



**Better Officials
- Better Games**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Referees are an integral part of the rugby family as are players, coaches, club administrators and spectators. The quality of match officials contribute to the player experience and, ultimately, to their retention in the Game. Undoubtedly, the Game faces a challenge in training, developing and converting sufficient individuals into long-term, active match officials for the community 15-a-side game. Against a backdrop of change in the Game (staging the RWC in 2015, winning the Women's World Cup in 2014, the Adult and Age Grade Competition Reviews and the introduction of the RFU's Planning, Financing & Reporting process), this review was commissioned to determine a blueprint for the development of officiating into a world class system. In undertaking its work, the Working Group took account of 3 other work strands considering the financing of officiating and the governance of match officials' organisations. While this report of the Match Officials' Blueprint Group makes a number of recommendations, it is currently a document to be used as a basis for consultation with match officials' organisations.
2. The vision of the Working Group is to have every 15-a-side match from U13s upwards officiated by a trained and qualified referee. It is calculated by 2016/17 there will be about **100,000** such matches played in a season. In addition, the vision looks to have trained and qualified assistant referees at every Level 4¹ upwards and equivalent matches; it is estimated there will be about **1,400** such matches by 2016/17. Currently, research suggests there are about **2,900** active society referees and fewer than **4,000** active "non-society" referees. On average, both officiate at between **11 and 14** games per season. Therefore, there is a significant challenge to meet the vision, despite the fact that some **800** individuals each year undertake the initial training with the intention of becoming active referees.

3. The Working Group met on 7 occasions from July 2014 until April 2015. Its work was wide-ranging and it discussed and considered many aspects of match officiating. On concluding its deliberations, the Working Group makes a range of recommendations that cover:
- The initial qualification to referee the 15-a-side game and additional conditions that must be completed in the first 2 years to retain that qualification (paragraphs 16 – 27).
 - A new on-line course for those who want to improve their knowledge of officiating, but do not wish to become active referees (paragraph 28).
 - A new support structure, comprising of a strengthened partnership between a dedicated RFU-employed workforce and volunteers to train and develop all match officials, whether they are a member of a referees' organisation or not (paragraphs 29 – 35).
 - A set of principles against which to develop a new framework for prioritising the appointment of match officials, to be used consistently across the country (paragraphs 36 & 37).
 - The introduction of “best practice” in charging rugby clubs for the provision of match officials (paragraph 39).
 - The funding of match official's training and development (paragraphs 39 & 40).
 - Payments to match officials and those involved in their development (paragraphs 41 – 45).
 - The role of referee federations and societies in both the development of match officials and the governance of match officiating (paragraphs 46 – 55).
 - The status of the Rugby Football Referees' Union in the RFU (paragraphs 54 & 55).
 - A match officials' registration and licensing scheme (paragraphs 56 – 58).
 - The development of centralised, improved information technology and customer relationship management systems to support the outcomes of the recommendations in this report (paragraphs 59 & 60).

All the principal recommendations of the Working Group are set out at [Annex H](#).

4. Finally, the Working Group completed its work and compiled its report before the RFU Council delayed the introduction of changes to RFU leagues and new RFU cup competitions until at least the 2017/18 season. While throughout this report the Working Group assumed that the changes resulting from the Adult Competition Review (ACR) would be implemented from 2016/17 season, the principles of the recommendations in this report are generally unaffected whether the ACR recommendations are implemented or not. There may need to be some changes to the detail of this report's recommendations, but the general thrust would remain unaffected even if these specific ACR recommendations are subsequently not implemented.



INTRODUCTION

1. Without doubt, referees are an integral part of rugby matches, as are the players and coaches. Games officiated fairly and well add significantly to the quality of experience for players, contribute to the enhancement of player safety, player development and, hence, aid to player retention. Consequently, referees and all other match officials must be as much a part of the rugby family as players, coaches, club administrators and spectators.
2. The recent reviews of adult and age grade competitions in the community game, along with ongoing efforts to grow the game in the aftermath of England's staging of the 2015 Rugby World Cup, will undoubtedly lead to increased demands for, and pressure on, match officials. Furthermore, the winning of the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2014 is likely lead to a substantial expansion in the number of females playing the game. Developing a clear picture of the current numbers of referees along with their availability, assessing where growth is required and developing a better understanding of the training and development needs are key steps in ensuring that supply is able to meet future demand, and the quality of officiating is improved.

3. With other changes, such as the introduction of the Planning, Financing & Reporting (PFR) process and the re-organisation of the RFU's Development Director's department, and the increasing concerns for player safety and the implications this may have for the training of referees, the RFU's Game Development Sub-Committee² (GDSC) felt it was opportune to have a full review of match official issues that impact on the community game. Simultaneously, the Rugby Football Referees Union (RFRU) was instigating 2 studies of its own. The first considered the advantages, disadvantages, and practicalities of all referees, no matter the level of the game, receiving a match fee (as soccer referees do), as well as expenses. The second study considered the operational costs of refereeing and how they are financed. This also included the training and development costs met by referees' societies, federations and individuals, as well as the various methods employed by societies of charging clubs for the provision of referees. The GDSC also asked the RFRU to work with the RFU Governance Committee and the RFU Legal Department on a third strand of work to consider the governance of match officials and their member organisations. One of the major aims of this strand of work is to ensure that the RFU's governance arrangements reflect that match officials are members of the rugby family.
4. To coordinate the findings of those 3 work strands and to review other aspects of match officiating the GDSC and RFRU co-sponsored a study to develop a "blueprint" for the development of match officiating in the community game. The vision for this study is to have:
 - Every 15-a-side game from U13 upwards officiated by a trained and qualified referee.
 - Trained and qualified assistant referees at every first XV game from Level 4³ upwards and equivalent level matches.
 - All games below U13 refereed by a suitably qualified person⁴.

While the last objective is very important, the study has concentrated solely on developing a framework to achieve the first 2 points. The introduction of New Rules of Play for U12s and below, and the implementation of the age grade competition review will be the opportunity to ensure the latter objective is pursued.

5. To achieve such a vision, there is a need to determine a clear picture of the number of 15-a-side fixtures, the current numbers of match officials along with their availability, assessing where growth is required, and developing a better understanding of training and development needs, and a framework to deliver them. These are seen as key steps in ensuring that supply is able to meet demand. Furthermore, clarifying roles and responsibilities of the respective organisations involved in officiating is also critical. The landscape for officiating is complex. The roles played by the RFRU, the RFU, professional staff and volunteers, federations, societies, geographic constituent bodies (CBs) and clubs are not always understood and recognised.
6. Details of those who served on this Working Group are at Annex A. You will note that they are mix of individuals involved in match officiating, others drawn from the community game, RFU professional staff, and 2 independent members. These last 2 individuals have been invaluable in our deliberations bringing fresh ideas and challenging the norm. To all who have been involved in this Working Group, much thanks is due for their time, their commitment, their ideas and their teamwork in bringing the recommendations to fruition in this report.

² Among the strategic responsibilities of the GDSC is the recruitment, development and retention of match officials.

³ This Level reflects the re-organisation of league rugby by the Adult Competition Review.

⁴ An individual from a club or school that holds a Level One qualification.



ASSESSMENT OF NEED (NUMBER OF 15-A-SIDE MATCHES)

7. In order to achieve the vision, there was a need to determine a sound estimate of the number of 15-a-side matches that will require both referees and assistant referees. In addition, it was also considered beneficial to differentiate, as much as possible, between matches played on Saturdays, those played on Sundays, and those games held in midweek. In constructing these estimates, the Working Group was hampered in that there is not one central database of matches; this is a theme that we will return to on a number of occasions in this report. Therefore, in compiling the figures, we were reliant on a number of different sources. Invariably, this means that the accuracy of the figures will vary. That said, we believe that the figures are sufficiently robust to provide a relatively clear representation of matches that will require match officials.
8. At Annex B are the estimates of the number of 15-a-side fixtures in a variety of categories that we estimate will be taking place from the 2016/17 season. In addition, in the Annex are details of the numbers and categories of matches that assistant referees would also be appointed to. Finally, in the Annex those matches are separated into Saturday, Sunday or midweek matches. In summary:
- There are just under **100,000** fifteen-a-side fixtures in a 35 week season that require a referee. This is about **2,850 games each week**.
 - However, with schools, colleges and universities playing during term times and schools playing mainly before Christmas, the peak requirement for referees, we estimate, might be as high as **3,450 games in peak weeks** in October and November.
 - Of the 100,000 fifteen-a-side fixtures, **over 60% are youth matches**, and we estimate that:
 - **42% are played on Saturdays** (mainly adult male matches).
 - **36.5% are played on Sundays** (mainly male youth club matches, but also female club matches for both youths and adults).
 - **21.5% are played in midweek** (predominantly school and student teams for both males and females).
 - There are about **1,400** fifteen-a-side fixtures in a 35 week season that require assistant referees. This is, on average, about **40 games each week**. During those peak weeks, it is not thought that this number would increase significantly - possibly less than 5 games per week.
 - Of the 1,400 fifteen-a-side matches that require assistant referees, **1,200** are at weekends and **900** of those on Saturdays.



ASSESSMENT OF SUPPLY (NUMBER OF MATCH OFFICIALS AVAILABLE)

9. In determining the number of active⁵ match officials in the game we were, again, hampered in that there is no central database of society referees or those officiating in clubs, schools and universities who are not members of a society. Furthermore, because of this lack of a central database, there is no easily accessible information on which games are officiated and, consequently, the number of games that referees, on average, officiate in each season.
10. **Number of Active Society Referees.** The RFRU Working Group considering the operational costs of refereeing conducted a comprehensive survey with referee societies and federations; the findings of this working group are outlined in paragraphs 39 & 40 with a summary of its report at Annex E. It received responses from all federations and all but 2 societies. Having made adjustments for possible duplications and estimating figures for those 2 societies that did not respond, the report confidently reports that there are about **2,900 active referees** who are members of societies. Further research undertaken from figures extracted from the “Who’s the Ref?” and other systems supported this figure of active referees who are members of societies.
11. The purpose of the research analysing information extracted from the data was to ascertain the average number of games a society member officiated during a season and to discover if there were any significant differences that were dependent on the experience and level at which individuals were refereeing. Details of this research are at Annex C. As one might suspect, those society referees officiating at higher levels, on average, referee more matches in a season than those with lower referee grades (inevitably the less experienced). In summary, the analysis found that:
 - Referees Graded 5 – 9: Officiate, on average, **19** games per season.
 - Referees Graded 10 – 15: Officiate, on average, **11** games per season

- Of particular concern, is that **40%** of the latter group refereed **less than 5 games** in the 2013/14 season. Specific research of all, no matter their referee grade, who refereed less than 5 games in the 2013/14 season, was undertaken. Not surprisingly, nearly **60%** of them fell into the 2 oldest age brackets. Yet, when asked to list all the reasons that affected the number of matches they refereed in that season, the explanations were very diverse. Nearly **30%** had suffered an injury that had curtailed their availability. In addition, over 60% recorded a reason other than the 7 specific reasons listed (see chart in [Annex C, page 43](#)). Moreover, there was no common theme among this 60% of respondents. Work and family commitments featured, as did a lack of support from their society, cancellation or lack of matches, refereeing just at their club rather than taking a society appointment, referee abuse (but not to a large extent), as well as other rugby participation roles - playing, coaching and spectating. Interestingly, similar surveys of players would probably cite many of the same reasons for a reduction in the average number of games they now play in a season.

What is clear from the survey is that referees probably suffer a higher level of injuries than one might expect; this might be the subject of further research by the RFU. Moreover, referee societies must be cognisant that for many match officials rugby has to find its place among many other commitments nowadays. Consequently, like clubs with players' availability, referee societies may need to have a greater level of flexibility in appointing its members to games than has previously been the case.

12. **Number of Active Non-Society Referees.** These are often termed "club" referees. Generally, they only officiate matches at one club (often the club of which they are a member), or at a limited number of clubs within a small radius of each other, or at schools, colleges and universities. The games they referee are invariably male lower XV games in reserve leagues, merit table matches or friendlies, male youth games, particularly among the younger age groups (U13s - U16s), and many university and college games that are not part of the BUCS competitions. In addition, many female games (except those in RFU leagues, the more senior BUCS competitions and representative matches) are likely to be refereed by non-society referees. Many of these non-society referees will hold a relevant qualification, but probably receive little or no ongoing development. Furthermore, there will be lots of teachers who referee inter-school matches, but may not hold a relevant match officials' qualification and are unlikely to be members of a society.
13. Once more, there were no definitive statistics available centrally of the number of active non-society referees. According to data held by the RFU, there were nearly **14,000** referees⁶ with the ELRA qualification and about **4,700** of these had been assigned the role of referee by their club. However, there is no way of telling how many of these were also members of a referee society, and how many were active. Moreover, it should be noted that the number of individuals allocated to this referee role contributed to the calculation of the number of international tickets the club received. Therefore, there is no reason to ever update the accuracy of the data and, indeed, it might be argued that there is an incentive not to do so. Furthermore, this information just related to clubs and there was no data on those refereeing in the education sector.
14. In order to gain some information about these non-society referees, we commissioned a number of questions about referees appointed to games by clubs during the RFU's club playing census undertaken during October 2014; some **82%** of voting clubs made returns. This recorded **3,495** active "club" referees officiating at 15-a-side games for U13s upwards, but some **1,432** of these were also members of a referee society. The census recorded **4,122** games so it might be assumed active non-society referees officiate, on average, no more than 2 games per month (probably about 10 - 12 per season). Furthermore, these figures do not include any information on those non-society referees officiating solely in the education sector. Based on this relatively unqualified data we have assumed there are less than **4,000** active and qualified match officials (including those in the education sector), who are not members of a referees' society.
15. Therefore, without any further definitive information, there are probably fewer than **7,000** active and qualified referees (of which less than half are members of a referee society) and that the majority of these officiate at **12 or less** games per season. Consequently, a significant number of games are probably being refereed (or will be, given that we anticipate 100,000 fifteen-a-side games by 2016/17) by unqualified referees. We suggest that most of these will be games among the younger age groups (13 to 16 year olds), both in clubs and schools. Moreover, we suspect that many female youth games do not have qualified referees.



