



Leadership Development Pathway

The IRFU Leadership Development Pathway offers training and support to club committee personnel on various stages of their Leadership journey. It is an opportunity for clubs to offer support to male and female volunteers as well as identify potential mentors for succession planning for future committees. The Pathway has 3 elements, Leadership Development (phase 1 & 2), Mentoring Future Leaders (Phase 3) and Women in Rugby Leadership. The programme begins in January and runs until September.

Phase 1 & 2 Leadership Development

The pathway programme is open to existing members of club or provincial committees, with 80 places being offered in phase 1, with an option for 30 people to progress to phase 2. Participants should have been involved in the club for 2 seasons, and ideally on the Club Executive Committee. Club nominations should have a 50:50 gender balance. The sessions are a mix of online modules, zoom sessions and 1:1 executive coaching, allowing volunteers to cover most of the course in their own time. Previous attendees include Directors of Rugby, Chairs and Presidents, Hon. Sec and Treasurers.

"The IRFU National Leadership Course was one of the most valuable experiences I've had, both in my rugby journey and in my professional life. It challenged my thinking, strengthened my leadership skills, and connected me with passionate people from across the game. I would strongly encourage all Presidents and executive members to take part—it's an opportunity that will elevate both your club and your personal development." Ed Gunning - Ballin RFC (President 2024)

The aim of the programme is to develop the volunteers' ability to lead change and influence others. It does not focus on rugby knowledge but rather on how to work with others to make the best use of everyone's experience. Topics covered include: Self-awareness, Delivering Under Pressure, Leading Teams, Influencing Skills and Change Management. Course fees (worth £4,000) will be paid by the IRFU, the course is delivered by Jo Hopkins Consulting that includes access to global coaching executives

Why Get involved:

"The IRFU Leadership Programme was a positive game-changer for me. It provided me with the tools, confidence, and networks to help me lead our club volunteers with clarity and create a clear, unifying purpose. The various modules all supported my transition into the club's Director of Rugby role, which ultimately led to me taking on the Chair's appointment in recent years. My focus now is on fostering club cohesion, improving communication, and supporting our fantastic

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volunteers to deliver long-term strategic growth across all areas of our club. The IRFU programme has been a key step in shaping my leadership journey within the game - I would highly recommend it to everyone."

Andy Burke, Club Chair, Kilrush RFC

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