

ENGLAND NETBALL

# Diversity & Belonging Report 2025



# A message from Fran Connolly CEO England Netball

At England Netball our purpose is to make netball a place where everyone involved can feel they belong, flourish and soar. Back in 2021 when we launched our 10-year strategy, “Dedicated to Difference” formed part of our moral compass. We have an unapologetic focus on addressing the in equalities in sport for Women and girls, and we are committed to opening our sport to new audiences. On and beyond the court we recognise that the strength and success of a team comes from the differences individuals bring. We are working hard to remove barriers and create a strong culture of inclusivity and belonging. We recognise that culture change takes time and strong leadership. Our Dedicated to Difference Action Plan (DIAP) sets out our ambitions and actions that we will take to continue to make netball more inclusive.

**This report sets out the progress across our six key Dedicated to Difference Ambitions aligned to our People Plan:**

| PEOPLE PLAN | DEDICATED TO DIFFERENCE AMBITIONS |
|---|---|
| **Culture & System** | **Strategy & Leadership**: The leaders of our sport will role model a proactive fully inclusive culture, be accountable for upholding anti-racist and anti-discriminatory principles in our policies, practices, and decision making. Our leaders will live, champion, and communicate these consistently throughout the organisation. |
| | **Data & Reporting:** To have a comprehensive and consistent data collection system to better understand the diversity of our staff, members, athletes, and stakeholders, in order to report transparently on our progress towards overcoming barriers and improving experiences of under-served communities. |
| | **Governance:** To have a clear governance framework, ensuring that our Dedicated to Difference ambitions are embedded in every aspect of ENs governance structure, policies and practices. |
| **Experience** | **Celebrate, Communicate and Empower:** We empower under-represented groups including those who may have been marginalised or discriminated against within our sport and actively support and promote their voices. |
| **Growth** | **Representation:** EN and the netball family will represent the diversity of our society and continue to grow our membership and adapt to our changing nation. |
| **Learning & Support** | **Continuous Education:** To have a Thriving Collective that is genuinely curious to continually grow their knowledge and confidence bringing to life our ambitions around diversity and inclusion. |

## MEMBERSHIP YEAR - 2022-23



- Research, education and consultation began on the development of the Gender Eligibility & Participation Policy.
- NETBALLHer content reviewed through an EDI lens to inform future content that will raise awareness of the health inequalities that exist for women and girls from ethnically diverse communities.
- Exploration of pioneering partnerships with organisations like Street Games and HM Prisons testing and learning new ways of taking netball to new audiences in under-served communities.

## 2022-23



- Our programme delivery saw an increase in participants from LSEG communities increasing from 12% to 19%, because of targeted delivery to tackle inequalities and remove barriers to participation across the country.
- We celebrated International Women's Day – #InspireInclusion by showcasing our Back to Netball sessions run in partnership with Manchester City of Sanctuary, funded by We love MCR charity. The sessions brought women together from all different nationalities and backgrounds, including refugees and asylum seekers, to learn a new skill, discuss their shared experiences and build a community, showcasing the power of netball both on and beyond the court.



- We used our social media platforms to celebrate our athletes and empower women and girls with our Netball Super League 2024 SeeUSNow Campaign - including episodes discussing appearance, fertility, motherhood, female health and Injury.
- Further consultation on the Gender Eligibility & Participation Policy development with EMMNA and the voices of gender diverse athletes and participants.
- Sporting Equals Race representation index 2023 results demonstrate that we are continuing to increase the diversity from employees to athletes. Our grading increased from C to B putting us in the top 6 NGBs. We continued to champion Race celebration events such as Race Equality Week and Inclusion Week.
- Our Dedicated to Difference Action Plan was developed in consultation with EN leadership including EN Board, Exec, People Leaders and Regional Management Boards. This was submitted to Sport England for approval.
- The leadership team attended "Fearless People Leaders – building confidence and knowledge on anti-racism and anti-discrimination" knowledge sharing session.
- Our Netball Super League 2.0 tender required clubs to be signed up to our Belonging Commitment statement and to develop a Diversity & Belonging Action.



