

Supported (Medical) Membership Exercise Policy

Approval date: July 2026

Approved by: Board of Trustees

Review date: July 2027

1. Purpose

North Somerset Sports Foundation (NSSF) is committed to making physical activity accessible to people who may otherwise face barriers to participation due to long-term health conditions or disabilities.

The Supported Exercise Membership provides a reduced-cost membership for individuals whose health circumstances mean they require additional support to access exercise safely or where exercise forms an important part of their rehabilitation, recovery or long-term health management.

As a registered charity, NSSF has a responsibility to ensure that charitable resources are distributed fairly, transparently and sustainably. This policy sets out how eligibility is assessed and how decisions are made.

2. Principles

NSSF will:

- Treat every application fairly and consistently.
- Assess each applicant on their individual circumstances rather than their diagnosis.
- Promote equality, dignity and inclusion.
- Make reasonable adjustments wherever possible.
- Ensure decisions are evidence-based and proportionate.
- Protect the long-term sustainability of the charity's subsidised services.

3. Eligibility

Applicants may be eligible where they have a long-term physical or mental health condition, disability or medical need that significantly impacts their ability to access standard gym membership or where exercise is an important part of their ongoing health management.

Examples include (but are not limited to): Parkinson's disease, Cancer rehabilitation, Cardiac conditions, Pulmonary conditions, Stroke recovery, Neurological conditions, Musculoskeletal conditions, Long COVID, Multiple sclerosis, Arthritis, Mental health conditions, and Neurodevelopmental conditions where the individual's needs create additional barriers to accessing exercise.

This list is not exhaustive.

4. Assessment Criteria

Applications will be considered against one or more of the following:

- Exercise has been recommended by a healthcare professional.
- The applicant is participating in, or has completed, a recognised rehabilitation programme.
- The applicant has a long-term condition that creates significant barriers to accessing exercise independently.
- The applicant requires reasonable adjustments or additional support to participate safely.
- NSSF staff consider that the Supported Exercise Membership would substantially improve access to physical activity and wellbeing.

No single criterion guarantees eligibility.

5. Evidence

Evidence may include:

- Healthcare professional recommendation.
- Exercise referral.
- Rehabilitation programme attendance.
- Supporting information provided by the applicant.
- Assessment by an authorised NSSF member of staff.

Formal medical evidence will not always be required where sufficient information is available.

6. Exclusions

The Supported Exercise Membership is not intended solely because an individual:

- Has received a medical diagnosis.
- Wishes to obtain a discounted membership.
- Has a temporary minor illness or injury.
- Does not require additional support to access mainstream membership.

Each application will be considered individually.

7. Decision Making

Applications will normally be reviewed by authorised members of staff. Additional information may be requested before a decision is made. Applicants will be informed of the outcome as soon as reasonably practicable.

8. Review

Membership eligibility may be reviewed every 12 months, or sooner if circumstances change. Applicants may be asked to provide updated information during the review process.

9. Appeals

Applicants who believe their circumstances have not been fully considered may request a review. Wherever possible, a different authorised member of staff or manager will undertake the review. The outcome of the review will be final.

10. Equality and Diversity

NSSF is committed to providing an inclusive environment for all. Applications are assessed on the impact of an individual's health circumstances and support needs, not on age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability type or specific diagnosis. NSSF is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments wherever practicable.

11. Confidentiality

All personal and medical information will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Information will only be shared with staff who require it to assess the application or support the member safely.

12. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or operational requirements change.