RECRUITMENT STRATEGY AND THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF REFEREEING

16. Based on the relatively unqualified data in the previous section, it would seem that we need to recruit more individuals to undertake the relevant refereeing qualification, “take up the whistle” and officiate on a regular basis. However, from July 2013 until June 2014 some **1,660** individuals had undertaken the Entry Level Refereeing Award (ELRA), the then relevant qualification for those new to officiating. Moreover, this figure has remained relatively constant for the 2 years before that. This qualification, of course, was suitable not only for those wishing to referee the 15-a-side game, but also those involved in officiating mini games. Moreover, since the introduction of the new qualification in July 2014, the Level 2 - Refereeing the 15-a-side Game, until February 2015 some **1,066** candidates had successfully undertaken the course. Therefore, we have been qualifying some **2,000** individuals every year, but we still have a shortage of referees officiating on a regular basis. Furthermore, few of these candidates joined a referee society.
17. Consequently, we instigated a survey of the 2013/14 ELRA candidates. The primary objective of the survey was to ask candidates why they took a referee qualification and if they had found it an appropriate qualification in helping them “take up the whistle”. There were **283** respondents to the survey. Some **54%** wanted to become a referee, about **33%** had undertaken the course for personal/educational development or were coaches that wanted to improve their knowledge of officiating, and the remainder had a variety of reasons for undertaking the course.

18. Since completing the course, some **65%** had refereed at least one game, although over two thirds had refereed only youth matches. Interestingly, **23%** (65 individuals) of respondents said that they had joined a referee society. This seemed at odds with other data from referee societies, which would suggest that the conversion rate from those completing an ELRA course and then joining a society is less than 10% and this has been constant for many years. It is likely that those who joined a society would have completed the survey rather than others and, therefore, may have skewed the data. Consequently, we have assumed that currently **less than 10%** of successful candidates taking a referee qualification join a referee society. This is a serious concern, that needs to be addressed and the report will return to this later.
19. Finally, respondents were asked to list **all** the reasons that would encourage them to referee regularly; their responses were as follows:
- Additional training - **57%**.
 - Someone supporting on the touchline - **41%**.
 - Interacting with other inexperienced referees - **41%**.
 - Branded clothing and equipment - **35%**.
 - Refereeing in a controlled environment - **33%**.
 - Payment of a match fee - **24%**.
20. Given the relatively stable numbers completing the referee qualification course each year, and from the survey, it would seem well over 50% undertake the course with the intention of refereeing, we do not have a problem in initially recruiting sufficient numbers who want to referee. Potentially, there are probably around **800** individuals each year who complete the qualification and want to referee - that is over 10% of our estimated total of currently active club and society referees. If it was possible to have this sort of number regularly refereeing 10 to 15 games a season, it would not take many years to achieve our vision of every 15-a-side game having a trained and qualified referee.
21. Therefore, the Working Group concludes that there are sufficient individuals who want to become a qualified referee, but they need additional training and specific support in the initial stage of their refereeing career. Consequently, we further conclude that at the moment there is no requirement for a new recruitment strategy, but there is clearly a need to provide that additional training and specific support, which is likely to encourage them to referee regularly for a sustained period of time.
22. By way of comparison, we examined the Football Association's (FA's) Referee Recruiting Strategy. Until 2008, the FA had a system of recruitment, development and appointment to matches that was very similar to that in rugby with the National Governing Body providing the qualification framework and then referee societies and County FAs responsible for further development and appointment to matches. In 2010, the FA introduced its National Referee Development Strategy. This programme involved the employment of 58 Referee Development Officers (RDOs), working with County FAs, who manage the programme. These RDOs are responsible for the recruitment, initial training & development, and appointment (the latter through league appointment officials) of all new match officials. Local football referee associations still exist, but now play little or no part in the recruitment, development, or retention of soccer referees. Now, all football referees are automatically members of the FA with opportunities to attend training events organised, in the main, by the RDOs.
23. Confirmation of referee status within the FA is a staged process with an initial basic training course and the requirement to referee 6 "supervised" games before progressing to the 2nd stage. During this initial training, football referees are classed as trainees. Further training is offered as part of the second stage induction programme, which requires the individual to achieve a certain level of competency. It is only then that an individual is offered full membership of the FA and referee status is confirmed. Throughout this staged process individuals can be exited from the programme, either through personal choice or because they are not achieving

the requisite standard. Long term retention is the focus of this strategy. The FA now regularly recruits 6,000 new referees per annum with 80% of these under the age of 18. Now, there is a drop-out rate from the staged approach of about 25%, which is significantly less than was previously the case, when it was over 65%.

24. The Working Group was not persuaded that replication of the FA system is necessarily the answer for rugby. Firstly, it would have significant resource implications that are probably not affordable but, more importantly, it would lose the involvement of many of the excellent volunteers currently involved in rugby referee development. That said, there are a number of synergies between this FA referee development strategy and the findings of the survey of the 2013/14 ELRA candidates, outlined above. The FA strategy involves additional training in the first 2 years after the initial qualification, a requirement to referee a number of games in a controlled environment, and specific support. Our survey reported such matters would encourage individuals to referee rugby regularly. We have heard other evidence that concludes that if individuals remain involved in an activity for 2 years then their likely participation will continue for many years beyond.
25. Currently, once individuals have completed the initial rugby referee qualification then they retain the qualification in perpetuity, whether it used or not. Moreover, there are a number of candidates who undertake the qualification for personal or educational development, or are coaches that wanted to improve their knowledge of officiating; none of these are likely to become active rugby referees. A number of professions and sporting bodies (the Royal Life Saving Society being a prime example) place conditions on individuals to retain the qualification. The Working Group saw much value in requiring candidates to complete defined development requirements in the first 2 years after initial qualification, in order to retain the qualification and status of a qualified referee. Therefore, the Working Group's **1st principal recommendation** is twofold:

- 1. The current Level 2 (Refereeing the 15-a-side Game) will remain the initial qualification for those who wish to referee the 15-a-side game.**
- 2. To retain that qualification and the status of a qualified referee, within 2 years of completing that initial qualification an individual must:**
 - a. Referee a minimum of 15 games (including matches that are part of a festival).**
 - b. Have a satisfactory current performance review (or a development plan to achieve this within 4 months beyond those first 2 years).**
 - c. Complete at least 2 player safety CPD courses (such as "Scrum Factory" and the new on-line "Incident Management" currently under development by the RFU).**
 - d. Complete at least 2 of the accredited referee development CPD courses; the current list of such courses is:**
 - 1. Referee Match Preparation.**
 - 2. Managing Captains and Coaches.**
 - 3. Communication and Management.**
 - 4. Game Understanding.**
 - 5. Discipline and Report Writing.**
 - 6. Applying Advantage.**

An individual meeting the conditions set out in 1 & 2 above will retain the qualification and status of qualified referee in perpetuity.

26. This recommendation will provide targeted additional training and the opportunity (and requirement) to referee matches. Suitable matches will have to be identified for all who undertake the initial qualification to officiate, and which also provide the opportunity for them to interact with other inexperienced referees. What this recommendation does not address is the issue of suitable support needed by inexperienced referees; this will be considered in the next section. It will be the support structure that we put in place that will have to find novel ways of creating these initial refereeing opportunities, particularly for those who choose not to join a referee society from the outset.
27. In order to implement our 1st recommendation, a robust database and IT system will be required to capture all the data on individuals to ensure they have met the conditions set and, if necessary, remove the qualification from them. Earlier we referred to the need for a robust database and IT system, and we will return to the subject in greater detail later in the report.
28. Furthermore, implementation of this 1st recommendation will remove the reason for those who do not want to referee matches from taking the initial course. This would include coaches, who have previously undertaken the course to improve their knowledge of match officiating. Such improvement of knowledge about refereeing by coaches is very much to be encouraged, as it is in others who do not wish to be active referees. Therefore, the Working Group's **2nd principal recommendation** is:

The RFU develop an on-line course, primarily for rugby coaches, to improve their knowledge of match officiating.



SUPPORT TO AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MATCH OFFICIALS

29. Without doubt, the support structures and the quality of development for match officials is the most vital element for the provision of competent referees at all 15-a-side games and for the long-term retention of match officials in the game. Currently, match officials, who are not members of a society, receive little or probably no development. Those, who are society members, do receive developmental support, but it can be inconsistent and fragmented across the country. It was interesting for the Working Group to learn that referee societies provide referee coaches, advisors, assessors and mentors, but each can have different roles and responsibilities across the country. It is accepted that the development needs of each individual match official will be different. It will depend on: the level at which they referee; whether they have reached their full potential; whether they are nearing the end of their career or just starting; and, as the majority are volunteers, how much they want to progress.
30. **Support Structure.** The Working Group considered a number of models of support, but concluded that the framework needed, on which to base a support structure, must cover both society and “non-society” match officials. Moreover, while it must be based on the level of game being refereed, there must be a thread of consistency that runs throughout the framework. The development of match officials will involve a variety of interventions, ranging from formal assessment to informal advice. Firstly, the Working Group felt there was a role for referee coaches for match officials, who either are officiating at the highest levels or may have the potential to referee at those levels. Secondly, such match officials also need to be subject to regular formal assessment / performance review by individuals, other than their coaches. Whether these individuals are called “assessors” or

“performance reviewers”, the Working Group leaves for the referee community to determine, but it needs to be used consistently across the country. Thirdly, for the majority of referees, we need to have individuals to support the formers’ development by providing a mix of advice, formal assessment and coaching – key ingredients of referee development. Consequently, the Working Group suggests that these individuals are called “Referee Developers”, who undertake formal assessment, but also provide informal advice and coaching. Again, this term needs to be consistently used across the country whether supporting society or “non-society” referees. The Working Group does not see the need for “officially” appointed mentors. It must be an individual’s decision whether they want a mentor (as well as a mandatory coach), what role the mentor would play and, therefore, for the individual to identify a suitable person to fulfil that mentoring. Fourthly, the RFU cannot expect the support structure to rely entirely on volunteers. As is currently the case, there needs to be an RFU-employed workforce supporting those officiating at the higher level matches. However, more importantly, if there is to be greater consistency and greater retention of inexperienced referees and those who are not members of referee societies, there needs to be a dedicated RFU-employed workforce to support these referees and others involved in match official development. Moreover, this RFU workforce can work with (not for) a local referee society to help improve the latter’s recruitment of newly-qualified referees as members. Therefore, the Working Group concludes that the support structure should be provided by:

- Referee coaches, and assessors / performance reviewers for those officiating at the highest levels of the community game, or with the potential to officiate at these levels.
- Referee developers who work with all other referees, both society and “non-society”, providing a mix of advice, formal assessment and coaching.
- An enhanced RFU-employed dedicated workforce to oversee the development support structure for **all** match officials, together with “RFU-identified” educators who deliver training courses and CPD.

31. Turning now to the detail of the support structure, we propose the following arrangements:

a. **Support Structure for those Officiating at Levels 3 - 5⁷**. These are matches at the highest level of the community game and about 40% are officiated by a team of three. As well as RFU League matches, it also includes matches, for instance, in the Academy U18s League and the latter stages of RFU cup competitions among others. The commitment by all, either officiating at these levels or supporting those match officials, is significant. Therefore, to provide the quality and competency expected by the Game there must be a strong partnership between an RFU-employed workforce and high quality volunteers. The Working Group proposes that the RFU-employed workforce be responsible for:

- Facilitating the appointment to games of all match officials operating at this level (working with voluntary support). This will also include appointing referees with potential, currently operating at Level 6, to referee at Level 5 to test that potential.
- Recruitment, initial training, development and performance review of the volunteers who undertake assessment of match officials at this level (called either “assessors” or “performance reviewers”).
- Recruitment, initial training, development and performance review of those involved in coaching match officials at this level.
- Delivery of training to those who undertake the development of match officials operating at the next levels down.
- The recruitment of newcomers to this level and overseeing the management of those match officials found no longer capable of operating at this level.

