

Sport Integrity Commission Te Kahu Rauunui

Integrity Code for Sport and Recreation: Your questions answered

Questions received via our webinars September-November 2024

Why do we need an Integrity Code?

The Integrity Code is one of the key tools we have to help organisations in the sport and recreation sector make impactful changes to ensure people's safety and ensure a level playing field for everyone.

It also responds to call from the sector for better guidance about what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable in sport and recreation environments.

[Read the webinar slide deck \(PDF\)](#)

Why is adoption of the Integrity Code voluntary?

There are several reasons why a voluntary approach was chosen in the legislation including:

- the sport and recreation sector is large and varied so a one size fits all approach would have been difficult
- a voluntary approach has worked well in the past when the Sports Anti-Doping Rules were adopted, and
- a voluntary approach allows the Commission to work in a collaborative and positive way with the sector.

We want the sport and recreation sector organisations to adopt because it's the right thing to do. We know that approach will support a much more positive and constructive relationship with the sector. We want to be long-term partners, and we want to ensure continuous improvement rather having a compliance-led approach that could see organisations stopping at the minimum.

Could it be made compulsory in future?

This would be a decision for the government and changes to the Integrity Sport and Recreation Act 2023 would be required to make integrity codes mandatory.

The Act requires a review, by 2028 at the latest, which will include assessing how widely and effectively integrity codes have been implemented. At this time, changes could be considered to improve adoption and compliance.

If a club or organisation doesn't adopt the Integrity Code, what does that mean for them?

Whether an organisation has adopted the code or not, we are still there to ensure safety and fairness for them and their participants. Organisations that haven't adopted, however, will be in a different position to those that have when it comes to matter such as investigations and disciplinary processes. The main differences are that there wouldn't be the opportunity to use the disciplinary panel and respond with the full range of remedies available under the Code.

How will interaction with the Commission be different for organisations that choose to not sign up to the Code?

We will still be there to support, educate and advise everyone in the sport and recreation community, whether they are part of an Integrity Code-bound organisation or not.

Will there be an impact on our funding if we don't adopt?

We are not responsible for funding or making any decisions about funding of sport and recreation organisations. That is a matter for Sport New Zealand. At this stage, we do not anticipate that funding will be linked to adoption of the Integrity Code.

What learning and resources will be made available?

The Commission is here for support and guidance on all integrity issues. We already have helpful guidance and learning modules available on our website. Additional tools, resources, and model policies will be added to help organisations reach the minimum standards and then bring them to life for their participants.

[Explore our education](#)

If an organisation adopts the Integrity Code, does it supersede any existing policies or integrity code that they have?

Not necessarily. The minimum standards require organisations that are bound by the Integrity Code to have policies in relation to certain key areas. Organisations can choose whether to use our model policies or its own policies.

If you use our model policies then you'll be presumed to comply with the requirement to have the policy. This also helps reduce the time and effort needed to develop policies.

If you already have policies, your existing policies may be sufficient already, or they may need to be tweaked or amended rather than replaced in order to meet the minimum standards.

Does the RSO have 12 months from the date the NSO adopts? As constitution updates are in progress and rely on the NSO first, this may not give enough time for the RSO to be compliant.

The 12-month period is for the implementation process – from the national organisation and cascading this down through the regional and local structure. An organisation gets to choose when it adopts and therefore when the 12-month period for implementation starts.

It's also important to remember that organisations can start reviewing and amending policies at any time and so can be well down the path to implementation at the point at which they choose to adopt.

We also do not intend to take a punitive approach in terms of compliance. We have discretion to work with organisations and see what's needed to help them reach the minimum standards.

If an NSO adopts the code first as recommended, what happens if an organisation underneath hasn't adopted it - would they be in breach of the code if they had? Would the NSO be in breach?

That is not the intent. Starting with NSOs then cascading down to member organisations is more effective and streamlined, and this is built into the adoption process.

The first part of the adoption process is for the NSO to contact us and we will work with you to plan out what needs to happen to adopt at the NSO level and then to cascade that down through your sport or activity. We can provide support and guidance to help the adoption process run smoothly and minimise barriers.

About minimum standard 3 – proactive safeguarding measures - would this include measures to safeguard student coaches and officials in schools who unfortunately may receive serious abuse?

Schools aren't covered by the Integrity Code, although in some instances school sport might be covered if the organisation responsible for a specific event or activity that a school is participating in has adopted the Integrity Code.

While schools won't be covered by the Integrity Code, we will still be working with schools to help their standards align with those in the Integrity Code and this will include ensuring serious abuse is dealt with appropriately.

What is the position if a membership organisation like the New Zealand Olympic Committee or New Zealand Paralympic Committee sign up? Are NSOs bound?

We will be asking peak bodies such as New Zealand Olympic Committee to align with and advocate for the Integrity Code, rather than adopting it themselves. These organisations will be a big part of helping us lift integrity standards through championing the Code and encouraging sports to adopt it.

If the Integrity Code is intended to protect all participants, why is there a need to describe some adults as vulnerable and call this out specifically?

