



## Equality & Diversity

Table Tennis England is proud of its commitment to equality and diversity and we are confident that we can demonstrate this commitment in terms of our governance, playing, administration and support for our counties, clubs, leagues and individual members.

In respect of governance we will adopt a target of, and take all appropriate actions to encourage, a minimum of 30% of each gender on our Board; and will demonstrate a strong and public commitment to progressing towards achieving gender parity and greater diversity generally on our Board, including, but not limited to, Black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) diversity and disability.

We will publish on our website (approved by the Board) information about the work we do to foster all aspects of diversity within our leadership and decision-making, and update this annually.

Table tennis is by its nature an inclusive sport with few barriers to access. Table Tennis England's initiatives offer something for everyone for both the formal and informal player and in most cases are purposefully non-dependent on age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability and aim to create increased participation of this great sport by understanding what will drive this participation.

We do however acknowledge that in certain areas focus is required to ensure the sustainability and succession planning is maintained within the sport to ensure its continued health and growth.

The following documents and web links should help our members and partners understand our work in this area and provide useful information to enable us all to work together to continue to promote a sport that is open and inclusive.

General Equality & Diversity information for Table Tennis England can be found here:

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/equality/>

Table Tennis England is committed to the inclusion agenda and to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment for everyone to play and enjoy table tennis. We accept our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all individuals involved in table tennis.

For our safeguarding adults policy, click: <https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/about/safeguarding/>

\*Note – also referred to as vulnerable adults / adults at risk

The 2010 Equality Act introduces the protected characteristics. These are listed broadly below, where appropriate please click on the links for information on what Table Tennis England is doing to support each of these areas.

## Age

We are proud of our commitment to providing events for people of all ages and run a number of programmes for all ages:

A thriving Veterans programme includes Veterans British League. We also work closely with Veterans English Table Tennis Society (<http://www.vetts.org.uk/VETTS/index.html>) who run a wide range of competitions and events throughout the year.

The Table Tennis Young Officials Award:

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/organise/officials/junior-umpire-award/>

Young Ambassadors Programme:

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/about/young-ambassadors/>  
<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/about/young-ambassadors/>

Schools:

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/organise/schools/>

## Gender

Women make up 51% of the general population of England but unfortunately this statistic is not currently reflected in the volunteering, playing or coaching membership of Table Tennis England. However we are a sport that is inclusive, with mixed teams and leagues, and we have a number of female-only programmes and leagues.

Evidence clearly shows that there is a preference for females to participate in two-person leagues which have fewer time constraints i.e. start and finish earlier than three-person leagues, and are more likely to attend prevalent larger clubs with appropriate programming.

Through our BE TT programme (<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/featured-news/providing-a-better-experience-to-clubs-and-leagues/>) we will be working with clubs to target, grow and develop female players and volunteers.

We have also introduced female coach scholarships to increase the number of female coaches in the sport: <https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/featured-news/female-coaches-boosted-by-scholarship-awards/>

## Disability

This is an area where we have always been strong from grass roots to Paralympic success. We also have a disability strategy. The latest Active People survey confirms that disabled participation in Table Tennis is still growing.

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/about/policies-and-procedures/disability-policy/>

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/organise/clubs/premierclub-ability/>

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/organise/funding/disability-table-grant-scheme/>

## **Transgender**

Table Tennis England is actively supports the transgender population and has interwoven and adopted this population in our Competitive Table Tennis regulations.

## **Sexual orientation**

We know that more lesbian women and gay men play sport than the general population as a whole and we have no reason to believe that table tennis is any different in respect of these general sport statistics. We also know that gay people experience more discrimination in sport than any other group and we are keen to ensure that table tennis is not a sport that tolerates discrimination or prejudice of any kind.

## **Black and Minority Ethnic Participation (BME) & religion**

Table tennis is a sport with a long tradition of participation in Asian countries therefore it is no surprise that we have a higher than average participation rate amongst people from BME communities in England.

We know we cannot be complacent about this though and we are working to further understand the information we hold on our coaches to see if there are areas we can improve on in order to increase the number of coaches from a BME background coming through the coaching system.

## **Other Protected Characteristics**

Marital / civil partnership status and pregnancy and maternity – we ensure that we are legally compliant in all our HR Policies and we are currently working through a system of impact assessment. We are screening all our documents and policies / procedures to see how they affect people who may fall into any of the groups of protected characteristics.

# **Working in Partnership to engage the whole of Society**

## **Mental Health – Alzheimer's**

Playing Table tennis does not just help with physical health. We work closely with Bounce Alzheimer's Therapy Foundation (<http://www.batfoundation.com/bat-research/>) to support their work.

The numbers of those affected by Alzheimer's is rising (over 1 million in the UK by 2025), the cost of treating the disease is mounting (over £26 billion annually in the UK currently), and it is known that delaying the condition by five years could save 30,000 lives a year. Whilst the exact causes and triggers of Alzheimer's remain unclear, interventions focusing on encouraging more regular physical activity are likely to be particularly effective at combating the disease's symptoms. Scientific evidence has shown that table tennis can have:

**Positive effects of table tennis on mental ability** - Comparing results against a control group, the paper found that scores were higher amongst the table tennis players in every age group. Their findings suggested that table tennis can be an effective preventative or delayer of senile dementia. ([http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Kawano-Paper\\_1996\\_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Mental-Ability.pdf](http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Kawano-Paper_1996_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Mental-Ability.pdf))

**Positive effects of table tennis on brain blood flow** - Comparing results amongst players with varying level of table tennis skill, the paper found there was no brain blood flow increase after exercising with an ergometer, whereas blood pressure increased by 20% - 30% on average after playing table tennis. ([http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Teruaki-Paper\\_1996\\_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Brain-Blood-Flow.pdf](http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Teruaki-Paper_1996_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Brain-Blood-Flow.pdf))

**Positive effects of table tennis on higher brain function** - All findings suggest that not only does table tennis play increase brain blood flow and offer an effective delay against the symptoms of dementia, but that it improves motor and sensory functions, lowers depression, and is a good rehabilitation treatment ([http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Teruaki-Paper\\_1998\\_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Higher-Brain-Function.pdf](http://www.batfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Teruaki-Paper_1998_Effects-of-Table-Tennis-on-Higher-Brain-Function.pdf))

## **Mental Health – other benefits**

Lack of physical activity is linked to depression, while people with severe mental health problems are more likely to be inactive. With ever increasing pressures at work, a game of table tennis is able to help reduce potential mental health and stress issues.

Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of depression, reduce stress and anxiety and improve self-esteem. The Mental Health Foundation has reported that research has found low-intensity aerobic exercise such as table tennis is best at increasing positive moods.

The workplace is a key area that has been highlighted where stress is increasing, absenteeism is growing, and morale is low. Through our Loop in the Workplace programme ([http://www.keepintheloop.co.uk/work/?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1501229296.2999238967895507812500](http://www.keepintheloop.co.uk/work/?doing_wp_cron=1501229296.2999238967895507812500)) companies are able to purchase tables and associated equipment.

Table Tennis England is joining forces with Mind, the mental health charity, to work together and deliver the benefits of table tennis.

The partnership will focus on celebrating the sport, raising awareness of mental health and boosting fundraising for the charity.

Mind, the mental health charity, provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. Mind has a confidential information and support line, Mind Infoline, available on 0300 123 3393 (lines open 9am – 6pm, Monday – Friday). For more about Mind's sports work see [mind.org.uk/sport](http://mind.org.uk/sport)