- b. Alongside this RFU-employed workforce the Working Group concludes there is a need to sustain the involvement of high quality volunteers. Firstly, all referees and assistant referees officiating at these levels must be part of a coaching structure. Secondly, they must be subject to regular performance review and therefore, there is a need for a cadre of well-trained and committed volunteers to undertake these assessments of match officials' performances. It is calculated that there are about **100** matches per week at these levels of which **40** would be officiated by a team of three. Therefore, there is a need for about **120** referees and **100** assistant referees needing a high-level of support. Therefore, we anticipate a need for about **50** match officials' coaches and **60** assessors/performance reviewers working with these **220** match officials operating at this level, and also to undertake performance reviews of those with the potential to officiate at these levels, but currently refereeing at lower levels.
- c. **Support Structure for those Officiating at Levels 6 - 9.** Invariably, those officiating at these levels of games will be members of a referee organisation⁸. As well as matches in the RFU Leagues, it also includes, for instance, matches between 2nd and lower XVs (particularly of clubs at Levels 3 - 5), some women's adult games, BUCS Premiership matches, the AASE League and some top school matches, among others. Those both refereeing and supporting match officials are generally, if not totally, volunteers. Consequently, the support structure needs to recognise there is a significant element of choice and, that, we should only describe the minimum level of support expected, while recognising that many volunteers strive to achieve more than that minimum standard. Moreover, to ensure there is greater consistency across the country, the referee organisations will need some support, particularly in the provision of "RFU-identified" educators who deliver training and CPD and by the RFU-employed workforce, supporting those officiating at Levels 3 - 5, in developing those who undertake performance reviews or coach at Levels 6 and below. Therefore, the Working Group proposes that the referee organisation be responsible for:
- Appointment to games of all match officials operating at Levels 6 and below. Those in a referee organisation appointing to games will need to work with RFU-employed staff responsible for referees officiating at Level 3 - 5, to appoint referees with potential, normally operating at Level 6, to referee at Level 5 to test that potential. Conversely, there may be some referees, who normally officiate at Level 3 - 5, that are available or would benefit from (following an identified need after a number of assessments) to officiate at a lower level; again close co-operation is required.
 - Recruitment, initial training, development and performance review of the volunteers who undertake formal assessment and provide coaching and informal advice at this level; these volunteers to be known as "Referee Developers". In addition, this responsibility to be overseen by RFU-employed staff to ensure consistency across the country.
 - Regular performance reviews of all match officials at this level.
 - Recruitment, initial training, development and performance review of those involved in coaching match officials with potential at this level; again, this to be overseen by RFU-employed staff to ensure consistency across the country.
 - Overseeing recruitment of newcomers to this level and overseeing management of those match officials.

You will see from above that we are expecting regular performance reviews of all referees at these levels and, hence, the need for these referee organisations to have a cadre of referee developers. Of course, the number of performance reviews an individual will be subject to will vary; we discuss this in more detail in the section of performance review (see paragraphs 33 - 35). The Working Group also concludes that the majority of referees at this level do not need to be part of a formal coaching structure; they will develop or retain their competency by regular CPD and by learning from their performance reviews. Therefore, only those referees with the potential to officiate at the highest levels (Level 5 and above) should be part of a coaching structure.

This does not preclude a relatively inexperienced referee, only officiating at this stage of his or her career at Levels 8 or 9, from being part of a coaching structure; it is entirely dependent on that individual being assessed as having significant potential for the future.

- d. **Support Structure for those Officiating at Level 10 and Below.** Currently, there are approximately **3,000** games each week taking place at these levels, of which we estimate **2,000** are being officiated by non-society referees – both club members and teachers. Those officiating at these levels, who are members of a referee organisation, will be supported by the structure (set out in [sub-paragraph 31c](#)) for those referees officiating at Levels 6-9. Hopefully, the majority of these will develop the competencies to referee at these higher levels. It is those active referees, who are not members of a referee society, which need support to develop, but currently have none. The Working Group considered a number of models to provide this support, including identifying an individual (probably in a club or school or a group of clubs or schools). Previously, there were 2 roles called “Club Referee Co-Ordinator” (CRefC) and “Club Referee Developer” (CRefD) that seem never to have been fully utilised or established consistently across the country. However, the Working Group felt that it was pointless at this stage to develop any detailed model, because it would need support from the RFU workforce to:
- Provide oversight of the recruiting of new referees by clubs, schools, referee organisations and CBs.
 - Train new referees and facilitate their initial development.
 - Develop and have oversight of a national model of support involving volunteers, such as the CRefC and CRefD system (if such system was thought to be beneficial).
 - Work with (not for) referee organisations to encourage newly qualified referees to become members.
 - For those who decide not to join a referee organisation, ensure they have access to:
 - Suitable matches to officiate at to develop their skills. The 2nd and 3rd most popular incentives (see [para 19](#)) in the 2013/14 ELRA Survey to encourage inexperienced match officials to referee regularly was someone supporting on the touch line and interaction with other inexperienced referees. Therefore, consideration might be given to run a bi-monthly series of festivals among schools, or club 2nd & lower XVs, or club youth sides providing an opportunity for newly qualified referees to officiate a series of matches at one ground, watching and supporting each other, and gaining in confidence because of the experience.
 - CPD, delivered by “RFU-identified” educators. The most popular incentive (again, see [paragraph 19](#)) in the 2013/14 ELRA Survey to encourage inexperienced match officials to referee regularly was additional training.
- e. Given the current numbers of active non-society referees, it is judged that those responsibilities could not be absorbed by the current RFU workforce. Therefore, the Working Group concludes that the RFU identifies and resources a dedicated RFU-employed workforce in each of its 6 Areas to **principally** support active referees in clubs and schools, who are not members of a referee organisation. The responsibilities of this workforce are set out in [sub-paragraph 31d](#). Indeed, this would be one of our highest priorities for resourcing.

32. Therefore, in order to provide a support structure, covering both society and “non-society” match officials, based on the level of game being refereed, and which is consistent across the country the Working Group’s **3rd principal recommendation** is threefold:
- 1. The RFU identifies the requirement and then resources an RFU-employed workforce to provide the structure to support those refereeing at Levels 3 – 5 as set out in sub-paragraphs 31a&b above.**
 - 2. The RFU identifies the requirement and then resources an RFU-employed workforce to provide the structure to support those refereeing at Levels 10 & below, who are not members of a referee organisation, as set out in sub-paragraphs 31d&e above. (This would be one of the Working Group’s highest priorities for resources).**
 - 3. The RFU work with the RFRU and its member organisations to establish the support structure for all active referees as set out in paragraphs 30&31 above.**
33. **Performance Review.** Undoubtedly, regular performance review is key to the improvement (or, at least, maintenance) of the quality of performance of match officials, which is vital to the enjoyment of the game by both players and spectators. Indeed, performance review has featured throughout the discussion above on the structure to support and develop match officials. The number and style of performance reviews that a match official should be subjected to each year will be dependent on a number of factors. Firstly, their experience and level at which they are refereeing is one of those factors in that a highly experienced referee approaching the end of their career only needs a minimum number of performance reviews to ensure they are maintaining their competency level. On the other hand, those refereeing at the highest levels (especially if receiving a match fee) should expect a number of formal reviews to ensure their performance is at the requisite standard. Similarly, those new to refereeing will benefit from a number of performance reviews (although not too many) early in their career to ensure that they are applying the lessons from their initial training and to bolster their confidence. Generally, these should be less formal and more advisory in nature, but they will require formal performance reviews in order to retain their initial qualification and status as a qualified referee if the recommendation at **sub-paragraph 25(2b)** is accepted. Secondly, those showing potential to referee at a higher level (particularly the highest levels of the community game) should expect and would benefit from a number of performance reviews to confirm that potential to officiate at a higher level. Thirdly, the outcome of the previous performance reviews and the trends demonstrated in previous reviews will determine the frequency and timing of future assessments. What is clear is that no set structure can (or should) be established, as one sees in the business world, for the frequency that match officials are subject to performance reviews each year. Most match officials are volunteers and want to enjoy their involvement in the game. That said, all should benefit from knowing their strengths and weaknesses as a referee and what they need to do to improve. It will always be dependent on individual circumstances. However, the Working Group strongly believes that every qualified referee, whether the member of a referee organisation or not, should have their performance formally reviewed once per season. Moreover, as a guideline those officiating at Levels 3 – 5 might expect to be assessed at about every 4th game to ensure they are maintaining the required quality of performance and to illustrate how they might improve to maximise their full potential.
34. Turning now to the format of the performance review. The Working Group was made aware of the robust and comprehensive assessment currently used for those Panel and Group match officials. It was reported that it is working well, providing appropriate development outcomes and ensuring the quality of officiating at those levels. Therefore, the Working Group sees no reason to suggest changes to this assessment format. However, for those officiating at lower levels such a format is too complex and overbearing, except those with the potential to referee at Levels 3 – 5 who should be subject to a series of that comprehensive assessment to confirm that potential.

For the majority, they need a simple assessment system, albeit formal, that lists some good points in their performance and 2 or 3 points to improve on. What is important is that there is an assurance that: the individual is competent to officiate at the level to which they are appointed; potential is identified; and the individual knows what they have to do to maintain or improve their level of performance. The individual match official must feel it is beneficial to them, and any changes to the level at which they are appointed to referee should be based normally on trends rather than a single performance.

35. The Working Group decided not to make any formal recommendations about the performance review system. It believes, in recommending that the RFU work with the RFRU to establish the support structure for all active referees (see paragraph 32(3)), performance review will be an integral part of that support structure. What will be important is that there is consistency across the country, not only to benefit the development of all active referees but, particularly, if mandatory referee registration and licensing is introduced; the latter is a section later in this report at [page 29](#).
36. **Priority for Appointments to Matches.** The match, to which a referee is appointed, is important to their development, can impact on the integrity of the competition and, ultimately the enjoyment of players and spectators. Moreover, match official appointments should take account of any specific priorities that the Game has. For instance, the RFU is trying to increase the retention in the game of those aged 16 - 24 and to grow the women and girls' game. The suitability of the referee for a match involving these groups will have an impact on the players' enjoyment and development and, ultimately, their retention in the game. Therefore, the Working Group concludes that any system of priority of appointments for match officials should take account, of where appropriate, the needs of the Game, as well as the level of competition and status of the match.
37. The last time that the RFU issued guidance on the priorities for appointment of match officials was in the 2009/10 season. The Working Group learnt that some referee societies consult with their local CBs and schools to determine local priorities for match official appointments, others do not. Some may apply an adapted version of that now incomplete RFU guidance, some may not. What is clear is that there is little consistency across the country (allowing for local needs) and the guidance is based solely on competition hierarchy and takes no account of any needs of the Game being promoted by the RFU. A new framework is required. This is a significant piece of work, which the Working Group did not have the time to provide the detail needed. However, it developed some principles for a new framework which are at [Annex D](#). While there may be some specific local needs, these are likely to be very occasional and the Working Group conclude that the norm should be that a new framework should be applied consistently across the country. This leads to our **4th principal recommendation**, which is twofold:
- 1. The RFU works with the RFRU and its member organisations to develop a new framework, based on the principles at Annex D, for prioritising the appointment match officials.**
 - 2. All ensure that the new framework is consistently applied across the country, subject to the very occasional local needs.**
38. **Exchange Appointments.** For those refereeing at Level 6 and below, exchange appointments are vital in the development of referees with potential. To officiate in an unfamiliar environment and experience nuances in the way the game is played across the country is a challenge that referees with potential must experience. In addition, exchange appointments can be reward and recognition for the stalwart referee. The Working Group was told that there are no protocols for determining exchange appointments, and different referee societies use them in different ways. This, it was reported, has, on occasions, led to frustrations in that the referee has not been sufficiently competent to officiate the match to which the exchange appointed them. The Working Group do not feel it necessary to make a formal recommendation about exchange appointments, but strongly suggests to the RFRU that it develops a set of agreed protocols for exchange appointments that are then applied consistently by all its member organisations.

39. **Financing of Match Official Development.** To date, the report has concentrated on the human resources needed to support the development of match officials but, of course, funding is also required. The Working Group relied entirely on the RFRU study that considered the operational costs of refereeing, how they are met, and the training and development costs incurred by referee societies and federations. The report of that RFRU study is at [Annex E](#). The Working Group accepts the findings of this study and concludes there are 2 main recommendations for the former to highlight. The first concerns how clubs are charged by referee societies and federations for the provision of match officials and the payment of their expenses. The study suggests there are generally 2 approaches: an annual subscription from each club, with no account being taken of how many matches for which the society or federation is unable to provide officials, and with the expenses of the match officials being paid directly to them by the clubs over and above that annual subscription; or secondly, a charge for every game for which the society or federation provides a referee, with the expenses of the match official being paid by the society or federation from that charge to the club. We support the view of the study that there should be consistency across the country in the methodology. Moreover, we also support the findings of the study that “best practice” would be to charge for every game that the society or federation provides a club with throughout the season with the referee’s expenses being paid from that charge to clubs by the society or federation. It seems equitable that any charge to a club should be based on the actual provision of a match official (accepting that the level of charge will differ across the country dependant on local geography). We are not concerned about the methodology of collecting those charges (there may be a number of acceptable processes), but the principle behind the identified “best practice”. Therefore, the Working Group’s **5th principal recommendation** is:

All referee societies and federations adopt what is considered the “best practice” in the RFRU study of charging clubs based on the actual number of games for which match officials are provided, with the match official’s expenses being paid by the society or federation from that club charge.

40. The other major recommendation that the Working Group draws from this RFRU study concerns the RFU’s PFR process, whereby elements of the financing of the training and development of match officials is administered by the RFU’s Constituent Bodies (CBs). The local referee society may be a full member, may be an associated body, or may have no affiliation to its local CB(s). The Working Group accepts the findings of the study that the effectiveness of this system across the country is very variable and that it could be more efficient, if this funding for the training and development of society and federation match officials was administrated directly by a referees’ organisation. However, the Working Group recognises that with this responsibility there needs to be accountability, with account being taken of the funding the societies and federations receive from clubs for the provision of match officials, much of which is for the training and development of their match officials. Furthermore, the RFU has governance and oversight of its CBs contained within the RFU’s rules, which currently it does not have for the RFRU, its federations and societies. Therefore, in making our next recommendation the Working Group would want appropriate governance arrangements to be put in place before this recommendation is enacted; such arrangements are listed in the section on the governance of match officials at [paragraph 53](#). Consequently, the Working Group’s **6th principal recommendation** is:

The funding of match officials’ training and development financed through the PFR process should be administered directly by referees’ organisations, subject to appropriate governance arrangements to ensure accountability are in place.



