



## Umpires Zoom through exams to stay on 2022 path

**Author:** Paul Stimpson

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Lockdown has not stopped a group of umpires working hard to gain their Level 2 qualification and stay on track to officiate at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Training has moved online during the pandemic and exams have been taken via Zoom, with invigilators also present on the calls.

A total of 11 Level 1 umpires passed the Level 2 (National) Umpire exam in a couple of recent online sessions. They are: Dan Bullen, Flynn Connolly, Richard Horsfield, Chloe Ireland, Martin Ireland, Tom Konarski, Beate Nicol, Viren Panchal, Matthew Pryke, Sunil Sapre and Sheila Walshe. More exams are scheduled for the autumn.

All the umpires will also receive continuous mentoring and will be required to attend at least one more classroom-based training session after the restrictions are lifted. Their Level 2 status will be formally confirmed – or, if they do not meet the practical standards, removed – by the end of the 2021/22 season.

Table Tennis England has been committed to helping more female and under-25 umpires to qualify, with the aim being that those demographics will make up at least 50% of the umpires at the Commonwealths.

Of the 11 to pass, three are female and six are teenagers, while Dan Bullen – who is also a British Para Table Tennis athlete – uses a wheelchair.

Development and Volunteering Officer Chris Newton, who has been overseeing the qualification process, said: “After months of study and training courses held over Zoom, organised by the Technical Officials Committee, it’s great to see these 11 people pass their Level 2 Umpires Award.

“Their journeys have been made harder due to being in lockdown and not been able to attend competitions and receive extra support from fellow umpires.

“The majority of these people now will be eligible for selection for the Commonwealth Games in 2022 being held in Birmingham. I wish them well on with their future experiences umpiring and hope they eventually move up to be International Umpires and get the opportunity to represent England around the world.”

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