## 2024-25



- Sonia Mkoloma – England Pathway Head Coach & Vanessa Stewart Commercial Partnership Manager successfully gained places on the inaugural Aspire to Lead UK Sport development programme for aspiring senior leaders from Black, Asian and other ethnically diverse backgrounds.

- Our Head of Insight and Diversity & Belonging Business Partner ensured that netball voices contributed to two important research projects Dr Steven Bradbury's Leading the Way? Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion in the Senior Leadership Workforce and the Women In Sport Research Report Black Girls and Sport: A break up story.

- England Netball employed two Netball internships helping young people gain additional qualifications, develop new skills and gain valuable experiences to increase their employment opportunities. This was in Partnership with the Mayor of London NGB Internship Programme which provides 12-month paid internship opportunities to young Londoners from underrepresented groups within the sports industry.




- EDI leads were appointed in all 9 Regional Management Boards.

- A landmark moment for representation in officiating we celebrated the first wheelchair user to become a qualified umpire. We facilitated the delivery of a coaching course in British Sign Language, learning how we can develop more inclusive qualifications in the future. Conscious Inclusion training is now promoted as a part of all Coaching and Officiating qualifications.



- We saw an increase in the numbers of netball coaches (+2%) and officials (+4%) from ethnically diverse communities.

- England Netball have delivered a number of pilot programmes focused on taking a place-based approach. The Leicestershire menopause project was a programme designed with the Active Together and Active Women to educate and empower women through peri-menopause and menopause, while introducing Walking Netball and promoting the benefits of exercise, with a key focus on south Asian women.

***"I had to bring my daughter to the first session as before this programme I didn't leave the house much, I would never have caught a bus by myself. Each week I have gained more confidence, and my family say they can see this in my face. I now catch the bus by myself to each session, I love my Monday netball! My granddaughter asks me every week how it went, and she is very proud of me."***







- A core focus of England Netball delivery was through state, primary school-children's engagement, and more specifically the cohort most impacted by the pandemic. In partnership with the Youth Sport Trust, at the end of the summer term 2025, 5,200 primary schools and 58,000 children had engaged with Bee Netball. A third of which were from ethnically diverse communities, 12% of whom had access to free school meals and 8% were children with special educational needs.

- On the international stage we introduced the Vitality Netball Horizon Series between England and Jamaica, celebrating the pioneers of the game with introduction of the Rhone- Hornsby Trophy a tribute to Molly Rhone (Netball Jamaica) and Jean Hornsby (England Netball). A tribute to two trailblazers who continue to inspire new generations.

- Gender Eligibility & Participation Policy and guidance published, with three categories of netball: Female, Male and Mixed netball, providing a category of netball for all to play.

## FUTURE PLANS FOR 2025-26



- Getting to know our Player Pathway - building on the foundations we will improve our data collection and understanding of the experiences of our pathway athletes across EN and NSL.

- We will ensure that as we transform Coach Education and Development learning offers become more accessible removing the barriers for under-represented groups to play a role in delivering netball.

- We will continue to build on Partnership working and place-based delivery of netball taking netball to under-served communities through both England Netball and NSL clubs.

- We will be recruiting a new Diversity & Belonging Business Partner to play an important role to ensure that being Dedicated to Difference remains at the centre of what we do.

- Continue to celebrate the growing diversity of our sport and create role models and inspire a future generation.

# DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AT ENGLAND NETBALL

**England Netball has a number of sources it calls upon to enable us to understand the demographic profile of the netball family, as well as to enable us to measure their attitudes with respect to belonging and inclusion.**

Our primary source is our ENgage registration system which we access to understand age, ethnicity and gender of our members. We are able to access data about all members of all ages (0-100).

Our secondary sources are surveys. In the last 12 months we have carried out three surveys where we have been able to gather demographic data that we are unable to collect via ENgage, because it is not asked, incomplete responses or because there are concerns about quality of data. Surveys also enable us to ask attitudinal questions about feelings of belonging.

We are using disability data from our surveys in this report, due to incomplete responses in ENgage. As such the numbers here may not be comparable with previous reports and numbers are potentially higher due to our samples being primarily over the age of 35. The definition for disability in our surveys is also slightly different from the definition used in ENgage, which will also impact on the results.

