



This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after the **22 November 2023**.

Section 1: Overview of governing body endorsements for the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system

This page provides a brief explanation of what endorsement requirements apply in respect of the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system. The Immigration Rules for the International Sportsperson route can be found at [Appendix International Sportsperson](#).

The **International Sportsperson** route is for elite sportspeople and coaches who:

- are internationally established and whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK
- who will base themselves in the UK
- will be filling a post that cannot be filled by a suitable British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction.

The application process explained: migrants applying to come to the UK under the International Sportsperson route need to be sponsored by an organisation that has an International Sportsperson sponsor licence.

If you wish to sponsor such migrants, you must have a sponsor licence. Before you apply to the Home Office for a licence you must be endorsed by the relevant **sports governing body** for your sport. This endorsement confirms to the Home Office that the application for a licence is from a genuine sports club (or equivalent) that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. Once licensed, you can assign certificates of sponsorship to a sportsperson or coach with a job offer that allows them to apply for entry clearance or permission to stay in the UK. Each individual must also have a personal endorsement from the relevant **approved sports governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

An **approved sports governing body** is one specified in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules. Each governing body must be recognised by one of the home country sports councils such as Sport England, and will have been approved by the Home Office before being included in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Sports governing bodies will work within the Home Office's '[Code of practice for sports governing bodies](#)' and must comply with any immigration regulations, UK legislation and the principles of the points-based system as detailed on the [GOV.UK](#) website.

Length of endorsement

Governing body endorsements should be issued for a period appropriate to the period of approval for sponsorship, that is:

Type of application	Length of endorsement
Sponsor	4 years from date of issue.
Migrant	For an initial maximum period of 3 years, with a further



	extension of a maximum period of 3 years. If the contract is for fewer than 3 years, it will be issued for the length of the contract.
--	--

Change of employment

If a migrant is intending to change employer, their new employer must request a new governing body endorsement. The endorsement can be issued for the length of the contract or to the maximum period permitted within the route, whichever is the shorter. The new employer must assign a new certificate of sponsorship to the migrant to allow them to apply to the Home Office for new permission to stay. Permission to stay must be granted before the migrant can start work with the new employer.

Salary

The salary should be agreed as part of the contract between the migrant and the sponsor. This and the other conditions of employment should be at least equal to those normally given to a resident worker for the type of work undertaken.

Supplementary employment

International Sportsperson migrants are eligible to undertake supplementary employment under the Home Office supplementary employment regulations. The 'Supplementary employment' section [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors - Sponsor an International Sportsperson guidance](#) has more information on this.

Compliance with the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies

In reviewing this criteria, Netball Northern Ireland confirm we have reread the Code and agree to our roles and responsibilities as set out within. We confirm we have acted in full compliance with the principles of the Code during this annual review.



Section 2: Requirements

This page explains Netball Northern Ireland requirements under the International Sportsperson route for the 2023 to 2024 season.

Only the roles listed as part of this criteria are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are applicable to Northern Ireland only.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation between Netball Northern Ireland and the national governing bodies (NGBs) of England, Scotland and Wales.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, Netball Northern Ireland confirm that full consultation has been carried out, this includes any organisation that could be interpreted as an interested party, such as clubs, bodies, or player associations related to netball in the UK.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually in June of each year.

Length of season

The season for netball runs from 1 September to 31 August.

Requirements

The table below shows the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants.

Category	Requirement	
Sponsor	Only Netball Northern Ireland and Franchises competing in the Super League are eligible for a sponsor endorsement.	
Migrant	Player	<p>A player will be granted a governing body endorsement if they meet one of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A player must have played in at least one competitive game for one of the current top 12 international teams in the world during the two years preceding the date of the application of endorsement. <p>Competitive games comprise games played in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Games • World Championships

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games within any qualifying tournament for the above, and • World Ranking Points matches <p>The top 12 international teams are shown in the World Netball Rankings and can be accessed at the IFNA website, www.netball.org/thrilling-world-class-events/current-world-rankings. Or,</p> <p>2. Netball Northern Ireland will consider supporting applications from <u>individual players</u> who have not played international netball but who have been members of ANZ franchise squads (in Australia – part of the 12-person roster and in New Zealand – part of the 14-person roster) within the three years leading up to the submission of their application. It agrees to do this on the basis that the standard of ANZ netball is, in a number of cases, higher than that played by some countries in the world top 12; or,</p> <p>3. An endorsement can be awarded to a returning player who played 75% of games in the England Netball Super League during the - 2022/2023 season whilst in the UK as an International Sportsperson as defined in the Introduction of the Immigration Rules.</p>
	<p>Coach</p>	<p>A coach is required to have a proven 12 months cumulative experience coaching as a Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Coach Mentor or Coach Educator in the last five years. This mean, within the last five years they have delivered at the following level:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Top 12 in the World Netball Rankings during their tenure 2. SSN/ANZ Netball League <p>Or proven experience of coaching as Head Coach or Assistant Coach for a cumulative 12 months within the last 3 years in the Netball Superleague</p> <p>A coach is also required to have gained a UKCC Level 2 qualificaiton or equivalent, which also includes Health and Safety, First Aid an</p>