We know, and the research shows, that people who want to harm and abuse others often target children and vulnerable adults. There are some risks that this Minimum Standard is intended to address. That's not to diminish the protection for all participants - it's just to mitigate additional risks that vulnerable people can be exposed in sport and recreation environments.

We have had feedback from the disabled community to say they want vulnerable adults to be recognised in the code, as they may need more consideration and support. We do want to hear more from people about whether the language we've used is working for everyone, so we hope to receive feedback on this during consultation.

Will there be a matrix or guide given as to which incidents are included in what is considered 'serious concern'?

Yes, the Integrity Code defines what 'issues of serious concern' are. We are seeking feedback on this definition as part of consultation so please give your views on the issue. Once the definition is finalised in the Integrity Code we will provide guidance and examples to help the sector identify issues of serious concern and report them to us quickly.

When NSOs sign up to the code, how will that be communicated? Are you planning to have signatories publicly displayed on your website, and will you notify RSTs?

Yes, we will maintain a list of organisations that have adopted the Integrity Code on our website.

What are the Commission's obligations or intentions re: reporting about the number of Code adoptions (and types of organisations), number/type/level of complaints received, investigations, and so on?

As noted above, we will maintain a list of organisations that have adopted the Integrity Code on our website.

As an independent crown entity, we will also report publicly in relation to our performance expectations which are set by the government and this will include high level statistics about the work we do.

If a local authority signs up to the code, how would this impact on clubs using facilities, like for example the local swimming pool for training?

Local authorities will not be able to adopt the Integrity Code. Adoption is focussed on sport and recreation organisations. Like peak bodies, we will encourage local authorities to align with and advocate for the minimum standards in the Integrity Code as much as possible.

Will Sport NZ be insisting on acceptance of the Integrity Code for relationship recognition?

No. Adoption of the Integrity Code will not impact on other matters like funding or relationship recognition.

Will the Commission have an ability to impact the cost of three yearly police checks for coaches?

No, the fee for police vetting is set by the New Zealand Police.

How will the Integrity Code cascade down from NSO to regional/club level, in a practical sense?

This will depend on organisational structure in each sport or recreational activity. The adoption of the Integrity Code will start at the NSO/NRO level through a constitutional change or a formal resolution. Then depending on the structure of the sport, that change at the NSO/NRO level will either directly bind the members below that level, or require a further amendment or resolution by the regional or club organisation to bind their members until their entire structure is covered right down to grass roots level.

We are happy to work with organisations to determine the best way to distribute all the relevant information and resources down through their structures.

The Integrity Sport and Recreation Act 2023 envisages that there may be several codes so that organisations have a choice what to adopt. I understand however that there will be only one code. Will organisations have a choice to adopt some parts of the Integrity Code and not others?

There's a good chance that there may be further codes in future, but the starting point is the Integrity Code which is very broad in its application and which looks to set minimum standards across all areas of integrity (except anti-doping). In time we may issue other integrity codes, or amend this one.

If there are parts of the Integrity Code which you consider can't or shouldn't apply to your sport or activity, then please contact us and we are happy to discuss the best approach.

Other organisations may have an interest in the Integrity Code but it may not be possible or appropriate for them to adopt it. Can you explain who may not be able to adopt and why?

Some overarching organisations or "peak bodies" (like the NZ Olympic Committee for example) will cover a lot of sports through their members, but it is not appropriate for them to adopt as it would cutting across the ability of each sport to make an independent decision about adoption, which is the intention of the Integrity Code.

Similarly schools obviously play a prominent role in our sporting landscape, but are not primarily directed at providing sport and recreation activities and so therefore do not qualify as organisations that could adopt. They are also already regulated through the education sector.

In both cases, we would want these organisations to align with and advocate for the Integrity Code rather than adopt it.

For a multi-code community organisation, would it be more appropriate to 'align' with the Code rather than adopt it?

Yes, it would be great for multi-code/multisport organisations to align with and advocate for the Integrity Code. That could mean looking at what policies you have in place and bringing them in line with ours. As an advocate, you could communicate what behaviours are acceptable in your community, and encourage others to do so as well.

Is there any confidentiality in the complaints process to protect people who are afraid to speak up?

Yes, our complaints process is completely confidential.

Does the Integrity Code address gender diversity and the inclusion of transgender athletes?

The Commission's role is focused on participant protection - ensuring the safety and fair treatment of everyone involved in sport and recreation activities. Regardless of gender, if someone is experiencing harm that's when we have a role. We are safeguarding all people against any form of abuse, harassment or discrimination.

[Read about racism and unlawful discrimination](#)

The Commission is not involved in selection or eligibility. Sport NZ has Guiding Principles for the Inclusion of Transgender People in Community Sport; while elite sport is generally governed by the policies of international federations.

[Read the Guiding Principles for the Inclusion of Transgender People in Community Sport](#)

Note on this document

Some questions have been edited for brevity or have been combined into similar questions to avoid duplication. If you have any further questions about the Integrity Code or about the Commission, please email haveyoursay@sportintegrity.nz