PAYMENT OF MATCH FEES TO MATCH OFFICIALS

41. The survey of the 2013/14 ELRA candidates found that nearly a quarter of respondents felt that payment of a match fee would encourage them to referee regularly. The question of whether all match officials, no matter the level at which they officiate, should receive a match fee as well as expenses is a perennial one. A number of other sports have this arrangement. In 2014, the RFRU instigated its own review of this. A summary of the report of the Task Group is at [Annex F](#).
42. As well as making recommendations about match fees the review group also made a number of proposals about support structures for match officials. Indeed, they are comparable to our 3rd principal recommendation on [page 20](#). Turning to its proposals on the payment of match fees to all match officials, the Task Group makes 2 specific recommendations, namely:
- There should be no universal payment of referees from U13 to Level 6 inclusive;
 - Referees appointed to Level 5 league games should receive payment proposed at £75 per game. Those officials would become, for PAYE and employment purposes, part of the existing PNR payroll management process and employed by the Union. The cost of payment would be approximately £79K, plus travelling expenses. Further work will be required to define fully other Level 5 matches which might be eligible for payment.

43. The Working Group accepts the findings of this RFRU Task Group on the payment of match fees. We have proposed a support structure, overseen by an RFU-employed workforce, for all those officiating at Levels 3 - 5, and it is reasonable that all match officials operating within this cadre should be treated equitably. In future, it is at these levels of the community game that match officials will be under greatest scrutiny and with payment of match fees comes greater accountability. Currently, those officiating at Level 4 and above are paid a match fee. The changing landscape, resulting from the Adult Competition Review, makes it reasonable that, in future, those officiating at Level 5 should receive a match fee. In addition, the Working Group discovered that currently, match fees are not always paid for games that have equivalent standing to Level 3&4. The Working Group considers that it is reasonable (and, thus, bringing consistency) that a fee is paid to the match officials for all games, no matter the RFU competition, that are deemed to be at Levels 3 - 5.
44. The Working Group also noted from the report that a substantial number of the responses to the Task Group's questionnaire supported the payment of other officials, such as referee coaches and assessors / performance reviewers, but there was no further discussion on the matter in the report. The Working Group considered this in more detail, especially in relation to those coaches and assessors working with those officiating at Levels 3- 5. Much is and will be expected of these coaches and assessors. They have a high degree of responsibility and accountability, and a significant commitment is expected of them; to recognise and reward them in some way to mark that commitment and accountability is not unreasonable. These coaches and assessors are crucial to the development of those match officials who officiate at the highest levels of our community game in England and from whom our future Premiership and International referees will be drawn. Therefore, the Working Group concludes that coaches and assessors working with those officiating at Levels 3 - 5 should receive a payment (as well as expenses) to recognise their level of responsibility and expected commitment. While we do not consider this a high priority for resourcing among our recommendations, we do believe it should have a higher priority than a new payment of a match fee for those refereeing Level 5 games and their equivalent matches in other RFU competitions. Therefore, the Working Group's **7th principal recommendation** is twofold, and is:
- 1. All those officiating at Levels 3 – 5 or equivalent matches in other RFU competitions receive a match fee (on a sliding scale between the levels) and expenses. (However, resourcing of match fee payment to those refereeing at Level 5 is our lowest priority for additional funding).**
 - 2. All referee coaches and assessors working with those officiating at Level 3 – 5 receive a payment, as well as expenses, to recognise their responsibilities and expected commitment. (Again, resourcing of this would be our 2nd lowest priority for additional funding).**



ROLE OF REFEREES' ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR GOVERNANCE

45. The Working Group when discussing the role of referees' organisations (the RFRU, federations and societies) considered 2 aspects - their role in development and their role in governance. Earlier in this report, we laid out our proposed support and development framework for all match officials. Consciously, we did not differentiate in those proposals between the role of federations and societies. The footnote in [sub-paragraph 31c](#) makes that point and states that it will be discussed in this section.
46. **Role of Referees' Organisations in the Development of Match Officials.** In our earlier proposals on the support structures, we made referees' organisations integral to the support and development of match officials for those refereeing at Levels 6 – 9 and those officiating at Level 10 and below, who are members of a referee organisation. Referees' societies have been the backbone of match officiating for many years undertaking the training, development and appointment of its members. However, across the country there are considerable differences in size and capability and, therefore, effectiveness. Referees' federations are a relatively new concept, having been set up in the last 15 years. However, their role and responsibilities differ across the country, depending on local arrangements and the level of co-operation between the societies that make up the federation. If the other recommendations of this Working Group are endorsed, there will be significant change to the support and development structures for match officials in the next few years. Therefore, on balance, the Working Group feels it would be counter-productive to propose any significant changes to the match officials' membership organisations at this time. The new arrangements need to establish themselves. Those referees' organisations then have the opportunity to take advantage of the new support structures, build their own capability and effectiveness, and attract many more newly-qualified referees to join their organisations, develop them and retain their services for many years to come.

47. Therefore, the Working Group determines that referees' societies should retain responsibility for the training, development and deployment of the majority of their members who referee at Level 6 and below. In theory, referees' societies could be responsible for the training and development of all their members who referee at Level 6 and below. However, the Working Group concludes that there is a specific role in the identification, training and development (including appointment) of those refereeing at Level 6 and below, who have the potential to officiate at Level 5 and above; this talent identification and development role should be the responsibility of referee federations. As set out, in [paragraph 31d](#) above, it will be those referees with the potential to officiate at Level 5 and above who should be part of a coaching structure. Therefore, referee federations need a cadre of volunteer referee coaches and assessors to develop these match officials with potential. Moreover, referee federations will need to work closely with referee societies and those who appoint Level 3 - 5 match officials to co-ordinate the appointment of these referees with potential to appropriate matches, particularly at Level 6 and, to some extent at Level 7. Furthermore, appointment of these referees with potential must not be limited by the geographic confines of the federation; if there is not a suitable game within those geographic confines then a suitable match needs to be found in a neighbouring area. Therefore, there is a need for close co-operation and co-ordination between those appointing to Levels 6&7 matches. The Working Group recognises that in some parts of the country federations have a wider remit than outlined above. The Working Group has no objection to this where it suits locally. The responsibility for the identification, development and appointment of match officials with the potential to officiate at Level 5 and above is the minimum responsibility of the federations; a wider remit can be agreed locally with its member referees' societies. Therefore, the Working Group's **8th principal recommendation** is that:

- 1. Referees' societies retain responsibility for the training, development and deployment of the majority of their members who referee at Level 6 and below.**
- 2. As a minimum, referee federations have responsibility for the identification, development and appointment of match officials, currently refereeing at Level 6 and below, but with the potential to officiate at Level 5; any wider remit can be agreed locally with its member referees' societies.**

48. **Role of other Refereeing Organisations in Developing of Referees.** There are a number of examples around the country of local groups of non-society referees forming subsidiary groups to provide referees for various competitions; examples include:

- A group that provides referees for the Raging Bull reserve league in the North.
- Bristol University (working with the Bristol and District Referees' Society) providing referees for students' intra mural matches.
- The CB-sponsored Surrey Referees' Association with support from the London Referees' Society.

It was felt that these "non-society" groupings should be encouraged to aid the development and offer wider appointment opportunities (if the individual is willing) to these non-society referees. This could be a strategy adopted by the RFU-employed workforce we are recommending to support non-society referees.

49. **Governance of Referees' Organisations.** This was not initially within the remit of the Working Group, except to report on the work of the RFU's Governance Committee and the RFRU to consider the governance of match officials and the latter's member. The report on this work is at [Annex G](#) with its recommendations listed on [page 63](#). Subsequently, the RFU's Governance Committee has received this report and is generally content with the proposals.

50. The major recommendation of that study is that referees' societies should consider becoming voting members of the RFU (like clubs). The report also proposes that this Working Group consider what criteria (if any) should be applied to referees' societies to become voting members of the RFU. For comparison, to be a voting member of the RFU a club has to play in an RFU Adult League, or play a minimum number of friendly fixtures against a minimum number of clubs that are also voting members of the RFU. In addition, clubs have to be allocated to membership of a CB. The remaining recommendations about referees' societies are mainly requirements or subsequent actions necessary if societies were to seek voting membership of the RFU. There is a strong recommendation that referees' societies, which are not yet incorporated, should consider doing so. This is a matter for those individual societies. It does not

impact on any other proposals, and, therefore, this report will make no further comment on it, except to say that any un-incorporated societies should seriously consider the advantages of incorporation.

51. It is, of course, for referees' societies to decide if they wish to pursue becoming voting members of the RFU. Note must be taken that the report proposes that appropriate amendments would be needed to societies' constitutions and membership application forms, as a pre-requisite. For referees' societies to become voting members of the RFU, they would need the endorsement of the RFU Council to make the necessary regulation change. The report also states that there would need to be criteria by which societies qualify as voting members, and asks that this Working Group make recommendations on this. The Working Group considered a number of possible criteria, including having a minimum number of active referees as members. However, it was concluded that this is not necessarily a measure of the effectiveness of a society. Instead, the Working Group considers that initially the following criteria would be appropriate:
- A constitution approved by the RFU.
 - A membership application form agreed with RFU.
 - Appoint to an RFU League.
 - Sign up to a set of standards that includes responsibility for referee development.
 - Provide a 5 year action plan to help achieve the vision of all 15-a-side matches in the society's geographical area being officiated by a trained and qualified referee.
52. Maintenance and progress against these criteria would determine if a referee society retains its voting status. Moreover, if societies do become voting members of the RFU, then it would be acceptable that the funding of match officials' training and development financed through the PFR process should be administered directly by referees' organisations, as stated in our 6th principal recommendation. The Working Group concludes that societies becoming voting members of the RFU would provide the latter with appropriate levels of accountability for its members' money.
53. The other recommendations about governance concern the organisation and constitution of the RFRU. Currently, the RFRU is a National Representative Body of the RFU; as such it does not have "CB status". The RFRU at one of its recent meetings had a presentation on the advantages of CB status from the England Schools RFU (ESRFU), which is in a similar position to the RFRU, but does have CB status. The ESRFU suggests that the advantages of CB status provides it with direct access to PFR funding, means greater influence in the Union, and it is considered as a full member of the rugby family. For the RFRU to be granted CB status would require an RFU rule change, which needs the agreement of the Game at an RFU AGM. Therefore, the earliest that this could be enacted is the RFU's AGM in 2016 (usually in July). The Working Group makes its **9th principal recommendation** regarding the governance of referee organisations is threefold:

- 1. Referees' societies consider becoming voting members of the RFU. In doing so, they agree to the following criteria:**
 - a. Their constitution is approved by the RFU,**
 - b. Their membership application form is agreed with the RFU.**
 - c. They appoint to an RFU Adult League.**
 - d. They sign up to a set of standards that includes responsibility for referee development.**
 - e. They provide a 5 year action plan to help achieve the vision of all 15-a-side matches in the society's geographical area being officiated by a trained and qualified referee.**
- 2. If referee societies seek voting member status of the RFU, as set out in 1 above, then the RFU Council agrees the appropriate RFU Regulation change.**
- 3. The RFRU seeks CB status at the 2016 RFU AGM.**



REFEREE REGISTRATION AND LICENSING

54. The RFU already has a voluntary coach registration and licensing system. It is intended that the scheme become mandatory for coaches from 2019. Registration and licensing serve as a tool to underpin and promote coach development. A licence to practise as a coach within a specific sport is a measure of currency of coaching practice that builds upon qualifications. A licence can support the effective recruitment, employment and deployment of skilled coaches. It is accepted that introducing coach licensing across sport will help coaches to maintain their currency of knowledge, skill and effectiveness. This, in turn, will lead to higher levels of coaching practice and enhanced experiences for participants. One of the challenges to introducing a mandatory scheme is to have a robust assurance system to ensure that coaches consistently display the behaviours that are expected of them. Whilst it is relatively easy to deal with the coach that seriously transgresses the behaviours expected, a system of quality assurance is needed to ensure that all maintain at least good practice and do not slip into bad/poor coaching practices.
55. The Working Group agreed that having a mandatory match officials' registration and licensing scheme could accrue many benefits for the referee community. Firstly, compulsory registration would mean it would be relatively easy to track the personal details, qualifications, CPD undertaken, matches officiated, and performance reviews of all match officials, whether they were a member of a referee society or not. Secondly, a compulsory licensing scheme would mean it would be possible to insist that all active match officials undertake relevant CPD. In addition, the purpose of a licensing scheme is to ensure an individual is complying with the demands of the level that one is refereeing at, and displaying the behaviours and standards expected. The real challenge is having an effective quality assurance system that ensures that purpose is being met. However, the match officials' performance review system (outlined earlier) is a large step towards that quality assurance system.
56. The Working Group concludes there would be significant advantages in recruiting and retaining match officials, as well as, more importantly, raising the overall standard of refereeing across the country if there was a mandatory referee registration and licensing system. Therefore, the RFRU and its member organisations should agree the principle of having a mandatory referee registration and licensing system. Thereafter, they should work with the RFU (and alongside the coaching community) to introduce such a scheme for match officials from 2019 with an absolute commitment to scheme being sought in 2018. Consequently, the Working Group's **10th principal recommendation** is:

The RFRU and its member organisations agree the principle of having a mandatory match officials' registration and licensing system, and then work with the RFU to introduce such a scheme from 2019 with an absolute commitment to scheme being sought in 2018.