- **Court Thoughts Wave 1 in April 2024.** This survey was open for anyone in the netball family over the age of 16+ to complete, but will have a bias towards those age 35+, which may impact on responses given. Base = 1,253.

- **Court Thoughts Wave 2 in August 2024.** This survey was open for anyone in the netball family over the age of 16+ to complete, but will have a bias towards those age 35+, which may impact on responses given. Base = 1,307.

- **Learning and Development Survey, July 2025.** This survey was open for anyone in the netball family over the age of 16+ to complete, with a focus on those involved in coaching, officiating or keen to get involved. It will have a bias towards those age 35+, which may impact on responses given. Base = 1,310.

*Specific sources used will be highlighted on each page in the following section.*

# SPOTLIGHT ON DEMOGRAPHIC DATA MEMBERSHIP YEAR 2024-25

## GENDER



| | |
|---|---|
| FEMALE | 98.4% |
| MALE | 1.6% |
| PREFER NOT TO SAY | 0.5% |

## ETHNICITY



| | |
|---|---|
| WHITE | 89.6% |
| BLACK | 2.7% |
| MIXED | 4.5% |
| ASIAN | 2.8% |
| OTHER | 0.6% |

SOURCE: ENGAGE 24-25

**3**
PERCENTAGE POINT INCREASE IN MEMBERS WHO IDENTIFY AS BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

