

Volunteer Resources

Region and County Governance Toolkit

Effective Succession Planning Step 4 - Increasing the Diversity of your Committee



About this tool

In 2018 one third of Netball County and Regional committees who completed the health check felt that the committee did not reflect the diversity of netball and could do more to attract more diverse volunteers. Whilst everyone knows that ensuring we don't appear to be discriminatory against people of different gender, race, religion and sexuality diversity is about more than that. By building a team of people from different backgrounds we can build a team of diverse skills, experience, opinions and personalities and have better discussions, which means better decision making.

Why is it important?

Netball committees have historically lacked diversity and currently there are very few men, people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities (BAME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT+) or young people volunteering in these roles. You've told us you find this really challenging and so England Netball have produced some guidance to help you. There's an overwhelming body of research showing that greater diversity improves decision making, creativity and success of organisations.

Top Tips

- When recruiting volunteers you can add an inclusive statement to the role description such as *"We are particularly keen to receive applications from people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, disabled and LGBT+ people and volunteers under 35."*
- Ask the experts. Reach out to people in your networks, both those volunteering and those who aren't, and ask them what barriers they face or what would make it easier to get involved. This can be something as straightforward as reaching out to local community groups.
- Make sure that when you conduct your [skills audit](#) you consider diversity too.
- Like all activities you could appoint a member of the committee responsible for ensuring that the committee does all it can to be inclusive.
- Make sure you advertise Board and volunteer roles outside of the usual channels. For example, organisations such as Inclusive Boards and Sporting Equals will be able to share your opportunities, even if it's sharing on social media.
- Consider conducting an audit of any websites, social media platforms and marketing materials that you produce; are these representative of the communities that play netball? Visually, is there representation of BAME or disabled people?

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- Make sure that your committee creates a welcoming environment for new people of all backgrounds. It takes huge confidence to be the first person who is different to join a board that is not diverse. The committee should be friendly and supportive.
- Existing members acting as role models and mentors for new recruits from diverse backgrounds can be incredibly helpful too.
- Consider spending a few minutes taking some online tests as a Board. Harvard Business School have developed [a number of online tests](#) that help recognise biases we may have.
- You could reach out for training and consultancy support from another organisation e.g. Inclusion in Sport.
- Consider the wording on your website and when advertising volunteer roles. For example, could you adapt essential criteria such as 'previous board experience' to experience 'on a board, committee, as a governor or as a senior leader'? Also consider how young people's voices are heard in decision making; do older people make decisions on their behalf? The NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit have a [range of resources on their website](#) to help include young people's voices in decision making.
- Think about when, where and how you conduct meetings. Is the venue accessible, is there accessible parking available, does the venue serve alcohol, can you conduct meetings via telephone or Skype, do times or dates clash with religious or cultural events are a number of questions you could consider when communicating commitments of volunteers. If any of these may impact upon volunteers, then be open about them in application information.

How does this link to the Governance Code?

Considering diversity is a key element of Mandatory Requirement 4 of Tier 1 of the [Code for Sports Governance](#).

"In deciding who sits on its governing committee the organisation considers the skills and diversity required of its committee members."

Once this is in place you will be able to tick the corresponding boxes on your Annual Governance Health Check.

"Democracy and diversity are essential to get the right people and ensure good governance"

Essex Thurrock Secretary