THE RFU'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM) SYSTEMS SUPPORTING MATCH OFFICIATING

57. Throughout, the Working Group has been hampered by the lack of a central database containing information about the number of matches, data about match officials' training and development, the matches they are appointed to, their assessments, and whether they are considered competent of officiating at the level at which they are deployed. IT and CRM systems are developed, among other things, to aid administration, and to provide information and evidence on which to base future resourcing decisions and the like. Currently, the RFU's IT and CRM systems supporting match officials are woefully lacking.
58. If many of our recommendations in this report are to be effective (or even instigated), then the RFU needs to make significant improvements to its IT systems in support of match officiating. This does not mean developing bespoke systems in isolation. There are commercial CRM systems, like "Who's the Ref", used by many referee organisations to appoint referees to games, to inform clubs of those appointments, and to undertake some administrative tasks. The RFU, in improving its IT and CRM systems to support match officials, should investigate proven commercial systems and, if appropriate, incorporate them into the Union's solution. This leads to the Working Group's **11th (and final) principal recommendation**, namely:

The RFU works with the RFRU and the latter's member organisations to develop an improved IT and CRM systems, including where appropriate already proven commercial solutions, to support match officiating. The improved RFU systems must be capable, as a minimum, of supporting the outcomes of the recommendations in this report.



REPORT SUMMARY AND THE PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

59. The Working Group began with a vision of:

- Every 15-a-side game from U13 upwards officiated by a trained and qualified referee.
- Trained and qualified assistant referees at every first XV game from Level 4⁹ upwards and equivalent level matches.
- All games below U13 refereed by a suitably qualified person.

While the last objective is very important, the Working Group has concentrated solely on developing a framework to achieve the first 2 points. The introduction of New Rules of Play for U12s and below and the implementation of the age grade competition review will be the opportunity to ensure the latter objective is pursued.

60. During its deliberations, the Working Group has been conscious that the vision cannot be achieved unless an appropriate support structure within a framework of governance is established. Moreover, it will take a number of years to achieve that vision. Therefore, the Working Group has concentrated in determining what are those appropriate support structures and governance arrangements. We have, therefore, developed our principal recommendations accordingly, which are summarised at [Annex H](#). It also includes details of which organisation will need to endorse each recommendation.

61. Undoubtedly, the Game faces a challenge in training, developing and converting sufficient individuals into long-term and active match officials for the community 15-a-side game. The quality of match officials is integral to player safety, development and enjoyment and, ultimately player retention. In making its recommendations, the Working Group is cognisant that these only set out the principles to provide appropriate support and good governance for match officials. Once the recommendations are endorsed, there is much work to be done by all, if the vision is to become a reality. The Working Group has received much co-operation from many in conducting this study and compiling its report, for which it is most grateful. This willingness to work together is imperative if the match officials' challenge is to be met and accomplished.



ANNEX A

COMPOSITION OF THE WORKING GROUP

1. **Chair:** Nigel Gillingham (Chair of GDSC and RFU Council member).
2. Ian Blanchard (FA's Referee Development Department).
3. Graeme Charters (Chair RFRU).
4. Jim Coulson (RFRU RFU Council member).
5. Nigel Cowley (Wessex Referee Federation).
6. Steve Grainger (RFU's Development Director).
7. John Lawn (RFU's Head of Game Development).
8. Robert Linthwaite (a young referee from Notts, Lincs & Derbys Referees' Society).
9. Tim Miller (London Referees' Society).
10. Michael Patz (RFU's Match Official Development Manager).
11. Ian Taylor (CEO Skills Active and former GB Hockey International and Olympic Gold Medallist).
12. Mike Wappington (RFU Council member and former CB Secretary).
13. **Secretary to the Working Group:** Linda Fell (RFU's Game Development Administration Officer).

ANNEX B

NUMBER OF 15-A-SIDE MATCHES

NUMBER OF MATCHES REQUIRING REFEREES (ONE PER MATCH)

SER No	TYPE	NUMBER OF MATCHES	COMMENT
1.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 3 - 5).	1,896	Based on Adult Competition Review model from 2016/17.
2.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 6 & below).	11,748	Based on Adult Competition Review model from 2016/17: Level 6 - 2112 (16 leagues of 12 teams). Level 7 - 4224 (32 leagues of 12 teams). Level 8 & below - 5412 (492 teams in 12 team leagues).
3.	RFU cup competitions.	1,253	Based on Adult Competition Review model from 2016/17, but with an assumption that all eligible teams will participate: Level 5 - 189 fixtures (96 team format as per Adult Competition Review - Cup, Shield & Bowl). Level 6 - 190 fixtures (192 teams on straight knockout with 2 competitions (Cup & Shield). Level 7 & below - 874 fixtures (876 teams on straight knockout with 4 competitions (two at 2 levels - Cup & Shield).
4.	Other cup competitions (eg County Cups/ District or Combination Cups for adult males).	1,100	Despite a number of attempts, there was a poor response from many CBs when asked to provide this information. Therefore, we have assumed that the same clubs are involved in the RFU cup competitions, but that there are 28 geographical CB competitions and they are all a straight knock-out format.
5.	Matches played by 2nd and lower XV's in reserve leagues, merit tables and friendlies by male sides.	15,753	Based on returns from clubs for 2013/14.
6.	Matches played by male teams in HE & FE establishments.	1,750	BUCs fixtures only. However, does not include intra-mural matches.
7.	Matches played in schools (U13s - U18s) by male sides.	27,244	Based solely on returns from 1594 ERFSU schools and includes 1703 Nat West Cup fixtures. However, there are 5479 secondary schools in England (4021 State & 1456 Independent). In addition, includes an estimate the All Schools programme for schools that do not normally play rugby will generate 1500 games in festivals (these, however, are for both girls and boys).

SER No	TYPE	NUMBER OF MATCHES	COMMENT
8.	Matches played in clubs (U13s - U18s) by male sides.	31,320	4176 teams currently registered on RugbyFirst and assumed, on average, they play 15 matches per season.
9.	Matches played by adult women club sides	4,440	Based on returns from CBs and Divisional Organising Committees for 2013/14. An additional 3,000 matches added to account for expansion in the game.
10	Matches played by female sides in HE & FE establishment.	300	BUCs fixtures only in HE institutions. However, does not include intramural matches.
11.	Matches played in schools (U13s - U18s) by female sides.	0	Included in All Schools estimate in Ser No 7.
12.	Matches played in clubs (U13s - U18s) by female sides.	1,600	320 teams currently registered on RugbyFirst and assumed on average they play 10 matches per season.
13.	Armed Forces Teams.	585	117 teams and assumed on average they play 10 matches per season against each other.
14.	Other Matches - AASE competition.	129	
15.	Other Matches - County Championship.	38	
16.	Other Matches - U20s National Championship.	52	
17.	Other Matches - U18s Academy League.	45	
18.	Other Matches - Age Grade County Matches.	126	Based on 28 counties having U16s team that plays 5 fixtures & U18s team that plays 4 fixtures.
19.	Other Matches - PRL A Team League.	42	
	TOTAL	99,421	

NUMBER OF MATCHES REQUIRING ASSISTANT REFEREES (TWO PER MATCH)

SER No	TYPE	NUMBER OF MATCHES	COMMENT
1.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 3 &4).	840	
2.	RFU Cup Competitions (semi-finals & finals).	27	Level 5 - 9 matches. Level 6 - 6 matches. Level 7 & below - 12 matches.
3.	Other cup competitions (eg County Cups/ District or Combination Cups for adult males).	84	Assumed to be the semi-finals and finals of these type of competitions in each of the 28 geographical CBs.
4.	RFU Schools Competitions (semi-finals & finals).	15	Based on 4 NatWest competitions at 2 age-groups and the Schools Champions Trophy.
5.	Women's Premiership & Senior Cup Competitions.	135	
6.	Other Matches - AASE Competition.	129	
7.	Other Matches - County Championship.	38	
8.	Other Matches - U20s National Championship.	52	
9.	Other Matches - U18s Academy League.	45	
10.	Other Matches - PRL A Team League.	42	
	TOTAL	1,407	

TIMING OF MATCHES REQUIRING REFEREES

SER No	TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MATCHES	SATURDAY MATCHES	SUNDAY MATCHES	MIDWEEK MATCHES
1.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 3 - 5).	1,896	1896		
2.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 6 & below).	11,748	11,748		
3.	RFU cup competitions.	1,253	1,253		
4.	Other cup competitions (eg County Cups/ District or Combination Cups for adult males).	1,100	28 (Finals only of each CB competition)	536	536
5.	Matches played by 2nd and lower XV's in reserve leagues, merit tables and friendlies by male sides.	15,753	15,753		
6.	Matches played by male teams in HE & FE establishments.	1,750			1,750
7.	Matches played in schools (U13s - U18s) by male sides.	27,244	9,081 (An assumption of one third of the total)		18,163
8.	Matches played in clubs (U13s - U18s) by male sides.	31,320	1566 (An assumption of 5% of the total probably all U18 matches)	29,754	
9.	Matches played by adult women club sides.	4,440		4,440	
10.	Matches played by female sides in HE & FE establishment.	300			300
11.	Matches played in schools (U13s - U18s) by female sides.	0			
12.	Matches played in clubs (U13s - U18s) by female sides.	1,600		1,600	
13.	Armed Forces Teams.	585			585
14.	Other Matches - AASE competition.	129			129
15.	Other Matches - County Championship.	38		3 (Finals only)	
16.	Other Matches - U20s National Championship.	52	1(Championship final only)	51	
17.	Other Matches - U18s Academy League.	45	42		3 (Finals Festival only)
18.	Other Matches - Age Grade County Matches.	126	28 (An assumption of half the U18s fixtures)	98	
19.	Other Matches - PRL A Team League.	42			42
	TOTAL	99,421	41,431	36,482	21,508

TIMING OF MATCHES REQUIRING ASSISTANT REFEREES

SER No	TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MATCHES	SATURDAY MATCHES	SUNDAY MATCHES	MIDWEEK MATCHES
1.	Adult RFU league matches (Levels 3 &4).	840	840		
2.	RFU Cup Competitions (semi-finals & finals).	27	27		
3.	Other cup competitions (eg County Cups/ District or Combination Cups for adult males).	84	28 (Finals)	28 (Semi-Finals)	28 (Semi-Finals)
4.	RFU Schools Competitions (semi-finals & finals).	15			15
5.	Women's Premiership & Senior Cup Competitions.	135		135	
6.	Other Matches - AASE Competition.	129			129
7.	Other Matches - County Championship.	38	35	3 (Finals only)	
8.	Other Matches - U20s National Championship.	52	1 (Championship final only)	51	
9.	Other Matches - U18s Academy League.	45	42		3 (Finals Festival only)
10.	Other Matches - PRL A Team League.	42			42
	TOTAL	1,407	973	217	217

ANNEX C

ANALYSIS OF AVERAGE NUMBER OF MATCHES REFEREES UNDERTAKE IN A SEASON

1. **Introduction.** The data is extracted from the various appointing systems of a number of Referee Societies, including “Who’s the Ref” and “EasyRef”; the data is anonymous. As will be seen in some qualitative data later, the data is in respect only of society appointments. Within the largest combined source of data, 23% of registered individuals did not referee in the season and the assumption is that they were not available for appointment at all for a variety of reasons.

2. **Analysis.**

a. The distribution of society referees by grade of referee is as follows:

GRADE OF REFEREE AT END OF SEASON	%	GRADE OF REFEREE AT END OF SEASON	%
4 or higher	1%	10	17%
5	4%	11	9%
6	8%	12 or lower	11%
7	9%	ELRA	3%
8	12%	No grade recorded	12%
9	14%		

b. The distribution of appointed games by level of game in the data is:

LEVEL OF GAME	% OF APPOINTMENTS IN SAMPLE	LEVEL OF GAME	% OF APPOINTMENTS IN SAMPLE
6 and above	7%	11	11%
7	8%	12 and below	9%
8	17%	Schools	4%
9	18%	Women	1%
10	18%	Unidentified	7%

c. The number of games being officiated by society referees as a proportion of the survey is as follows:

NUMBER OF GAMES PER SEASON	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	30+
PROPORTION OF REFEREES	31%	15%	27%	19%	8%

- d. The average number of games officiated by society referees, extracted from this data, was 14 matches per season. Two things, in particular stood out about this data. First, the average number of games was lower than expected and, second, the large proportion of referees who refereed five games or fewer. We hypothesised that referees with a higher grading would referee more, both as a consequence and a condition of their development. Further analysis supported that hypothesis, as shown below:

Referees Graded Ten to Fifteen (including Ungraded and ELRA Grades).

NUMBER OF GAMES PER SEASON	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	30+
PROPORTION OF REFEREES	31%	15%	27%	19%	8%

The average number of games officiated by that subgroup of society referees was **11** matches per season.