**24.5%**
OF OUR MEMBERSHIP DECLARED A DISABILITY

**3.7%**
OF OUR MEMBERSHIP IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

SOURCE: 2024 COURT THOUGHTS W2, AGE 16+

# COACHES 2025

## GENDER

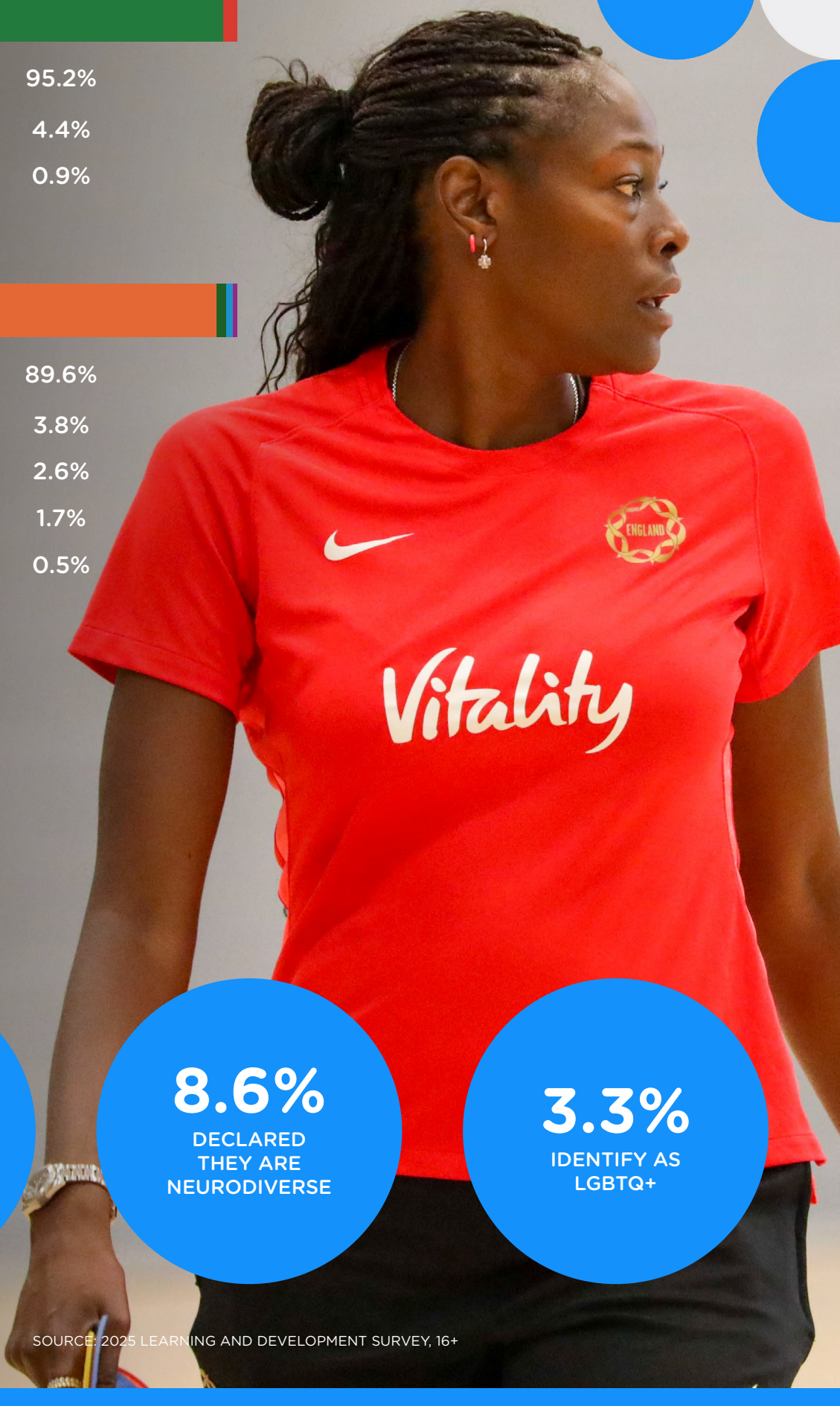


| | |
|---|---|
| FEMALE | 95.2% |
| MALE | 4.4% |
| PREFER NOT TO SAY | 0.9% |

## ETHNICITY



| | |
|---|---|
| WHITE | 89.6% |
| BLACK | 3.8% |
| MIXED | 2.6% |
| ASIAN | 1.7% |
| OTHER | 0.5% |




**17.7%**
DECLARED A DISABILITY

**8.6%**
DECLARED THEY ARE NEURODIVERSE

**3.3%**
IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

SOURCE: 2025 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, 16+

# OFFICIALS 2025

## GENDER



| | |
|---|---|
| FEMALE | 96.1% |
| MALE | 2.7% |
| PREFER NOT TO SAY | 1.1% |

## ETHNICITY



| | |
|---|---|
| WHITE | 89.3% |
| BLACK | 4.3% |
| MIXED | 2.2% |
| ASIAN | 1.7% |
| OTHER | 1.0% |

**19.4%**
DECLARED A DISABILITY

**9%**
DECLARED THEY ARE NEURODIVERSE

**1.4%**
IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

SOURCE: 2025 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, 16+

# VOLUNTEERS 2025

## GENDER



| | |
|---|---|
| FEMALE | 96.5% |
| MALE | 3.1% |

