

Young Umpires

With social media increasingly becoming a platform for engaging umpires, it seems prudent to reiterate key England netball information to our Middlesex County leagues, clubs and schools.

Umpires Under 16 years of age should only umpire games within their age group.

- They may not umpire matches with Over 18s participating nor umpire mixed sex matches
- The venue must ensure that there are separate changing and toilet facilities provided
- This is documented in the England Netball Age Limits for Younger Umpires guidelines

Qualified umpires aged between 16 and 18 years of age can umpire any match according to the qualification required by the league, but England Netball recommend that they do not umpire 'senior' matches, only Under 18 or younger matches.

- Should the decision be made to allow a 16 - 18 year old umpire to officiate a senior game, then a suitable safeguarding adult (e.g. a club safeguarding officer or accredited umpire mentor) must be available to support the umpire throughout the duration of the match and this cannot be the parent or carer.
- The safeguarding adult is there to ensure a controlled and monitored environment and to manage any situations that can arise around players, team officials and spectators at the match.
- This is a Child protection issue where safeguarding young umpires is a priority.
- Teams choosing to appoint Under 18 umpires to adult games will be fully responsible for their actions.
- The welfare of the young umpire is paramount. This means that for the young umpire, their personal physical and mental development and enjoyment of umpiring must be key determinants in the team's decision to appoint them to umpire an adult match.
- An awareness of the possibility of psychological intimidation or the experience leading to a loss in confidence must be acknowledged.
- The fact that the team is desperate for an umpire is not an acceptable reason to engage a young umpire.

All young umpires should be given positive constructive feedback on their performance and monitored during the season.

Middlesex County fully support England Netball's recommendations for under 18 umpires.

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.

If any league, club or school wishes to discuss this policy further, please contact the Middlesex County Umpiring Secretary amber@middlesexnetball.co.uk