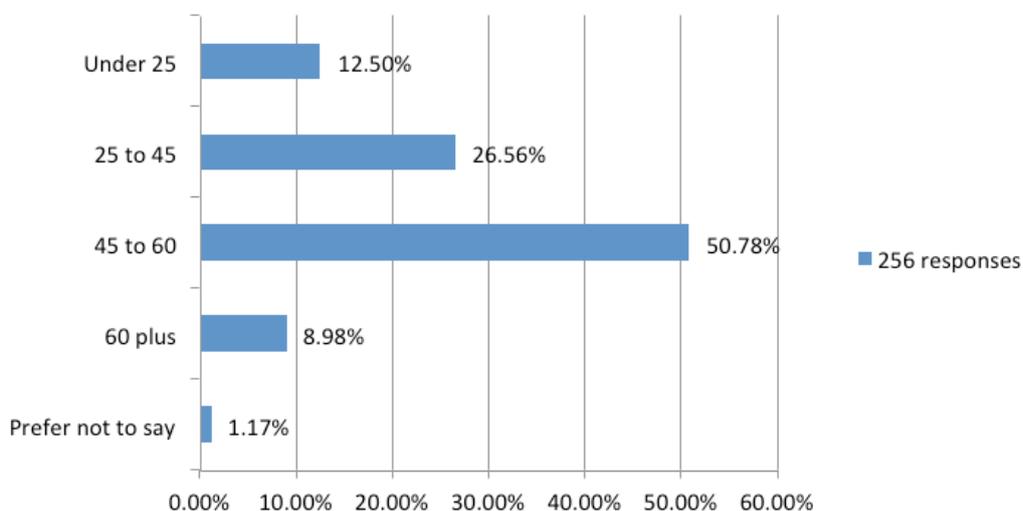
Referees Graded Five to Nine.

NUMBER OF GAMES PER SEASON	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	30+
PROPORTION OF REFEREES	40%	18%	27%	11%	4%

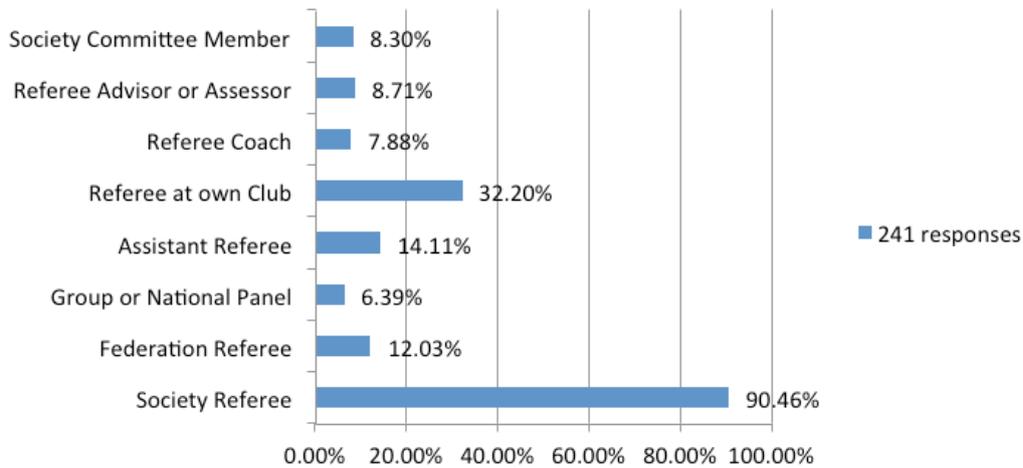
The average number of games officiated by that subgroup of society referees was **19** matches per season.

- e. We also speculated that there would be variety of reasons as to why the data showed such a large proportion refereeing a seemingly small number of games. Such reasons might be the referee had only recently qualified and had not yet had many games, the referee had retired from refereeing during the season, the referee was injured during the season, the referee was being appointed by a body other than the society (eg Federation, Group or National Panel) and that those games would not be matched from the other data sources (all of this analysis was carried out with anonymous data). It was also possible that they were refereeing for a club or had multiple roles in refereeing. In addition, they may have had other interests, pressures and commitments in their lives. We, therefore, decided to survey these match officials, refereeing 5 or less society appointed games in the 2013/14 season, to understand the reasons why they refereed so few games.
- f. We asked 3 questions and had about 250 responses to each. The results are as follows:

What age bracket do you fall into?

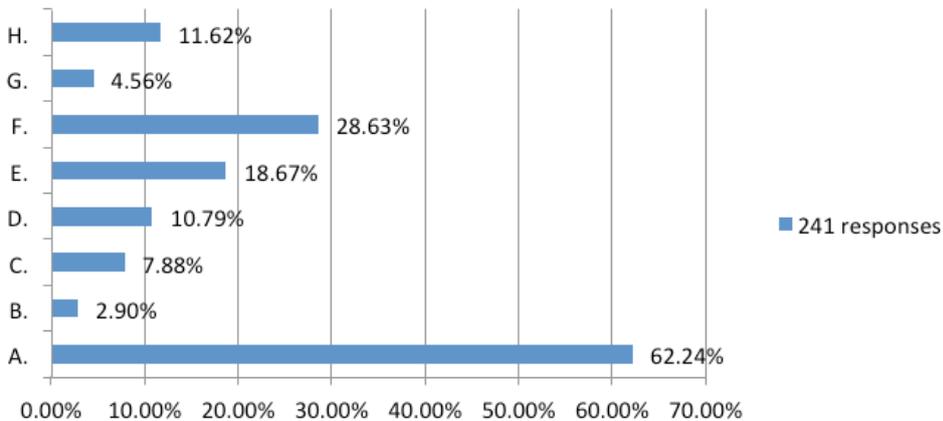


What roles do you fulfil in match officiating? Please select all responses that apply.



What reasons affected the number of games you were able to referee for your society in 2013/14?

Please specify all the reasons that applied?



KEY	
A.	Other reasons (please specify).
B.	I was not a member of a society in 2013/14 season.
C.	I also officiate as an assistant referee.
D.	I also referee at Federation, Group or National Panel Level.
E.	I also referee for my club.
F.	I was injured.
G.	I retired from refereeing during or at the end of the 2013/14 season.
H.	I had only just qualified.

g. Those who listed “other reasons”, gave the following explanatory comments:

I also referee for the military and so not captured on society database.
I refereed most Saturday mornings at local schools.
Was working as expat in China (while also refereeing there).
Not given any games.
Purely my availability. I work alternate Saturdays and until 6:30 during the week. I ref every Sunday where possible.
I still play on a Saturday and I returned to coaching on a Sunday afternoon. I also have a 19 month year old daughter so I had to drop something.
Change of expenses & subsequent attitude of clubs.
Have significant commitments as Secretary of local rugby club.
I shifted my focus into referee coaching.
Matches getting cancelled at the last moment.
In recovery from major emergency surgery March/April 14 regaining fitness.
Combination of circumstances.
Due to illness.
Disciplinary Panel member, so primarily do Schools/Youth fixtures.
I would like to officiate more often, but work commitments, family and childcare arrangements often get in the way!
Prefer Wednesday games as ref every Sunday at U16's Club side who arrange direct without involving Society.
Junior rugby in my area is dying out.
Currently finishing off my final year of a degree, so other priorities.
Due to work.
I am getting old and have achieved my objectives - colts are 19 and fit. I was focusing on my children and helping to ref them when they would either not had or got a less capable ref than myself.
None. I refereed 40 games.
Other officiating commitments.
Still playing.
Work and family commitments.
I referee on an "if and when" basis as I also play and coach.
As a low level referee (Level 10), well over half of my matches (2nds, 3rds and 4ths etc) were cancelled because they couldn't field the teams.
I'm an A-level student and I still played for school. Academic study took priority.
Time/commitment constraints.
I refereed 25 games!!!
I have refereed about 20 times this season and only rejected on 2 occasions: once when I was informed of my appointment after I had made other plans; once when I was injured.
Still play.
Travel, as I am in Jersey and coaching commitments with the juniors.
I am an RFU employee and alongside work/club visits/course tutoring. I could not fit in more than 1 match this season.
Work & home commitments.
Difficulty knowing Sat availability up to 8 weeks in advance, so had relied in past on backfilling but not as many unfilled fixtures this year.
Armed Forces work commitments (operational deployment).
Work commitments out of the country.
I still play for my club, and had to take on the 3rd team Captain role this season.
Work commitments.
Weather - match cancellations.
I did not receive any appointments, despite declaring self available and sent e-mails to chase this up!
Work and family commitments.
Did about 2/3rds Society games and the rest group this year.
Illness.
Lack of games/other commitments.

The Match Officials Challenge: Better Officials - Better Games

I refereed 80 games in 2013/14.
While I enjoy it I make myself available, this hasn't been the case in the 14/15 season so only had 6 games.
Whilst still technically a member of Dorset & Wilts referees society, I am currently at university in Bristol, so am refereeing for Bristol at the moment.
I took over as Director of Rugby at my club.
Due to family commitments I only referee for the Society every other week. However I usually referee every Sunday at U14 level for the club at which I also coach.
Joined society on the 25th March 2014.
Some game cancellations as well in this period.
Work commitments.
I partly passed my course but I have been Mentored so I can come back and complete my Level 2 referee course.
Not given appointments each week.
Family illness.
I'm not too sure why you believe I only managed a few matches as I must have done over 35 in the season. Perhaps a problem with the records?
A-Level examinations.
Pressures of work plus I am studying for a master's degree with the Open University.
I play most weekends.
Family commitments.
Work commitments.
Advising on regular basis.
Lived part of season in Russia and also officiated for the Russian RFU.
I had 2 sons playing senior rugby and wanted to watch them play, I also became a team player for a golf club.
Because my society don't appoint at my level.
My society at the time (Durham) failed to appoint me when I was free from Panel as they said I needed to choose between refereeing and AR. Now I am in Yorkshire, I get a game every time I am available to referee.
Abuse.
Having suffered injury precluding me from AR at Championship level found it difficult to officiate at levels 8,9,10 due to poor discipline and skill levels of players, discipline of coaches. Constant regulation changes, monitoring of replacement/substitutions etc and so became disillusioned with our game.
I'm also a Regional Referee Selector.
I attended a fitness test venue on agreed date but test date had been changed without me being notified and I was out of the country on holiday for the rearranged dates, hence I was not considered for federation appointments and ended up doing mostly level 9 to 11 games but only 1 or 2 per month.
I have a lot of other things like family and work in my life and also coach Juniors on Sundays.
Working away from home during the week meant weekends were for catching up on household chores.
Family & Work commitments as well as lack of motivation due to less challenging matches.
Family balancing act.
Went travelling for extended period.
Domestic commitments meant I was only available four times each month and poor weather caused lots of cancellations.
Match assessor.
I don't like the new system. It's over complicated. I think I was treated poorly by the grading system because of my age.
Officiating as coach most weeks.
Due to previous work commitments I only started refereeing for referee society in Feb 2014.
I still play rugby on most Saturdays and I also referee football.
I have my grandchildren Saturday about every 5/6 weeks.
Various things. Domestic life, other interests and not getting offered decent games to do.
Work commitments on Saturday, but have loads of Junior fixtures on Sundays, but this is not recognised.
Personal Family reasons as well as being injured early in the season.
I did referee a full season at Level 6.
No incentive to hurry back due to quality of games I get appointed to.
Not enough matches available at level 8, too many referees means only get one appointment per month usually.
Games been given to "racetrack" refs.
I am a school teacher and coach/officiate school matches from Sept-Dec. After Christmas, I was injured.

The Match Officials Challenge: Better Officials - Better Games

Age.
I also referee at my Son's school on Saturdays before Christmas, and I am a season ticket holder at a Premiership club when some of their home fixtures are also on a Saturday p.m.
After 10 happy and successful years refereeing I have been diagnosed with advanced osteoarthritis and told I must stop all forms of high impact.
Family balance/lack of suitable society culture.
Family commitments & match locations.
Shift worker for emergency services means I am not always available on Saturdays. I have refereed when I have been on nights in the past but cannot always get games close enough to home to allow me to get to work on time. This has seen my availability decline further.
Coach juniors too & still play Vets.
I work away from home and so weekend time is precious family time.
Other commitments.
School: Monday - Friday. Part-time work: Saturday-Sunday afternoons. Playing rugby some Saturday and most Sunday mornings. Injury to lower back in latter part of the season meant I was unable to play/referee for a significant period of time.
Required some surgery then became injured. Think I did about 10 games last season.
I am a MO on Saturdays and referee on Wednesdays.
I referee/AR/advise/appoint extensively mid-week with the Army. Recently married I restrict weekend refereeing for home/sport balance.
Started to advise in addition to referee.
Work on some Saturdays, other sports.
Working away from home through the week has meant that I could not commit to refereeing society matches on a Saturday. I needed to spend time with Family.
I am a University student and sometimes had work to do.
I am away quite a few weekends in the early and later part of the season.
Been playing this season alongside son.
I had a long period of unemployment and had no car.
Work and family commitments.
Work, but do not get appointments on who's the ref can't login and fed-up with telling the society.
I was out of the country during December.
I am a p/t teacher at a local independent school and referee U16/ U14 matches for them regularly.
Lack of games available.
Long wet winter meant 8 weeks with very few pitches playable - plus I only referee November to March.
Coach on a Sunday morning.
I had spinal surgery in October. Hoping to return this October.
I also play rugby.
The only reason that I may not ref at any particular time is due to family commitments. However have done 3 society games and one Touch Rugby non society in the last 3 days I usually do not have any reasons not to referee.
Still have not been assessed.
I work in Germany and referee there most weeks. I referee for my society when I travel back to the UK.
Head coach for U12s.
Reduced number of games.
I balance a hound family and weekends being my own free time with the love of the game.
I did ref over 50 games that year.
My son (15) now plays on Saturdays and so I watch him and ref at club on Sundays for Youth/Colts.
Other commitments.
Premiership season ticket.
Shift worker so I do work a lot of weekends.
I was also playing rugby at the same time.
I have asked not to be allocated matches at the monthly planning stage, but to be asked to take late appointments by the Society reappointments secretary. On that basis I have done some 12 games this season.
RFU and EPCR performance review duties plus I only want to spend one day per weekend involved with rugby.
Don't know until the last minute if I have to look after my grand children.

