



GENDER ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 England Netball as the national governing body of Netball in England (as defined in Appendix One) is proudly female-centric and remains unwavering in its commitment to prioritising women and girls, ensuring that Netball provides fair, safe, enjoyable, and equitable opportunities.
- 1.2 England Netball also recognises it has a duty of care to all participating in Netball under its jurisdiction and it is England Netball's view that gender identity should not be a barrier to participation. The purpose of this document is to provide clear eligibility and inclusion criteria ("**Eligibility Criteria**") and processes which enable everyone to participate in Netball (this "**Policy**").
- 1.3 Since 2021, England Netball has partnered with the England Men's and Mixed Netball Association ("**EMMNA**"), to support the growth and development of men's and mixed Netball participation and competition. EMMNA serves as the primary delivery and support arm for the male and mixed club network and is recognised as an authorised provider of Netball activities under the England Netball membership.
- 1.4 England Netball is dedicated to ensuring participation free from discrimination, including transphobia. Any incidents of discrimination should be reported to complaints@englandnetball.co.uk, where they will be thoroughly investigated in line with England Netball's Diversity & Belonging Policy, Code of Conduct, and Disciplinary Regulations.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE POLICY

- 2.1 As participation in men's and mixed Netball continues to grow, along with ongoing research into gender-inclusive sports and feedback from England Netball Members, it is vital to implement clear and transparent criteria for categorising Netball activities and competitions, providing Participants with greater choice.
- 2.2 England Netball is committed to: (1) ensuring opportunity for all Participants to participate and succeed in Netball, including through the representation in its programmes and competitions of Participants of both biological Sexes; and (2) ensuring competitive fairness within England Netball programmes and competitions.
- 2.3 World Netball recently conducted its own gender eligibility and inclusion review which concluded in the release of its new Policy on Participation and Inclusion (the "**World Netball Policy**"). The World Netball Policy, which came into effect in April 2024, governs the eligibility of Participants to compete in International Level Women's Netball Competition.
- 2.4 The World Netball Policy advises that each of its member countries (including England Netball) establish its own gender eligibility and participation policy, and this Policy is built upon that framework.
- 2.5 Following the introduction of World Netball Policy and the earlier publication by the Sports Council Equality Group on the 30th September 2021 of "The UK's Sports Councils Guidance for Transgender Inclusion in Domestic Sport", England Netball has undertaken a review of its 2017 "Trans Inclusion Guidance" resulting in the creation and adoption of this Policy. This Policy is intended to be comprehensive, fair and equitable and to be compliant with England Netball's obligations under the World Netball Policy.

3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 The Policy came into effect on 1 September 2025.

3.2 The Policy shall apply to:

- 3.2.1** Recognised and Authorised Activity (including EMMNA delivered activities);
- 3.2.2** all Participants;
- 3.2.3** all Support Personnel;
- 3.2.4** all Member Organisations; and
- 3.2.5** all Approved Delivery Partners.

3.3 The Policy shall not apply to:

- 3.3.1** training camps, activities, competitions or events within the jurisdiction of Europe Netball, World Netball and/or any other body outside of England Netball's jurisdiction;
- 3.3.2** Participants and Support Personnel involved in training camps, activities, competitions or events within the jurisdiction of Europe Netball, World Netball and/or any other body outside of England Netball's jurisdiction;
- 3.3.3** organisations including, universities, schools and clubs which are not Members of England Netball; and
- 3.3.4** any case involving a prohibited substance or other offence under the WAD Code, World Netball Anti-Doping Rules, Europe Netball Anti-doping Rules, UK Anti-Doping Rules and England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules (or any other applicable anti-doping rules) (as amended from time to time), which shall be dealt with by WADA, World Netball, Europe Netball, UKAD and/or England Netball according to those applicable Anti-Doping Rules.

3.4 The Policy operates without prejudice to all other rules and regulations that are applicable to Participants including those of Europe Netball and World Netball. In particular, any matter pertaining to a Participant's eligibility to compete in Europe Netball Competitions and/or World Netball Competitions shall be dealt with in accordance with Europe Netball's policy and/or the World Netball Policy (as in place from time to time).

4. POWER TO CHANGE, RESCIND OR ADD TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE POLICY

- 4.1** In the event an issue arises that is not foreseen in the Policy, it will be addressed by England Netball in a manner that protects and promotes the objectives identified in the Policy.
- 4.2** England Netball is committed to reviewing the Policy periodically which may be amended from time to time by England Netball.