## ETHNICITY



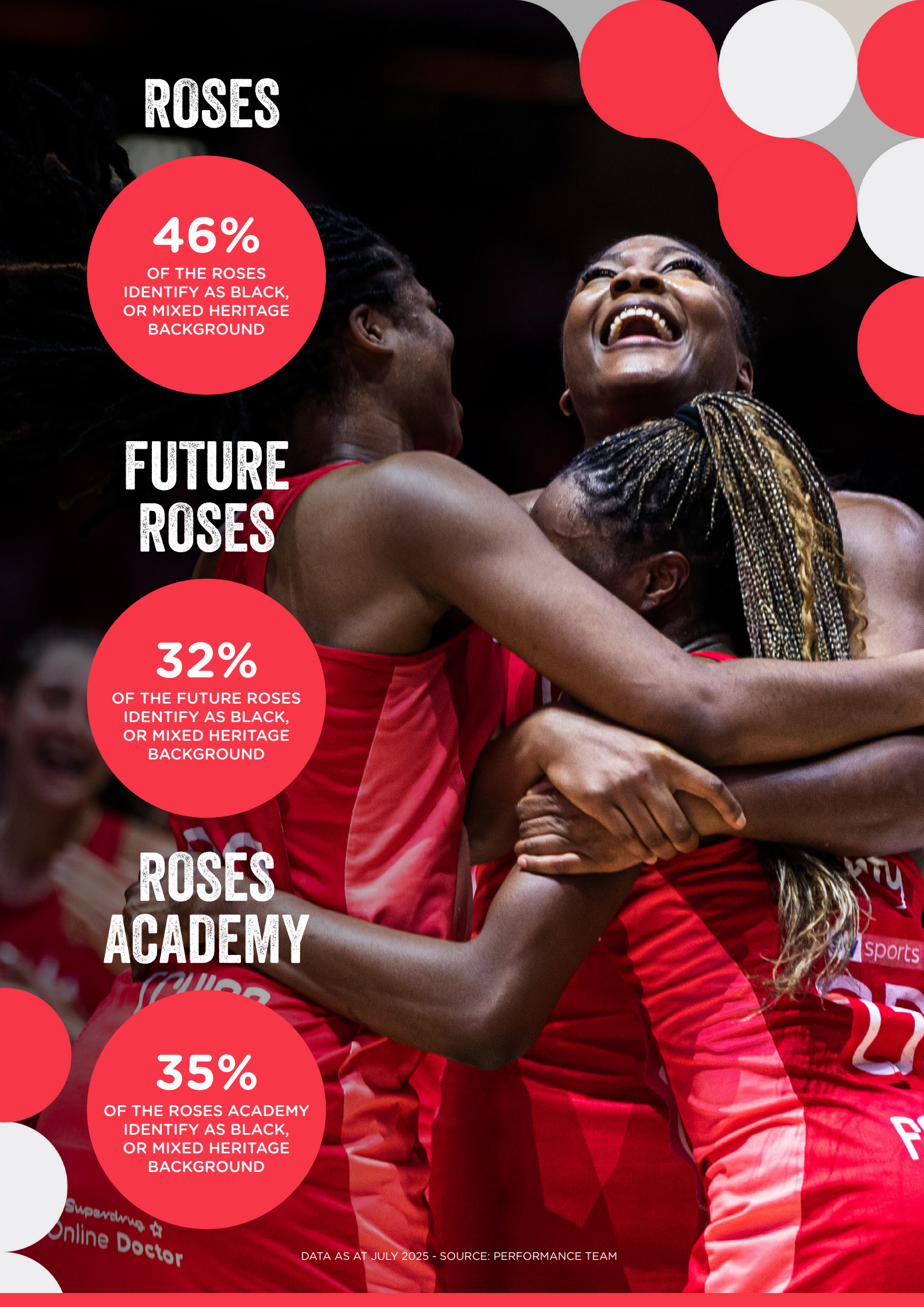
| | |
|---|---|
| WHITE | 93.0% |
| BLACK | 2.3% |
| MIXED | 2.2% |
| ASIAN | 1.2% |
| OTHER | 0.7% |




**26.5%**
DECLARED A DISABILITY

**2.8%**
IDENTIFY AS LGBTQ+

SOURCE: 2024 COURT THOUGHTS W2, 16+




# ROSES

**46%**

OF THE ROSES IDENTIFY AS BLACK, OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

# FUTURE ROSES

**32%**

OF THE FUTURE ROSES IDENTIFY AS BLACK, OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

# ROSES ACADEMY

**35%**

OF THE ROSES ACADEMY IDENTIFY AS BLACK, OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

DATA AS AT JULY 2025 - SOURCE: PERFORMANCE TEAM

# EN EMPLOYEES & CASUAL WORKFORCE

**14%**
OF EMPLOYEES ARE MALE

**84%**
OF EMPLOYEES ARE FEMALE

**7%**
OF OUR EMPLOYEES IDENTIFY AS BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

+ 5% SINCE 2021

**16%**
OF OUR EMPLOYEES HAVE DECLARED A DISABILITY

**27%**
OF OUR OF OUR COACHING AND OFFICIATING TUTORS & ASSESSORS HAVE DECLARED A DISABILITY

**8%**
OF OUR COACHING AND OFFICIATING TUTORS & ASSESSORS IDENTIFY AS BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

SOURCE: HRIS JULY 2025, AND 2025 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SURVEY, 16+