The Match Officials Challenge: Better Officials - Better Games

Transferring from societies they don't consider your previous level when appointing. You are placed at the bottom of the list. The level of games given was not challenging and no concern for observing referees who are new to the society.
With the RFU appointing on a 3 week cycle and the society appointing on a 4 week cycle by the time the RFU have issued its appointments the society has already completed its appointments.
I now referee in Italy with the FIR.
I also play for my club.
Disaffected by the attitude and opinion of the local society and CB so decided not to commit any more of my time to them.
Lack of games locally.
Playing & coaching rugby.
I referee at school and am only available for half term and holiday games, often at short notice. I do not feel especially valued when I do referee for the Society and the officials are quite condescending. I have heard too many of them being a bit picky about refs rather than being positive and encouraging.
Work commitments, and still play some Saturdays and takes a while to recover at my age.
Other commitments.
Living in Jersey there are very few matches that are shared out amongst the referees.
I refereed 18 games during 2013/14 season. Unavailability was the only factor.

- h. We also asked a free format question about availability and this probably gave us the most interesting information:

This season 2014-15 has been my first full season, and whilst I can usually only referee every other week, I intend to increase my capacity next season. Family commitments, and the rare work commitment, are the only block to my eventual aim of being available to referee every week.
Lack of law knowledge by TV Commentators/pundits give wrong impression to viewers that translate to lower level players and spectators.
I had some watchers who did not submit reports even though they said I had done well (club cards were sent in and collected by me and were always good). one person looked at me and said I needed to lose weight and improve my fitness (I had lost 26lb since the last time he saw me and run 10k marathon) one watcher was quite clearly drunk. I refereed the same clubs and teams for three years. One watcher said you don't want promotion at your age (great incentive to improve that was) no wonder you're short of referees!
I referee when I can. Sat can be difficult due to work. I have stated in reasons that Junior games are not recognised in this report. If Sunday is my only day then I will do U13/U14 games where ever.
Club Secretary, so have to attend a number of 1st XV home games.
The society is run by self-serving people. I want nothing to do with them.
I enjoy playing & am now more involved in coaching. I always make myself available to help out if I am free.
I only qualified in March and the Referees Society managed to appoint me to a friendly match within a fortnight of qualifying. Unfortunately this match was cancelled but they appointed me to another game within 2 weeks. So far they could not have been more helpful or keen for me to get involved in officiating.
I am currently still at secondary school, making it hard to get to any midweek matches. I also don't have a car so getting to matches is difficult, especially if my dad isn't available to take me. Luckily I have been given some good appointments near my house.
I have felt disheartened that I seem to be put aside by my society as someone who could potentially reach the top levels as I am 25 already. I would like to achieve my full potential whatever that maybe however I feel that I may not be allowed to do that.
I may return to refereeing once I finish playing. However, I feel the abuse levels dished out to referees from spectators and players are growing and that discourages me. I feel we ALL need to take a stand as a society to stamp this out. I have played in matches this year where opposition players have been extremely verbally abusive to the referee, and nothing has been done. The more this is allowed to creep into the game, the harder it'll be to attract refs.
Simple work life balance, my work takes me abroad as well so sometimes I can't commit.
Long term ankle issue.
I maintained & paid membership of my refs society while working as ex pat to ensure I kept up to date with laws / protocols etc; & refereed a couple of matches while on leave in UK.
I am always available. I started at the end of the 2012/13 season.
Family - now I have a family I can only make myself available 1 day per weekend.
Some clubs are notorious for having difficult teams to oversee coupled with vocal touch line abuse of the referee during play. There is little or no incentive to knowingly walk into the lion's den for an afternoon bad tempered fractious rugby and verbal abuse thrown in from the partisan crowd. Like football referees it's about time there was financial reward for the efforts of refereeing.
The culture in the Referee Societies is not inclusive enough for new referees. That's why so many newly qualified referees give up. The RFU needs a much better process for new referees.
Refereed 28 games this season and observed 3 more. Also did 5 tournaments for club.
Work, home life and other rugby activities.
More financial support for offshore officials to travel would help, together with being able to officiate in more convenient Societies than our Home Union.

The Match Officials Challenge: Better Officials - Better Games

I have refereed a lot more in season 14/15.
Society has their favourite referees and do not allocate games of correct level, so I look for better games to referee outside of my local society.
Shift work is the only thing that prevents me refereeing more regularly but as I still enjoy refereeing I make myself available as often as possible.
New refs need encouragement and support when they join a Society. I received no assessments and only received one during this season whilst others receive regular coaching and guidance. It then becomes easy for individuals to become disillusioned.
There are an increasing number of instances where 2nd teams (and lower) are turning up with fewer than 15 players. I have been fortunate in that I am progressing to first team level, however if I am not able to get to and stay at 1st team level I will give serious thought to stopping refereeing as games without 15 players are no fun and can at times be a total waste of time.
I would referee more if promoted as am capable of higher level (assessments confirm) - but Society won't promote unless I commit more time - understand but Catch 22!
I can only referee alternate Saturdays as I have my kids over on other weekends.
Less able to referee mid-week games due to work commitments.
Have also had a new job and moved house this year, affecting my Sunday availability.
Payment, I believe more referee would be available on a more regular basis and also attract more people to take up the whistle if referee were paid by match by match basis.
The pressures from players and coaches to refereeing decisions has increased, often when they have very little knowledge of the laws of the game and this has taken much of the enjoyment out of the game.
Only available on Wednesday, Thursday and Sundays.
Also realised that quality of appointments has little to do with refereeing ability. Under 25 you can't do anything wrong, over 45 you can't do anything right. So don't waste any more of your time refereeing.
I help with officiating within the school and sometime referee at Away matches when the host school are short of a ref.
Overall the primary constraint is that I work away from home and so free time is very limited.
15+ years of playing soccer, then 15 years of Rugby (player, coach & referee) - bit of burnout - time to do other things with the missus.
Work commitments means I am sometimes unavailable.
More flexibility to be able to ref ad hoc rather than have to plan weeks in advance would help.
Lower graded referees also need the challenge of higher grade/quality games to referee. How else are they supposed to improve if they consistently get games where the player knowledge of the laws and playing skills, mean that a game cannot flow, with the constant breakdowns and stoppages!!
Balancing society commitments and wanting / needing to provide cover for home club when WSOR doesn't send a referee (ie. the last 2 Tanners home games at Barkers Butts RFC).
Happy to both referee and referee coach whenever available both home and overseas.
I come from a background of "no rugby" playing yet over my last 12 games that I have refereed I have been mentored and been given advice back form players, and coaches, and I have the support really well, I can't wait for the next season to start. I look forward to complete my level 2 award soon, as the course and the people I have meet up to now have been a really good from Ex International referee from 1980's to Society members.
One week can ref at your level then the next week you have been downgraded to a lower level.
Other reasons : - Illness (as opposed to Injury) - late game cancellations - 1 game I turned up to already had a referee allocated from a different society - my availability vs match availability not the same (too few games) - late response to availability requests (pre who's the ref) - less than 48 hours - meant no allocations (have to liaise with family to check availability).
I love it but wish there was a better framework provided by the RFU to improve my performance and support my local Society.
My Society is very well run indeed.
I make myself available for most games but the continued shortage of referee particularly for Sunday junior games meant that on some weekends I was refereeing on Saturday afternoon and 2 or 3 games on Sunday whilst I was trying to regain fitness. The league structures and management of the leagues particularly on Colts leagues propagated a feast and famine situation. The appointments officers had difficulty with this situation. Consideration and instruction to the competitions secretary for each area to ensure the leagues for junior rugby are split across alternate weekends may help alleviate the appointments situation and encourage newer referees to become more involved. The commitment to refereeing is much greater as is the requirement to get the decision making right during game time now I believe having a major effect on individuals' availability to commit the time and effort to improving personal standards. There is an expectation by the RFU that volunteers will commit most of their spare time to the development of the game and match officials. The match officials' structure is now making refereeing a second occupation even for referees at the community and junior levels of the game. For those with the desire to reach for the top this is not a problem but for most Society referees Saturday rugby is still a hobby. Refereeing as part of game development has been side lined for all those except the elite. Education materials and CPD is practically non-existent with all societies following their own training format. There should be a more structured presentation format across the year so that the same presentation and information is delivered at the society meetings each month Thank you for your consideration of my comments. If you wish to speak with me please contact me directly Best regards (Name given).
I have an intermittent neck condition. To ensure I give of my best, I wait until quite late in the week to determine if I should turn out on the weekend. Obviously by then most games have been allocated.
I did an ELRA 2 course 3 years or so ago, and if honest have been very disappointed at the absence of any structured development programme. It appears that the Society drive referee development, but there is no structure. A mapped pathway would be very useful for new referees, because the absence of one has led me to feel isolated and unsure as to my ability. I have not yet been watched or assessed, which in itself is not a huge problem, but I do sometimes feel unsupported. I believe the WRU monitor the first few games of new referees and supply a mentor that to me is a fabulous approach.
In general work commitments restrict my availability to referee more often.
I'm always available but we lose a lot of games through postponements locally for various reasons.
As I am retired I take holidays during winter (get away to the sun).

The Match Officials Challenge: Better Officials - Better Games

Even with watching Premiership club I managed to get in 30 games, including Kids games on a Sunday.
I think this season I will have refereed probably 20 games.
See my comments in the previous box. But additional comments are I do not feel that I require any other incentive to referee, I played for a long time and have a love for the game.
Injury is long term arthritic hip.
Being appointed to right level of game and to be challenged.
Through my RFU role I do referee lots of school/college/university fixtures informally - joining the society was an attempt to get closer to this group as part of the day job.
Family commitments. I need one weekend a month for me to have with them.
Being a young referee I was given reserve games which were cancelled frequently.
Clear procedures for progression and subsequent demotion.
More often than not I am officiating PNR matches in a number of capacities (Referee, AR or 4th official). Therefore, my availability for the society is limited during the normal season times.
Can't login to who's the ref no one appears to be able to solve it so can't give my availability.
Having had the privilege of refereeing at Group and periphery of Panel, the grind of officiating at level 8 and below was not much fun - "gobby" players and spectators etc. I am still prepared to referee and I am planning to get fully fit for season 2015/16 and concentrate on colts/schools rugby which tends to be a better standard than lower league games.
Evening matches would be helpful to better fit in around a busy work schedule.
Coaches' attitude is getting worse each season, and societies are not dealing with it particularly well. Reduces positivity.
I don't believe there is the training available to new referees ie CPD help information referee society web site is useless out of date.
I will be 60 this year and refereeing for 17 years - so happy to be only doing one or two games a month at level 9/10/11.
Being 75 I feel I may restrict the chances for newer referees if I take fixtures at the initial appointment stage rather than as a Thursday/Friday late filler in.
Having played rugby for more than 20 years I took up refereeing so that I could continue to be a part of the sport that I love. Unfortunately, I can't referee as often as I'd like because of my work pattern, commitments to family and arranging childcare - all of which often combine to prevent me from being the man in the middle as often as I would like!
Am I on this list by mistake?
I can't drive yet so sometimes a lack of public transport access to clubs limits my refereeing.
Society seems to value Saturday games above all else, i.e. Sunday and Weds games and my affiliation with club and side I coach too makes my priority Sunday and then I opt to be available for Weds games too, so in fact this year I refereed 20 plus games but the society will only record about 5-10.
The lack of chance of getting promotion.
I enjoy refereeing but often find I drive an hour each way to a game and then spend 2.5 to 3 hours with the players both on and off the pitch. This is a big commitment when people have families and as a result I believe people can't always commit every weekend.
My availability was restricted as I have been President of Constituent Body for 3 years.
Lack of intense training opportunities. Lack of prospects to advance. Inconsistency of clubs hospitality Continually getting uncontested scrums in games - decreases challenge and enjoyment.
At the time I was still playing.
Having suffered a long term injury. My spine collapsed! I am in recovery and intend to move on as an assessor.
I significantly reduced my time for a number of reasons: 1) Fiercely in disagreement with the RFU over the removal of Training Support 2) no new training materials - so Society meetings are just a regurgitation of old experiences - need freshening up 3) 1st team rugby remains great - sides turn up - play etc... at 2nd team and below - it is demotivating as sides turn up late or cry off, high number of games with uncontested scrums - take this Saturday 12 v 11!!! I accept as an experienced Level 6 referee I can use my experience to improve their game - but the lack of player numbers is soul destroying! 4) Politics is all pervasive in refereeing at the moment and it is a financial exercise - no-one is committed to improving the current resource unless they are young and potentially have Panel aspirations 5) engage what you have!
I attend all games I was appointed except for one due to illness.
Games cancelled last minute and no re-allocation.
Lack of support from society & no mentoring for older refs. Will probably revert to club refereeing only.
I have recently transferred from one society to another. Despite making myself available in Jan 2015, I've only been allocated 2 fixtures in 2015 both at short notice. I would like to continue to referee but without regular appointments will have to seriously consider my future as a referee.
Family commitments also.
I usually referee 2 or 3 times per week, and find my local referee society efficient and helpful in being able to do this.
I believe there is an inconsistency between societies across the country. From my personal experience, I was told by one society I had to choose between being a referee or AR. As a consequence, I was allocated minimal games. I moved to another society at the end of the season you are surveying, and immediately picked up 2 games in a 4 week period. This season I have had 1 game per month with the new society based on the weeks I chose to be available to them. From an RFU perspective I have had an appointment every week of the season since November. It maybe would be a good idea to enforce some sort of rule that means AR's must referee once per month - though this may present resource issues for the Panel.
I would like to referee more but other commitments I have outside refereeing sometimes get in the way but I always try and do as many games as possible.
Think more needs to be done to curb abuse from crowds. My son has been put off refereeing due to the abuse from crowds etc.