5. LAWS

- 5.1** The laws of England and Wales shall apply to the Policy.

6. PARTICIPANT SUPPORT

6.1 Parents, or other persons with parental responsibility for Participants under the age of 18 (“**Minor**”) understand and agree, in respect of the Minor for which they have legal responsibility, for the Minor as a Participant to be bound by all aspects of the Policy.

6.2 Any individual seeking information on the application of the Policy should contact [England Netball](mailto:GenderInclusion@englandnetball.co.uk) for assistance at GenderInclusion@englandnetball.co.uk

7. FEMALE CATEGORY RECOGNISED AND AUTHORISED ACTIVITY

7.1 Transgender Female and Non-Binary Participants (whose biological Sex is Male) are not eligible to participate in female category Recognised and Authorised activity.

7.2 Female Participants (those whose biological Sex is Female) are eligible to participate in female category Recognised and Authorised Activity, regardless of their Legal Gender and/or Affirmed Gender under the following conditions:

7.2.1 Female Participants who have previously used testosterone as part of female-to-male gender-affirming hormone treatment (with or without a Therapeutic Use Exemption) but are no longer following that treatment are eligible to participate in female category Recognised and Authorised Activity if they can establish to England Netball's comfortable satisfaction that:

7.2.1.1 the testosterone use was for less than a year in total (i.e., from the date of first use to the date of last use) and did not take place during pubertal growth and development; and

7.2.1.2 their testosterone levels in serum (or plasma) are back to pre-treatment normal and any associated anabolic effects have been eliminated.

7.2.2 Female Participants who have used testosterone in violation of the WAD Code, World Netball Anti-Doping Rules, Europe Netball Anti-doping Rules, UK Anti-Doping Rules and England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules (or any other applicable anti-doping rules) (as amended from time to time) may return to participation after they have served their period of ineligibility.

7.3 Where a Transgender Female Participant or Non-Binary Participant (whose biological Sex is Male) has been granted clearance by another sport to participate in the female category of that sport wishes to participate in Netball, England Netball shall not recognise nor give effect to the decision of the other sport and/or its governing body.

8. MALE CATEGORY RECOGNISED AND AUTHORISED ACTIVITY

8.1 Male Participants (those whose biological Sex is Male), Transgender Male Participants and Non-Binary Participants are eligible to participate in male category Recognised and Authorised Activity, regardless of their Legal Gender and/or Affirmed Gender.

9. MIXED CATEGORY RECOGNISED AND AUTHORISED ACTIVITY (ALSO KNOWN AS MIXED NETBALL)

9.1 All Participants (including Female (those whose biological Sex is Female), Male (those whose biological Sex is Male), Transgender Female, Transgender Male and Non-Binary Participants) are eligible to participate in mixed category Recognised and Authorised

Activity (also known as Mixed Netball), regardless of their Legal Gender and/or Affirmed Gender.

10. UNDER-12 RECOGNISED AND AUTHORISED ACTIVITY

- 10.1** All Participants aged 11 and under on 1 September of the membership year are eligible to participate in any category (Male, Female and/or mixed) Recognised and Authorised Activity, regardless of their Legal Gender and/or Affirmed Gender.

11. FIELDING AN INELIGIBLE PARTICIPANT

- 11.1** Member Organisations and Approved Delivery Partners acknowledge and agree that fielding an ineligible Participant in any Recognised and Authorised Activity shall constitute as a breach of this Policy. In the event of such a breach, the Member Organisation and/or Approved Delivery Partners shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations and/or relevant competition rules and regulations.

