



**Welsh Rugby Union**

**Women's Performance Rugby  
Mid Term Strategy Review - Recommendations**

**An independent report for WRU Board**

**July 2021**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations highlighted in green need priority action

Dimension 1 - Strategy, Systems and Structures

OVERALL RAG RATING



	Recommendation	By When
1	Implement player contracts	Sep 2021
2	Board to set long-term strategic commitment to Women's Performance Rugby	Sep 2021
3	Establish a Women's Performance Working Group (task and finish) to re-write a long-term strategy	Report by Jan 2022
4	Executive team to review and plan how to maximise business opportunities offered by the women's game	From Jul 2021
5	Produce an annual operational plan	Mar 2022
6	Establish a clear management and reporting structure	Mar 2022
7	Appoint a Head of Women's Performance Rugby and a Head of Women's Community Rugby	Sep 2021
8	Appoint a Women's Rugby Steering Group	Aug 2022
9	Implement a performance structure	Jul 2022
10	Start to explore, negotiate and plan the involvement of Welsh super clubs in a GB league from 2023 onwards.	Jul 2021
11	Plan a structured season that caters for growing the game and developing the talent within the game.	Mar 2022
12	Establish a robust and visible performance pathway that is player centred, development driven and competition supported.	Sep 2021
13	Invest in quality human resources to support the performance pathway programme.	Mar 2022
14	Appoint an Executive Director of People	ASAP
15	Elevate the need for change in the women's game to the risk register	ASAP
16	Head Coach to report directly to the new Performance Director.	ASAP
17		

	Contract the management team through to the end of the 2025 RWC	Sep 2021
18	Appoint a physician and full medical team	Sep 2021
19	Appoint a sports psychologist	ASAP
20	Provide adequate medical cover for the talent development pathway.	Sep 2021
21	Appoint a full time S&C coach with a qualified assistant and intern.	Sep 2021
22	Appoint a full-time second analyst and a qualified intern to support a Head of Analysis for the Women's game.	Sep 2021
23	Create, maintain and monitor a player depth chart and succession plan.	Dec 2021
24	Integrate the women's game into business planning and set departmental objectives.	Dec 2021
25	Develop and deliver an education programme within the WRU and externally to the wider game to highlight the importance of equality and inclusion of women in rugby in Wales.	Mar 2022
26	Improve communication internally and externally with regard to women's rugby.	ASAP
27	Set a disaggregated budget for women's performance that ensures there is sufficient human and financial resource	Sep 2021

**Dimension 2: Culture and Climate**

**OVERALL RAG RATING**



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>By When</b>
28	Women's performance reports into PRB through the Performance Director	Sep 2021
29	Performance Director must be accountable for women's performance and Head of Women's Performance should report directly into PD.	ASAP
30	Board to receive training on women's game and women's performance, including international landscape and benchmarks, and issues specific to women in rugby.	Dec 2021
31	Team management to identify team values and role models to instil, celebrate and challenge team values regularly and consistently in addition to reviewing behaviours and emphasising core values.	Sep 2021
32	Performance Director to lead the development of winning behaviours	Oct 2021
33	Renew emphasis on WRU Values	Oct 2021
34	Engage the support of the newly appointed World Rugby Head of Women's Performance	Jul 2021
35	Align performance and community strategies with regard to girls and women's rugby	Jan 2022

**Dimension 3 - Players**

**OVERALL RAG RATING**



	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>By When</b>
36	Appoint a dedicated Sevens Head Coach to work with Sevens players and to direct the regional and age grade Sevens programmes	Sep 2021
37	Re-instate Wales representative teams at U18, U20 and 'A' level.	Mar 2022
38	Appoint a Head Coach for the 15 a-side programme.	Sep 2021
39	Implement an annual health check/pulse survey as part of Performance Director, Head of Women's Performance and Head Coaches' appraisals.	Annually from Jun 2022
40	Continue with team performance debriefs with input from players about their experiences.	Ongoing

## Conclusions

The WRU is facing a significant number of risks not only in respect of the women's performance programme, but as a National Governing Body for rugby in Wales. These include:

- **Strategic failure** to deliver the WRU's overarching strategy, including women's performance goals. This failure could also apply to community and development objectives as young players drop out or move to England to play and are lost to the Welsh game
- **Reputational risk** – the perceived intransigence and reluctance to fully commit to women's performance in respect of investment, profile, culture and leadership will only serve to reinforce views of the WRU as a NGB for men's rugby with little interest in the female game
- **Legal risk** – There is the potential for individuals within the game (currently and formerly) to challenge the WRU with some worrying examples of what could be defined as unfavourable treatment and a lack of equitable provision provided through this review
- **Financial risk** – there is the potential for significant opportunity cost as the WRU has, to date, failed to assess, either in an integrated business planning model, or through discreet planning, the commercial value of women's rugby. This includes the specific asset value of the women's performance squad to partners, sponsors, kit suppliers and others.