



Game Leadership Diversity & Inclusion July update – 2020/21 progress

We're keen to update you on the progress being made as part of the RFU's commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in rugby union.

The RFU has been focussing on four key areas of the game:

1. **Game Leadership** – volunteer leaders within clubs, Constituent Bodies (CBs) and Council.
2. **Game Play** – players, coaches, match officials and club volunteers
3. **Fans, Followers and Partners**
4. **Employees and Board**

Further background on each area can be found [here](#)



RFU D&I WORKSTREAMS

Fans, Followers & Partners

Driving interest amongst:

Women & girls / ethnically diverse communities / LSEG groups / Young people / LGBT (via focus on age)

Employees & Board

Increasing diversity from under-represented groups and making the RFU feel like an inclusive place to work:

- Board. - Executive Team
- Leadership Group - All employees

Game Play

(Players, Coaches, Match Officials, Club Volunteers)

- Improving inclusivity, reducing discrimination and increasing numbers amongst:

Women & girls / ethnically diverse communities / LSEG groups / Young people / LGBT

Game Leadership

(Volunteer Leaders in Council, CBs and clubs)

- Improving diversity and inclusion within the volunteer leadership and governance structures within the game (e.g. at Council, CBs and Clubs)

Over the next year, we will provide regular updates in each of the four work streams. We begin by focussing on an area in which you play such an integral role – **Game Leadership** - and look at how we can support you in this capacity.



Game Leadership - supporting volunteer leaders at clubs, CBs and Council

Plans in this area will be delivered by the **RFU Council D&I Implementation Working Group**, which was formed in September 2020 with an objective to:

- Build an inclusive and sustainable game through skilled and diverse leadership.
- Increase the number of people from under-represented groups across all Council and volunteer decision-making groups and sub-committees.
- Introduce training and education to support diversity awareness and codes of conduct to establish principles, boundaries, guidelines and acceptable behaviour.

Reporting directly to the RFU Council and chaired by Council Member Genevieve Glover, the group is made up of nine experienced volunteers recruited from across England to represent the game.

[Learn more about the members here.](#)

The group's focus is **to implement 10 recommendations approved by RFU Council**, which include:

- A training programme to be initiated for Council and all Constituent Bodies to support with diversity awareness.
- Guidance to be provided by the RFU to Constituent Bodies and clubs to support inclusive practices and showcase best practice. A best practice recruitment tool kit to be shared to attract a diverse range of candidates for each appointment; supporting Constituent Bodies to attract and retain a more diverse pool of people.

Over the past six months, the group has made real progress as it aims to improve diversity and inclusion among volunteer leaders in clubs, Constituent Bodies and Council – the game leaders.

The recommendations are aligned to the wider RFU plan and reflect the vision for diversity and inclusion in English rugby, with support from the RFU Council who oversee the work.

The 10 recommendations

You can read the key objectives and progress summaries for each recommendation in *Appendix 1*.

What has already been implemented?

Recommendations 1 and 2 have been incorporated into a Committee Manual for RFU Council and Committee Members:

- The composition of RFU committees and working groups to be considered within a D&I context and committees to be supported in achieving a diverse mix of members.
- Working practices, location and timings of meetings to be reviewed to enable a more diverse group to participate.

Recommendation 10

- A strong relationship has been forged between Council and the National Youth Council (NYC). There has been representation of the NYC at Council meetings and Council at NYC meetings throughout the season and will work towards joint projects in 2021/22. Members



of the NYC are being mentored by Council Members to support their journey as Game Leaders.

Recommendations 5, 6 and 9

At the RFU Council Meeting on 11 June, the Working Group discussed plans to implement the following recommendations ahead of the new season:

- A training programme for Council Members and CBs to support with diversity awareness.
- Publish resources to support D&I best practice. This will include guidance for CBs and clubs to support inclusive practices and a best practice recruitment tool kit to attract a diverse range of candidates for each appointment.
- Create a way to track the game's progress – Council Members and Committee Members will be asked to provide D&I data on a confidential basis to allow progress and trends to be monitored. Information will be anonymous.

Have you confirmed your CB D&I Lead yet?

D&I Leads have been recruited from 23 CBs – Berkshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Dorset & Wiltshire, East Midlands, Eastern Counties, Essex, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, NLD, North Midlands, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Warwickshire, Yorkshire, Army RU, Royal Navy RU and Students RFU. RFU staff are organising plans and communications for the 2021/22 season to support D&I Leads, kicking off with a workshop in August.

We know some CBs are midway through their recruitment process. If you need further assistance or if you are ready to nominate your D&I lead, please contact your Council Member or MarissaLowe@RFU.com

What's next?

July - D&I Website Hub - we plan to launch our new diversity and inclusion hub on EnglandRugby.com this month. Here you will be able to find more detail on each area of our plan as well as D&I guidance to support volunteers.

August - We aim to launch the training programme and D&I resources ahead of the new season to support game leaders. A workshop will be held for CB D&I Leads on 23 August to connect and learn.

2021/22 Season

D&I webinar for CBs and clubs

Genevieve Glover will host a webinar alongside members of the Working Group, who will be delighted to answer your questions on the D&I Game Leadership strategy. The webinar will also provide an opportunity to share ideas and best practice and create a deeper understanding of how we can grow the game and welcome more people from more backgrounds to our clubs. Further details to be communicated in the summer.

We look forward to continuing to work together to raise D&I awareness, understanding and to provide support in this important area. We will be back in touch on the launch of our D&I Hub as well as to update on progress made in **Game Play** for players, coaches and match officials.



