

## AGE LIMITS FOR THE YOUNGER UMPIRES

England Netball's recommendations regarding the age limits for younger umpires are as follows:

1. Minimum age for the England Netball Into Officiating Award and Netball Europe 'C' Award is 13 years old.
2. Minimum age for taking the Netball Europe 'C' Award practical assessment is 14 years (they can pass the written assessment and the practical pre-assessment before they are aged 14).
3. If they pass the Netball Europe 'C' Award Practical Assessment, they receive accreditation as a NE 'C' Award umpire but the following restrictions apply until they reach their 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday:
  - a) They may only umpire matches up to U17 level
  - b) They may not umpire matches with over 18's participating
  - c) They may not umpire mixed sex matches
  - d) Separate changing and toilet facilities are to be provided
4. Umpires aged between 16 and 18 years of age can umpire any match according to the qualification required by leagues but England Netball recommend that they did not umpire 'senior' matches but Under 18 or younger.

In making these decisions the best interests of the individual have been considered particularly in relation to how the experience will affect both physical and mental development.

There are many positive effects of setting these age limits and they include:

- Recruitment of players into umpiring at a young age
- A greater knowledge and application of the rules
- Potential reached earlier
- Umpires learn to deal with pressure earlier
- Develop a commitment to a team of young players

However there are also possible negative effects:

- Psychological intimidation
- A younger umpire is less likely to be able to demonstrate assertiveness
- The experience might prove to be a negative one leading to a loss in confidence

Therefore England Netball is issuing the following guidance to assist Counties in providing a carefully controlled and monitored environment so that the young umpire involved can develop to the best of his/her ability. It is acknowledged that youngsters mature at different rates both physically and mentally, and therefore the age limits have been set so that young umpires are allowed to develop at a rate appropriate to their age and stage of development.

### SOME REMINDERS FOR RECRUITING YOUNG UMPIRES

- The reason for encouraging the youngster to umpire is in his/her best interest
- Every attempt will be made to provide a support/mentor umpire to assist the youngster
- Physical and mental maturity has been considered
- Young umpires should be given positive constructive feedback on their performance.
- A youngster found not to be coping should be provided with guidance.
- The young umpire is encouraged to feel part of a team



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- His/her progress is monitored during the season

Reference to all of the above has been done in conjunction with England Netball's Duty of Care policy as outlined in the 'Duty of Care' Manual for Netball Clubs and Associations