12. COMPLIANCE

- 12.1** It is the responsibility of those subject to and bound by this Policy to ensure their ongoing compliance with the Policy.
- 12.2** England Netball may monitor ongoing compliance with this Policy by any appropriate means.
- 12.3** Subject to Applicable Laws, in addition to the general power to monitor continuing compliance with the Policy, England Netball may investigate, at any time, any circumstances that indicate actual or potential non-compliance with the Policy; and/or where the eligibility of a Participant is questioned and/or disputed by a third-party.
- 12.4** Except for investigations conducted by England Netball, a Participant's eligibility shall not be questioned during any event or competition. Any instances of such behaviour or concerns must be reported to England Netball at GenderInclusion@englandnetball.co.uk
- 12.5** England Netball will work with the Participant to undertake a sensitive and confidential review of their circumstances and shall have the authority to take all appropriate measures for the determination of the eligibility of the Participant, if it considers that there are grounds to do so. England Netball will only consider reasonable third-party requests which are submitted in writing, and which England Netball considers clearly sets out the grounds upon which the Participant's eligibility is questioned and/or disputed.
- 12.6** In such cases, if they wish to retain their eligibility to participate in Recognised and Authorised Activity the Participant must cooperate fully and in good faith with that investigation. Where necessary to safeguard the fairness and/or integrity of competition and/or the safety of the competitors, England Netball may provisionally suspend the Participant from participating in Recognised and Authorised Activity pending resolution of the matter, provided that in such cases all reasonable endeavours will be used to complete the investigation as expeditiously as possible.
- 12.7** Any investigation under Section 12 must be initiated in good faith and on reasonable grounds based on information derived from reliable sources.

- 12.8 In addition to the general power to monitor continuing compliance, England Netball may investigate, at any time any circumstances that indicate actual or potential non-compliance with this Policy.

13. ANTI-DOPING REQUIREMENTS

- 13.1 England Netball condemns, and is totally opposed to, the use of performance enhancing drugs and doping practices in Netball and fully supports the position of WADA, World Netball, Europe Netball and UKAD against the use of banned substances and methods. All Participants have the right to participate in Netball knowing that they, and their competitors, are clean.
- 13.2 England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules apply to all Participants and all Participants shall be deemed to have made themselves familiar with, and agreed to be bound by, the England Netball Anti-Doping Rules and to submit to the authority of WADA and UKAD in the application and enforcement of the England Netball Anti-Doping Rules.
- 13.3 A copy of England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules and general anti-doping information can be found via the Website at:
<https://www.englandnetball.co.uk/governance/performance-policies/anti-doping/>
- 13.4 For the avoidance of doubt Participants who are Minors are bound by England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules and are subject to drug testing. For the purposes of England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules, consent of parents, or other persons with parental responsibility to the testing of a Minor is deemed to follow automatically from the fact that the Minor has been permitted by their parents, or other persons with parental responsibility to participate in Netball. Any Minors participating in Netball, therefore, may be subject to drug testing.
- 13.5 More information about this can be found on the Website or via UKAD's website at:
<https://www.ukad.org.uk/violations/testing-process-minors>
- 13.6 It is the responsibility of all Participants to ensure that their actions are compliant with the relevant anti-doping regulations including but not limited to the WAD Code, World Netball Anti-Doping Rules, Europe Netball Anti-doping Rules, UK Anti-Doping Rules and England Netball's Anti-Doping Rules (or any other applicable anti-doping rules) (as amended in place from time to time).
- 13.7 It is a disciplinary offence for any Participant under England Netball's jurisdiction to fail or refuse (without compelling justification) to cooperate with any WADA, World Netball, Europe Netball, UKAD and/or England Netball anti-doping investigation or proceedings; and/or to commit an act of misconduct related to anti-doping which does not amount to an anti-doping rule violation, with appropriate action taken where necessary.
- 13.8 In the event that England Netball becomes aware of any information relating in any way to an apparent anti-doping rule violation by a Participant or other person under its jurisdiction, it shall immediately report that information in full to the WADA, World Netball and/or UKAD (as appropriate).
- 13.9 All Participants agree to England Netball sharing their personal data, where relevant, with WADA, World Netball, Europe Netball and/or UKAD for the purpose of intelligence sharing in relation to possible anti-doping rule violations. This information will be shared in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

14. DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS AND SANCTIONS

- 14.1 England Netball may take disciplinary action against a Participant and/or Support Personnel in accordance with this Policy and/or England Netball's Disciplinary Regulations (as in place from time to time) where:
- 14.1.1 information that is provided pursuant to this Policy is inaccurate or misleadingly incomplete;
 - 14.1.2 a Participant participates in Recognised and Authorised Activity in a category for which they have not satisfied the Eligibility Criteria;
 - 14.1.3 a Participant who has previously been determined to have satisfied the Eligibility Conditions fails to cooperate fully and in good faith with efforts to determine their continuing compliance with the Eligibility Criteria;
 - 14.1.4 there has been any other breach of or non-compliance by a Participant with this Policy; or
 - 14.1.5 Support Personnel has been complicit in a Participant's breach of or non-compliance with this Policy.
- 14.2 In such disciplinary proceedings, the person(s) involved may not challenge the validity of this Policy and/or Disciplinary Regulations and/or any decision made under this Policy and/or Disciplinary Regulations, except by way of Appeal in accordance with Regulation 13 of the Disciplinary Regulations.
- 14.3 In such disciplinary proceedings, sanctions will be imposed in accordance with England Netball's Sanction Guidelines as in place from time to time and currently found [here](#)
- 14.4 Without prejudice to the above, England Netball may recognise and enforce any sanction imposed on a Participant or Support Personnel by World Netball or Europe Netball or any other another body affiliated to, or recognised by, World Netball or Europe Netball.

15. DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 15.1 All cases arising under this Policy and in particular all Participant information provided to England Netball under this Policy will be dealt with in strict confidence at all times in accordance with the provisions of Data Protection Legislation and England Netball policies as in place from time to time.
- 15.2 So far as is practicable, confidentiality will be maintained at all times in respect of all those involved in any process arising under this Policy unless there is an overriding obligation in the interests of the Participant and safety for such information to be shared with other interested parties. Any such information shared shall be on a need-to-know basis only.
- 15.3 All medical information and data relating to a Participant will be treated as sensitive personal information and England Netball will ensure at all times that it is processed as such in accordance with applicable Data Protection Legislation.
- 15.4 England Netball will not comment publicly on the specific facts of a pending or decided case (as opposed to general descriptions of the process and science involved) except in response to public comments attributed to the

Participant or Support Personnel involved or their representatives to the extent permitted by Applicable Laws.

16. MISCELLANEOUS

- 16.1** In no circumstances will England Netball or any of England Netball's employees, officers, agents, representatives, or other persons involved in the administration of this Policy be liable in any way for any acts done (or omitted to be done) in good faith in connection with the administration of this Policy.

17. CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT

- 17.1** While all Participants have a place in Netball, England Netball acknowledges that the application of this Policy means that certain individuals may not be able to participate in the category that best aligns with their Legal Gender and/or Affirmed Gender. Individuals who exercise the choice not to participate because of these Eligibility Criteria are encouraged to consider coaching, officiating, administration, and/or other ways to participate in and stay involved with Netball.

- 17.2** For more information on how to become involved, please visit <https://www.englandnetball.co.uk/be-involved/>

APPENDIX ONE

DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

The following terms have the following meanings:

7-a-side Netball:	full 7-a-side Netball in accordance with the Netball Rules;
Affirmed Gender:	the Sex that a person identifies as or has transitioned/is transitioning to as opposed to that which was assigned at birth;
Approved Delivery Partners:	delivery partners and registered netball organisations that have an agreement to deliver Recognised and Authorised Activity on behalf of England Netball;
Applicable Laws:	any and all laws, statutes, regulations, decisions, rulings, directives, codes of practice, government policies, enactments or instruments (including national, regional, local or principal laws, regulations or by-laws of any kind whatsoever) relevant to this Policy;
Bee Netball:	adapted version of Netball (recommended for Participants under the age of 11) in accordance with the Netball Rules;
Data Protection Legislation:	all applicable laws relating to data protection, the processing of personal data and privacy, including: the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 and any other data protection and/or privacy legislation applicable in the UK from time to time, (each as amended, updated, replaced or re-enacted from time to time and including all subordinate legislation made from time to time under or giving effect to the same) and references to “Controller”, “Personal Data”, “process”, “Processing”, “Special Category Personal Information”, “criminal convictions” have the meaning set out in, and will be interpreted in accordance with, such applicable laws;
Disciplinary Regulations:	England Netball’s disciplinary regulations as in place from time to time;
England Netball:	the All England Netball Association Limited, a private company limited by guarantee and registered in England with the registered number of 1698144;
Europe Netball:	the federation of European netball associations recognised by World Netball and responsible for