Netball Northern Ireland Governing Body Endorsement Criteria

		<p>awareness of Child Welfare issues and a relevant police check from their country of origin.</p> <p>Attendance at a Safeguarding and UK Anti Doping Clean Sport Course is required to practice, once in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Evidence to show an open recruitment has taken place should be provided. Eg Job Advert and period of time advertised</p> <p>For further details of coach awards please see the Netball Northern Ireland website www.netballni.org/</p>
	Player/Coach	<p>A player coach must meet the playing criteria (as above) and is required to have gained a UKCC Level 2 qualification or above or an equivalent qualification (and to enrol on the UKCC Level 3 programme within 12 months failure to do so will preclude that individual being granted a new governing body endorsement if they have not met this criteria on renewal.), which also includes Health & Safety, First Aid qualifications, an awareness of child welfare issues and a relevant police check from their country of origin.</p>

Injuries, Absences and Suspensions

Matches/games for which the player was unavailable for selection are to be excluded when calculating the player’s appearance percentage. Unavailable for selection means the player was not available to play due to injury or suspension and written evidence supporting this, setting out the games missed and the reason(s), must be provided by the player’s National Association or club doctor to Netball Northern Ireland.

Consideration will be given to the following when applying the criteria: injury; a period of maternity or paternity leave; serious illness or any legitimate medical reasons; suspension; international duty; bereavement; or family crisis.

In order to obtain the governing body endorsement, the individual must not be subject to a provisional suspension or any unexpired period of ineligibility from playing and/or coaching activities in any jurisdiction as a result of being charged with or found guilty of a corruption offence and/or a doping offence and/or another misconduct offence.

Further information

This information is available on the Netball Northern Ireland website at www.netballni.org/

For any queries relating to the requirements or the endorsement process please contact:



Karen Rollo
Executive Manager
Netball Northern Ireland
Playball, Stormont Pavilion
Stormont Estate
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT3 4TA
Email: executivemanager@netballni.org

Information on visas and immigration is available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Dispute handling procedures

Where an application for a Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement as set out for International Sportsperson has been refused on the grounds that the Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach fails to meet the published requirements, the sponsor may seek a review of the application. The sponsor will have 28 days to request such a review. In these cases, Netball Northern Ireland will refer the sponsor's evidence to an independent panel as set out below.

Where possible the sponsor's supporting evidence will be sent to the panel in advance for their consideration in order to allow an informed decision.

Sponsors should note that, in respect of any application, there will only be one panel available and the decision of the panel is final. Sponsors should therefore ensure that all evidence it wishes to present in support of its application is presented to the panel. If the sponsor has previously made an application that was unsuccessful at panel a further panel cannot be requested for the same player during the season unless his status changes and he meets the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

a. The Review

The request for a review may only be made by the sponsor for whom the governing body endorsement has been initially rejected by Netball Northern Ireland.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the Netball Northern Ireland and Executive Manager, a notice of appeal within 28 days of the decision appealed against. The notice of appeal shall:

- i. set out details of the decision appealed against and, if the whole of the decision is not appealed against, identify that part of it which is appealed against;
- ii. set out in full the grounds of appeal and an appellant shall not be entitled to rely in any ground of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal; and
- iii. be accompanied by a deposit of £50. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.



Netball Northern Ireland Governing Body Endorsement Criteria

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations and the Panel shall be comprised as detailed below.

All appeals will be managed in accordance with the NNI Articles of Association. Where the appeal is referred to the Sport Dispute Resolution Panel, the club will be charged all costs levied by SDRP and all further costs incurred By Netball NI.

b. The Panel

The panel will be appointed by the Executive Manager. The appointed panel shall consist of: an independent chairman, one representative of Netball Northern Ireland (who has not been involved in the initial decision) and one representative of named further representatives.

c. Power of the Panel

An endorsement request may be refused if the Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents. Netball Northern Ireland will notify a Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach in writing of any endorsement request which is refused setting out the reasons for refusal.

A Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach shall have 21 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to Netball Northern Ireland. A Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach may only appeal on the basis that Netball Northern Ireland have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

Netball Northern Ireland shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, within 21 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the Player/ Coach/ Player/Coach of its decision.

d. The Decision

The panel will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding. There are no other grounds of appeal.



Section 3: Process for applying for an endorsement

How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson sponsor applications

Sponsors need to apply to Netball Northern Ireland for a sponsor endorsement in order to apply to UKVI for a sponsor licence.

To apply for a migrant endorsement from Netball Northern Ireland, sponsors will need to complete and return an application provided by Netball Northern Ireland. They will either approve or not support the application for an endorsement.

Once approved, each sponsor will be provided with a unique number and written confirmation of their endorsement by Netball Northern Ireland to use when applying to the Home Office for registration as a sponsor.

For each migrant worker endorsed, the sponsor will receive a unique number in respect of the migrant worker and written confirmation, for the sponsor to use when applying to the Home Office for the registration of each worker.

Sponsors are required to keep copies of all paperwork relating to endorsements received from Netball Northern Ireland.