to ensure that golf clubs are regularly communicated with and provided with relevant guidance and assistance
- 16
- To reduce the amount of golf clubs with a waiting list
  - To reduce the proportion of golf clubs charging an entrance fee for juniors
  - To increase the number of golf clubs who stagger entrance fees for juniors/intermediates entering the adult section
  - To reduce the amount of golf clubs having a minimum age for juniors
  - To increase the number of golf clubs holding welcoming evenings for juniors
  - To continue to communicate with golf clubs about initiatives and grant aid available to them
  - To increase the number of golf clubs operating the EGU/ELGA junior handicapping scheme
  - To increase the proportion of golf clubs where the junior organiser is a member of the management committee
  - To increase the amount of golf clubs that have specific junior tee boxes
  - The handicap limit for juniors to enter main club competitions should not differ from adults



## CONCLUSION



The purpose of the Golf Club Membership Questionnaire 2002 was not to assess the health of the game as a whole, but merely to appraise the current membership situation at one moment in time, and be able to make comparisons with previous and future research.

There are high numbers of membership vacancies for both adults and juniors and it is important that this continues to be addressed, especially as affiliated golf clubs are asking for assistance. In fact this process has already begun with relevant literature and projects available for golf clubs to become involved in to try and make the game more affordable and accessible – benefiting the game and in turn the golf club.

Junior golf continues to struggle in terms of numbers and most significantly girl's golf, which is why a longer-term strategy is the only way forward. Many golf clubs are starting to relax some of the restrictions that previously existed and are becoming more proactive towards youngsters as they realise juniors are the future of the golf club.

Since the Millennium Census in 2000 it does not appear that a lot has changed statistically, but we must be patient and much of the hard work, new initiatives and partnerships that have been created will soon start to pay off and this research is vital to assist with the planning.

It will be interesting to evaluate how the game at grass roots level has progressed in two years time and the challenge is for all administrators, volunteers, organisers, golf clubs, counties and national bodies to respond by promoting and developing the game of golf, offering opportunities to participate and sustain involvement.

For information on all EGU and ELGA golf development initiatives and to find out how you can benefit and help develop the game, please find the relevant contact details on the back cover.





## English Golf Union

The National Golf Centre  
The Broadway Woodhall Spa  
Lincolnshire LN10 6PU

TELEPHONE 01526 354500

FAX 01526 354020

E-MAIL [development@englishgolfunion.org](mailto:development@englishgolfunion.org)

WEB [www.englishgolfunion.org](http://www.englishgolfunion.org)



## English Ladies' Golf Association

Edgbaston Golf Club,  
Church Road,  
Birmingham B15 3TB

TELEPHONE 0121 456 2088

FAX 0121 454 5542

E-MAIL [office@englishladiesgolf.org](mailto:office@englishladiesgolf.org)

WEB [www.englishladiesgolf.org](http://www.englishladiesgolf.org)