

England Netball Guidelines for Young Umpires – October 2025

Introduction

England Netball recognise that young people mature at different rates - socially, physically, and emotionally. Some may develop confidence in officiating quickly, while others need more time and support to build their skills. These guidelines are intended to nurture and empower young umpires by providing them with the guidance, encouragement and developmental opportunities they need, to develop confidently and at their own pace. These guidelines must not be used to pressure young umpires into officiating matches beyond their current level of readiness – particularly in situations where there may be a shortage of available umpires.

A **young umpire** is typically defined as someone who has reached the age of 13 but has not yet reached the age of 18.

The current England & Europe Netball Pathways state the following:-

1. The minimum age for attending the England Netball INTO Officiating Award Course is 13 years old and Learners can be assessed at age 13.
2. The minimum age for attending the Europe Netball C Award Course and taking the Written Assessment is 13 years old. The minimum age for taking the Europe Netball C Award Practical Assessment is 14 years old.
3. Umpires aged under 16 who hold the Europe Netball C Award may progress along the B Award pathway, but they are not recommended to take the practical assessment until they are 16 years old. If an umpire under the age of 16 is Talent Identified and considered ready to undertake the B Award Practical Assessment, before they reach the age of 16, approval must first be obtained from England Netball Officiating Department before the assessment can proceed.

All Learners who have completed the two virtual sessions of the INTO Officiating Award Course are deemed to be “in training”.

The overarching principle underpinning these guidelines is that the League and Competition Organisers, working in partnership with the County Officiating Lead wherever possible, hold the responsibility for managing all aspects of game-related risk. This includes carefully considering the appointment of young umpires, especially to matches involving adult participants. The welfare of the young umpire is paramount throughout the risk assessment and decision-making process.

1. Identification & Registration Process

Any young umpire who has been recognised for their talent and is considered socially, physically, and emotionally ready to officiate matches involving players older than themselves must first be registered with the County Officiating Lead before being appointed to such fixtures. Identification will ordinarily be undertaken by an assessor conducting the young umpires’ assessment, a mentor working with the young umpire or a qualified umpire, assessor, individual appointed by a League or Competition Organiser, or the County Officiating Lead.

To complete the registration process, the person who has recognised the talented young umpire should contact the County Officiating Lead and request the link for the Young Umpire Registration Form. The County Officiating Lead must be contacted on every occasion before the Form is completed. The Form must be completed, fully and accurately and must be endorsed by **all** the following individuals:

- Young Umpire's Parent or Legal Guardian
- A current C Award Umpire Assessor (or higher)

A copy of the completed form will be sent to the County Officiating Lead, the Young Umpire's Parent or Legal Guardian and the endorsing, Umpire Assessor.

2. Record-Keeping

England Netball will maintain a **comprehensive record** of the young umpires who have been registered, including, but not limited to:

- Umpire Name
- Contact Details of Parent or Legal Guardian
- Umpire Date of Birth
- Umpire Qualification Level
- Location of & full details of all Matches Officiated
- Assigned Mentor & Responsible Adult (for each fixture, does not need to be the same Responsible Adult for every fixture)
- Progress Reports & Feedback

This database should be regularly updated to ensure young umpires receive proper guidance, recognition, and developmental opportunities.

3. Membership Requirement

All young umpires must be **current full members of England Netball**. Membership ensures they are covered by insurance, have access to official resources, and are part of the national network of netball officials.

4. Responsible Adult Definition

A **responsible adult** plays a vital safeguarding and supporting role for young umpires. They are not expected to act as a mentor or subject matter expert, though a mentor may fulfil this role if they meet the criteria. A responsible adult must meet one of the following requirements:

- Be the umpire's Parent or Legal Guardian.
- Be another suitable **Over 18 current Full Member of England Netball**.
- Be a **Co-umpire** who is over 18 and holds at least a **C Award Umpire qualification**.
- Cannot be a Player involved in any game whilst the young umpire is officiating.

Additionally, the responsible adult **should be within the court boundary for the entirety of the match**, always ensuring the young umpire's well-being and safety. Here is a link to further information about safeguarding and supporting young persons. [EN Safeguarding](#).

5. Code of Conduct

Young umpires must:

- Officiate matches with fairness and integrity.
- Treat all players, coaches, and spectators with respect.
- Adhere to the current Rules of Netball and any county regulations.
- Seek support from their responsible adult or mentor when needed.

Coaches and players should:

- Show courtesy and respect toward young umpires at all times.
- Maintain composure and refrain from any form of verbal, emotional or physical mistreatment.
- Support and accept the decisions made by young umpires throughout the duration game.

6. Safety and Well-being

- All young umpires must always have a designated responsible adult present, courtside, at all matches they umpire.
- Counties must address reports of intimidation or misconduct without delay, and the County Safeguarding Officer must be included in all communications of this nature.
- Emotional well-being resources should be available.

7. Communication & Support

- It is requirement that County Officiating Leads and/or their regular mentor hold **regular check-ins** with young umpires to assess ongoing confidence and progress.
- Documentary evidence of each **check-in** should be provided to the County Officiating Lead and/or the designated representative of their County Officiating Working Group and the parent/guardian of the young umpire. An ongoing record of all check-ins should be kept until the umpire reaches the age of 18.

8. Recognition and Growth

- Counties should offer advancement opportunities based on consistent performance and the recommendation of an approved Officiating mentor/assessor, at the level being recommended.
- Outstanding young umpires may be recommended for regional or national officiating appointments.

9. Guidelines Review and Updates

These guidelines will be periodically reviewed to ensure effectiveness and relevance.