	European rankings, maintaining the rules for netball and organising European competitions and events;
Europe Netball Competition(s):	all training camps, activities, competitions and events owned, run and organised by or on behalf of Europe Netball;
Fast5 / Fast Net:	5 or 7 a-side Netball in accordance with the Netball Rules;
Female:	possession of XX chromosomes and (in the absence of medical intervention) ovaries and increased circulating oestrogen and progesterone starting at puberty;
Legal Gender:	the Sex or gender that is recognised under the law;
Male:	possession of XY chromosomes and (in the absence of medical intervention) testes and increased circulating testosterone starting at puberty;
Member:	members of England Netball;
Member Organisation:	organisations including counties, regions, universities, schools and clubs which are Members of England Netball;
Mixed Netball:	a format of Netball which includes teams made up of Male, Female and Non-binary Participants in accordance with the mixed gender positional quotas as contained within the Mixed Netball Rules;
Mixed Netball Rules:	the rules and regulations of Mixed Netball as in force from time to time;
Netball:	netball under the jurisdiction of England Netball (being 7-a-side Netball, Fast5 / FastNet, Indoor Netball (or Nets), Walking Netball, Bee Netball and Para-Netball);
Netball Rules:	the rules and regulations as in force from time to time of England Netball (including Mixed Netball Rules), Europe Netball and/or World Netball to the extent that they relate or apply to England Netball and/or its Members;
Non-Binary:	a person who identifies in some way outside of the man, woman gender binary;
Para-Netball:	adapted version of Netball in recognition of the Participant's impairment(s) in accordance with the Netball Rules;
Participant	an individual who plays Netball under the jurisdiction of England Netball;
Recognised and Authorised Activity:	recognised versions of Netball that have been authorised by England Netball;

Sex/Sexes:	natural biological differences between Females and Males, including chromosomes, sex organs, and endogenous hormonal profiles;
Support Personnel:	any coach, trainer, manager, agent, team staff, official, nutritionist, medical, paramedical personnel, parent or any other person working with, treating or assisting a Participant participating in or preparing for sports competition under the jurisdiction of England Netball;
Transgender:	people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with the Sex they were assigned at birth;
Transgender Female:	a Participant who is assigned Male at birth but identifies and lives as a female. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female;
Transgender Male:	a Participant who is assigned Female at birth but identifies and lives as a male. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male;
Therapeutic Use Exemption:	a Therapeutic Use Exemption (also known as “TUE”) allows a Participant with a medical condition to use a Prohibited Substance or Prohibited Method as defined in the WAD Code; but only if the conditions set out in the International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions are met;
UKAD:	United Kingdom Anti-Doping (or any successor to, or replacement thereof). UKAD is the National Anti-Doping Organisation for the UK and is responsible for ensuring sports bodies in the United Kingdom are compliant with the WAD Code through implementation and management of the UK Anti-Doping Rules and the National Anti-Doping Policy;
UK Anti-Doping Rules:	the UK Anti-Doping Rules (as amended from time to time);
Under 12 Recognised & Activity	Netball activity for participants aged 11 and under on 1 September of the membership year (largely this will mean all children who are of primary school age)
WADA:	World Anti-Doping Agency (or any successor to, or replacement thereof);
WAD Code:	the World Anti-Doping Code (as amended from time to time) which provides the framework for anti-doping policies, rules, and regulations within sport organisations and among public authorities. It is designed to harmonise anti-doping policies and ensure the standards are the same for all participants within all sports and countries;

Walking Netball:	adapted walking version of netball in accordance with the Netball Rules;
World Netball:	the international federation (formerly known as the International Netball Federation) recognised by the International Olympic Committee and responsible for world rankings, maintaining the rules for netball and organising international competitions and events; and
World Netball Competition(s):	all training camps, activities, competitions or events including the Netball World Cup and netball at the Commonwealth Games owned, run and organised by or on behalf of World Netball.

If any provision or part-provision of this Policy is or becomes invalid, illegal or unenforceable, it shall be deemed deleted, but that shall not affect the validity and enforceability of the rest of this Policy.

All headings are used for ease of reference only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of this Policy.

Any reference in this Policy to any statute, law, statutory instrument, regulation or other similar instrument having the force of law shall be deemed to include any lawful amendment, re-enactment, extension, replacement, modification, consolidation and/or repeal thereof.

No failure or delay by England Netball to exercise any right, make any decision or take any action provided under this Policy or by law shall constitute a waiver of that right, decision or action, nor shall it prevent or restrict the further exercise of that right, decision or action. No single or partial exercise of such right, decision or action shall prevent or restrict the further exercise of that right, decision or action.