Appendix 1 – Council Diversity & Inclusion Implementation Working Group Recommendations

The recommendations are intended to be implemented by the end of the 2021/22 season. Work has begun on all recommendations, with some aiming for completion for the new season. Key objectives and progress summaries below.

Recommendation 1

The composition of the following groups to be considered within a D&I context and committees to be supported in achieving a diverse mix of members.

- i. RFU standing committees
- ii. RFU sub-committees
- iii. RFU task & finish/working groups

Objective: Creation of guidance on inclusive leadership and recruitment for RFU groups to be included in a standardised set of terms of reference for RFU committees.

Progress: The Nominations Committee, Council D&I Working Group and RFU Company Secretary have worked on a revised set of terms of reference for the Committee Manual. Draft terms of reference were taken to April 2021 Council meeting for feedback, with final version to be presented at June 2021 meeting, ready for the 2021/22 season.

Recommendation 2

Working practices, location and timings of meetings of RFU standing committees, subcommittees and task & finish/working groups should be reviewed to enable a more diverse group of members to participate.

Objective: Advice on good governance to promote inclusive practices be produced, with support via training for Council Members and communications.

Progress: The Council D&I Working Group has drafted guidance to encourage RFU standing committees, subcommittees and task & finish/working groups to be more inclusive with their meeting practices. This guidance was presented to Council in February 2021 and is to be included in the Committee Manual. The final draft of the Committee Manual was presented at the June 2021 Council meeting, and will be published ahead of the 2021/22 season.

Recommendation 3

Consideration given to the D&I overlay on Council Member appointments, supporting Constituent Bodies (CBs) to attract and retain a more diverse pool of people.

Objective: Produce recommendations for inclusive Council Member appointments.

Progress: Initial discussion with the current President to understand the potential future aspirations from a D&I perspective. Through consultation with CBs and Council Members, the Council D&I Working Group aim to produce recommendations on how this may be done.



Recommendation 4

The RFU to consider where it may be appropriate to introduce a D&I requirement to secure certain types of funding, e.g. CBs to satisfy all/certain demands of the sports governance code.

Objective: Provide recommendation for funding terms & conditions, related to CB and clubs' D&I engagement.

Progress: Due to Covid and associated funding anomalies, this recommendation has been deferred into the 2021/22 season. Initial discussions have been had with RFU CFO, Sue Day, and will be progressed with Steve Grainger, Rugby Development Director over summer 2021.

Recommendation 5

A training programme to be initiated for RFU Council, along with all CBs in receipt of RFU funding to support with diversity awareness. 2 stakeholder focuses:

1. Council
2. CBs

Objective: Suggest programme for Council D&I training, considering where resources can also be shared with CBs.

Progress: A representative for this group sits on the main RFU Education & Training task group, ensuring Council are included in learning opportunities also offered to Employees & Board. Linking into overall RFU aim of creating a D&I area on EnglandRugby.com, where signposting to existing resources and training can be found.

Recommendation 6

Council Members and Committee Members to provide D&I data on a confidential basis to allow progress to be tracked and trends monitored anonymously.

Objective: Collect anonymous D&I data from Council & Committee Members for monitoring purposes.

Progress: RFU HR system will allow data input from Council Members; mirrors process for RFU staff – data collation to begin summer 2021 as baseline. Data will be Phase 2 of project, with focus over the summer on considering the best way to collate and store this data, in compliance with GDPR.

Recommendation 7

Profiles of all Council Members, committee members etc. to be freely available on the internet to ensure visibility and accessibility and to show the make-up of Council and working groups.

Objective: Council profiles to be updated/ produced and publicised

Progress: Work has begun with RFU content team and Council services to update existing Council Member biographies. First publicised profiles on [EnglandRugby.com](https://www.englandrugby.com) in March 2021. Aim to have all



2021/22 Council Members on the website by September 2021 and Phase 2 (Committee Members) to be scoped over summer 2021.

Recommendation 8

A D&I Policy incorporated into the code of conduct, to be created and adopted by Board and Council to establish principles, boundaries, guidelines and acceptable behaviour.

Objective: Council code of conduct updated to include D&I overlay.

Progress: The Council code of conduct was updated at the start of the 20/21 season, so a review is being undertaken to ensure it encourages inclusive behaviour. Wider RFU work going on to create D&I policy, which will be presented alongside the code of conduct to Council Members towards the end of 2021.

Recommendation 9

Guidance provided by the RFU to CBs and clubs to support inclusive practices and showcase best practice. Best practice recruitment tool kit to attract a diverse range of candidates for each appointment.

Objective: Create guidance and toolkit for CBs to support inclusive practices.

Progress: Working with the Clubs & Communities team and Rockcorps, the Council D&I Working Group has been gathering insight from CBs and club representatives on their experiences with D&I in rugby, and the resources needed to support them. An initial draft of the resources will be presented to Council in June 2021 and completed over the summer, for use from September 2021.

Recommendation 10

To agree in principle to strengthen the relationship between National Youth Council (NYC) and RFU Council and leverage the experience and perspectives both groups can bring. CBs to be encouraged to consider the establishment of CB Youth Councils.

Objective: Build strong links between NYC and RFU Council, collaborating on three named projects per season.

Progress: RFU President, Jeff Blackett, along with Nigel Gillingham and Mike Waplinton have been very supportive of the National Youth Council, ensuring they have representation at Council meetings throughout 2020/21. Dick Tyler was recruited as Council Member lead to the NYC, attending their meetings and supporting the building of relationships with Council. Seven Council Members have stepped up as mentors to the NYC members. This relationship will continue into 2021/22.