# EN BOARD



**40%**
OF OUR BOARD ARE MALE

**60%**
OF OUR BOARD ARE FEMALE

**25%**
OF OUR BOARD IDENTIFY AS BLACK, ASIAN OR MIXED HERITAGE BACKGROUND

+ 5% SINCE 2021

SOURCE: BOARD DATABASE




# Spotlight on feelings of belonging and inclusion within the netball family

**Netball Community Perceptions (2022-2024)**
**Overall, the netball community consistently reports strong feelings of belonging and inclusivity, with positive trends observed between 2022 and 2024. While local communities generally score higher, "England Netball" (EN) is also largely seen as inclusive and welcoming.**

**Key Findings:**

- **Strong Sense of Belonging:** An **overwhelming majority** of the netball community (92% in 2024, up from 88% in 2022) **feel a sense of belonging within the sport. 76%** of EN employees agreed with the statement **"I feel like I belong here".**

- **Local Community Inclusivity:** **Most people within the netball community,** (81% in 2024, a slight decrease from 83% in 2022) view their local netball community as inclusive. Furthermore, there's been growth in the perception that local clubs actively **value and respect differences** (91% in 2024, up from 88% in 2022).

- **England Netball Perception:** A significant majority (70%) agree that **England Netball is inclusive,** with no change since 2022. Notably, **90%** now feel that EN is **"very welcoming to people like me,"** a substantial increase from 80% in 2022.

- **80%** of EN employees agreed with the statement **"I feel like I can be myself at work".**

**Addressing Discrimination: Encouragingly, the community shows increasing confidence in addressing negative behaviours.**

- **85% are confident that action will be taken** by their club/community to address discriminatory and biased behaviours (not previously asked).

- **81%** feel that discriminatory or inappropriate comments are **not tolerated,** up from 75% in 2022.

- **Empowerment and Dialogue:** There's been a notable improvement in members feeling empowered to speak up and discuss diversity issues.

- **79% feel empowered** to speak up and challenge behaviours, a significant rise from 70% in 2022.

- **79% also feel confident** to talk about diversity issues (e.g., race, gender) with other netball players, up from 74% in 2022.

- While the overall picture is positive, a small but important minority, particularly those less involved in the sport (e.g., programme participants), **express uncertainty** regarding the inclusivity of both netball generally and England Netball specifically. This suggests a need to ensure these positive experiences are consistent across all levels of engagement.

**Inclusivity and Belonging Perceptions Across Netball Demographics**

- While overall sentiment regarding inclusivity and belonging within the netball community is **positive,** a deeper look reveals variations among different groups. Those more closely involved in the sport's core, such as volunteers (especially committee volunteers), coaches, officials, and members, consistently express stronger agreement with statements on inclusivity and belonging. Interestingly, the 16-24 age group and the LGBTQ+ netball family are also among the **most likely to feel included and welcomed.**

- Conversely, men and individuals from Black and Asian communities are **less likely** to agree with statements on inclusivity and belonging, though improvements have been observed since 2022. People from Mixed ethnic background hold varying views on these topics. A notable minority of players and workforce members **report being treated differently,** with younger players, men, and individuals from ethnically diverse communities being more prone to this perception.






**Key Statistics:**

- **Belonging:** 89% of netballers from Ethnically Diverse Communities agree with the statement **'I feel like I belong here',** an increase from 81% in 2022.

- **Perceived Inclusivity:** The LGBTQ+ netball family are the most likely to perceive their community/England Netball as **'inclusive'** (86% in 2024, up from 79% in 2022).

- Individuals from Ethnically Diverse Communities are the **least likely to agree** on inclusivity (76% in 2024, although an increase from 63% in 2022).

- **Perceived Differential Treatment:** **15%** of players report being **treated differently** by officials (down from 18% in 2022).

- **12%** say the same about coaches (down from 15% in 2022).

- **10%** report this regarding volunteers (down from 11%).

- **Valuing and Respecting Differences:** **82%** of members from Ethnically Diverse Communitie agree that 'England Netball actively **values and respects others** for their differences', a significant increase from 66% in 2022.

- **Empowerment to Challenge Bias:** **77%** of members from Ethnically Diverse Communities agree they 'feel **empowered to speak up and challenge biased behaviour** and decisions when involved in netball', a significant increase from 61% in 2022.

- These statistics highlight both areas of strength and continued focus for the netball community in **fostering a truly inclusive environment** for all participants.

- For more information on Diversity & Belonging please visit our EN website.