ANNEX D

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PRIORITIES OF APPOINTMENT OF MATCH OFFICIALS

LEVELS 3-5	PRIORITY ORDER
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The competition hierarchy. 2. The match official's development needs.
LEVELS 6 & BELOW	<p>Overlaid by preference of the referee, all of whom are volunteers. It will also be dependent on the day of the week that matches are played and the availability of match officials on that day.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The needs of the Game (eg U16s / U17s or U18s fixture may have a greater priority than a 2nd XV fixture if that is a priority of the Game). 2. The competition hierarchy (the RFU need to determine that hierarchy for all competitions - adult males, women, schools, colleges, universities, girls, and male youth matches). 3. The match official's development needs. 4. Reward and recognition, through exchange appointments, for the match official without compromising Priority 1 & 2.

ANNEX E

SUMMARY OF REPORT OF RFRU WORKING GROUP CONSIDERING FINANCING OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF MATCH OFFICIALS¹

1. Introduction.

The RFRU Task Group, in co-operation with Referee Societies and Federations throughout England, has investigated their costs in training and developing referees, observers and coaches. The initial objectives (terms of reference – see appendix D) were confirmed at the January RFRU Working Group Meeting with the members of the Task Group (including nominations from the Game Development Board and an RFU representative) confirmed at the March meeting (Appendix C).

The Task Group had an initial meeting on 6th May 2014 where a schedule was agreed to try to obtain necessary information from Societies and Federations over the ‘close’ season via a questionnaire and direct contact. It was agreed that the letter and questionnaire would be constructed in conjunction with the parallel Task Group on “Match Fee Payment to Referees so that Societies and Federations were not faced with multiple questionnaires. The letter/questionnaire was agreed during May and distributed on 7th June.

Initial feedback was discussed at a meeting on 23rd July with a view to completing all the data collection from Societies and Federations by mid-August. This timescale matched the requirement from the RFRU to present the final report in early-mid October as input to the RFRU/Game Development board ‘Blueprint’ discussions. The results were discussed in a telephone conference and discussions in early September where how to address the few Societies/Federations from whom information was not received was agreed.

Costs related to the training and development of referees, assessors and coaches at Group (Level 5) level have not been included as funding for this area comes directly from the RFU.

This document presents a the first draft of costs, views and conclusions from this work in preparation of presenting a draft report to the RFRU Working Group on 24th September.

2. Questionnaire Response.

The response from Societies and Federations has been good with most responding with detailed costs, responses and comments. In the main, the Societies/Federations have been able to allocate costs within the categories defined by the Task Group with only one significant additional category being identified (i.e. Referee Incentive Kit). Only two Societies (out of 35) have not provided responses. We are aware of the number of referees in those Societies and as the average T&D cost per Society is generally consistent within similarly sized Societies we have matched these Societies to similar sized ones and estimated and included a cost on that basis.

The situation from Federations is slightly more complex as more Federations have not responded but we are aware that some of these do not operate actively or their costs are all included directly within the Society costs.

However we believe that only a small number of Federations have not provided potentially relevant costs and. As these may well be relatively insignificant and the costs from Federations vary considerably depending on how they operate in relation to the Societies, we cannot get to an accurate figure and therefore have not included an estimated cost for them.

Where they can be identified possible duplicated costs in Societies & Federations have been eliminated such that we have confidence that the total level of costs presented (see section 3) is a reasonable view of the costs of refereeing training & development within the Societies & Federations.

As well as the responses to specific questions (to build up a picture of the Society/Federation view on direct funding, charging and other relevant issues) the questionnaire gave the ability for the responders to give comments for consideration in the Task Group discussions. These are shown in Appendices A & B).

From the returns giving active referees and observers/coaches (with adjustments for possible duplications) we have Society/Federation numbers of:

Referees	2901
Match observers	562
Coaches/mentors	238

The number of observers looks high compared with the number of referees however some further investigation of this number suggests that Societies have included experienced referees who help new, young and development squad referees but who are not accredited coaches/observers. There may therefore be some duplication which we have not been able to resolve.

3. Training & Development Costs.

The table below shows a breakdown (£) of the total T&D costs under the categories provided in the questionnaire:

Training Sessions	77,366	Includes meetings, training days, fitness tests.
Observation Expenses	132,792	Includes match videoing.
Exchange	75,226	
Federation Sub	14,650	Only included where costs not included in Federation submission.
Young Refs	35,600	
Comms & Distribution	35,076	
Capital	38,186	
Miscellaneous	3,040	Main component is £2500 IOM development support.
Referee Incentive kit	25,001	
TOTAL	436,937	

Unsurprisingly the major costs lie in:

- Observation Expenses (including match videoing) totalling £132.8K as these are the major ways that Societies/Federations advise and develop refereeing with videoing becoming an increasing component.
- Training Sessions, totalling £77.4k. Monthly/training meetings, training days, fitness testing.
- Exchanges, £75.2k, still seen as an important component in giving developing referees the necessary range of experience to fully develop their skills.

The capital costs (£38.2k) relate to both telecommunications kit for observers and coaches and the necessary camera, computer and projection kit for videoing and meeting presentations etc. The communications and distribution costs (£35.1k) reflect the increasing need to properly engage with referees who cannot always attend meeting and needed to be addressed via different means including the increasing use of social media. A welcome cost is the increasing amount (£35.6k) being spent on Young Referees; still a somewhat ‘patchy’ picture, but an area which will probably incur increasing costs in the near future. The only additional category is ‘Referee Incentive Kit’ (£25.0k) provided on a recruitment, retention and development basis, depending on Society/Federation. Some Young Referee costs may also be ‘hidden’ in this category

4. Responses to Individual Questionnaire Questions.

The first set of questions in the questionnaire related to the direct funding of training, the current PFR process and related questions. A summary of the response to these questions is shown below – there is a variation in numbers as not all Societies/Federations responded to all questions (although the majority did).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Direct RFU funding of Match Official Training & Development will be beneficial to Societies and Federations.	17	6	11	4	1
The current PFR process (via CBs) is an effective way of funding specific Referee Society Training & Development projects.	2	4	3	10	20
Direct funding of Match Official Training & Development would have a significant impact on charges to clubs.	5	5	13	13	4
Most of my Society meeting and training sessions will be run by RFU Educators (or their equivalent) – primarily Society Training Officers.	18	10	2	5	3

5. Analysis of Response and Review.

5.1 **Responses.** Many Societies/Federations also attached comment to the responses and the conclusions we have drawn are derived from both the response summary above and the comments (See appendix C).

Q1 – **Direct Funding of Match Official T&D.** A majority believe in the benefit of direct funding. Very few directly against. The numbers in ‘Neither Agree nor Disagree’ reflects concern in potential inflexibility in that “one size does not fit all” and the detailed process is not yet known. Larger Societies/Federations have the capability to

undertake training and do not want unnecessary constraints – they have the ability to deliver what they consider as the most appropriate training to their referees, although professional support is appreciated. Those against are primarily concerned that local control would be better than a central, bureaucratic approach.

A healthy balance of professional resource and local voluntary knowledge and expertise is the desired solution.

Q2 – **PFR Process.** A very significant majority of Societies/Federations believe that the PFR process is ineffective and “not fit for purpose”. Most are unhappy to the extent that very few are in the ‘neutral’ column. A small number have had good experience of the PFR process.

Q3 - **Direct Funding would have a significant impact on costs to clubs.** The majority are in the ‘neutral’ or Disagree column. Although the Societies/Federations agree that reduction in costs would reduce charges to clubs the ‘lack of impact’ issue is probably that of a) potential increase of training for smaller Societies, b) significance in relation to larger Societies.

Q4 – **Training run by RFU Educators.** Wording here should have been RFU Educators/Developers as only Developers are required rather than the more qualified Educators. However, the distribution of responses show that most Societies use RFU Developers or similar for meetings/training. Those who ‘disagree/strongly disagree’ may not have such skills in house and therefore will need support. This is true of a small number of the smaller Societies.

5.2 **Funding Options.** At this stage the main funding options considered were a) Improvement to the current PFR process via CB’s and b) Direct Funding of Match Official T&D by the RFU.

a) **PFR Improvement.** As referenced above the current PFR process via CB’s is seen as ineffective by most Societies. An option would be to improve the current system so that a Society or Federation could be guaranteed that their application for funding would be included in the CB’s PFR application and any funding cascaded down would be ring fenced for Society/Federation use. However the relationships and communications between Societies and CB’s on both PFR funding proposals and their administration (if funding is awarded) has been almost universally difficult with Societies usually being dissatisfied with the results. The interest and focus from CB’s on Match Official issues has not been sufficient to improve this situation over a number of years and there seems no reason why this will change. The lack of confidence in the PFR process within Societies and Federations is at such a level that it is difficult to see a situation whereby even an improved system would be implementable.

b) **Direct funding of Match Official T&D.** The Task Group believes that the responses from Societies suggest that there will be benefits in implementing Direct Funding of Match Official Training & Development provided that there is flexibility, lack of bureaucracy in its implementation and clarity in communications between the various parties. The RFU representative described how management of the implementation of PFR awards can be accomplished and a similar non bureaucratic process is needed for both funding requests and implementation. The conclusion from the response from Societies and Federations is that they would accept the change to direct funding with a straightforward and flexible system. At this stage further work has not been undertaken with the RFU regarding how a system may be managed until the issues on the organisational status of the RFU & Societies and the ‘Blueprint’ discussions have been progressed.

5.3 **Direct Funding Impact on Clubs.** Societies are clear that they would reduce charges to clubs if direct funding is received; they are however not convinced that the reduction would be significant. In smaller Societies this comes from the expectation that under an improved scenario they would be able to at least ensure that a defined base level of training is offered to Society members and others. It is unsatisfactory that some Societies currently have to reduce realistic training due to cost issues (minimising costs to clubs) or have to raise the cost of training via ‘unreasonable means (e.g. a raffle every month as happens for one small Society). This would mean that training costs would increase for these Societies. In the larger Societies the extent of training against other operational costs and the number of games to which match officials are appointed implies that cost reduction per game (under a charging per Game arrangement – see 5.4 below) would not be large.

Work undertaken at Federation level by Eastern Counties indicates that there was under £7 per match available to fund both training activities and administration in average game charges of £71 (Game charge varies per level and match official team size). On this basis any reduction would be very small. However approximately £10 of the average cost is observer/coach expenses. If this was funded directly by the RFU this would be a more significant reduction in costs to clubs. The example is a single Federation review. More work at Society and Federation level would be needed to get a more accurate country wide figure.

5.4 Charging to Clubs. The majority of Societies/Federations charge per game which may also include a flat travel expense fee (as shown in the questionnaire response to questions on Charging). These fees are usually structured by game/team level. However a number of Societies including some of the largest have a club/team subscription fee (again varying by club/team level) with expenses being directly claimed by the referee. Some Societies limit the maximum travel expenses claimed by a referee with any excess amount claimed back by either the referee or the club from the Society. The direct claiming of expenses by referees reduces the administration (and costs) for the Societies although it obviously can result in varying costs to clubs in different locations.

There appear to be two 'standard' approaches:

- Charging by game with the amount based on the team level (e.g. £60 for a Level 9 game, £70 for Level 8 upwards, additional charge for a team of 3 or 4). The charge incorporates a flat fee per game for expenses. Referee expenses are reclaimed from the Society. This approach obviously incorporates significant administration effort in charging for games and managing/paying expenses but does provide a clear auditable process.
- Subscription per team (again usually based on team level). Expenses claimed by the referee from the club with often a mechanism for the club/referee to claim back amounts over a maximum figure.

The Task Group see the first option of charging per game as to be "Best Practice" as a modern, flexible system for the service that Societies are giving to the clubs. It also provides a basis to accommodate the interest that the taxation authorities are showing in Sports Association expenses. A number of Match Official appointments systems also provide software to support the creation of claims for travel expenses.

5.5 Training by RFU Educators. The overall response from Societies and view from the Task Group is that training sessions should be run by RFU Educators/Developers (or their equivalent) as long as there is provision for the delivery sessions on appropriate topics presented by suitably qualified/experienced presenters. There are a few (smaller) Societies who cannot meet this requirement due to the lack of RFU Educators/Developers. Support to these should come from their RFU ATM which should include training for Developers so that the Societies can have their own resource.

5.6 Base Level of Training. The Task Group also consider that a base level of training (see also 5.3 above) should be included in a 'Best Practice for Training' which could be used by Societies but would not be limiting for the larger Societies who have the resources for this and different types of training. Direct funding would enable Societies to get necessary professional support if this is not available from the RFU. In the longer term there would be need to determine the effectiveness of the training approach but at this point the minimum of a base level needs to be achieved with the ability to support higher demands where possible. Improved levels of training for Match Officials should lead to an improvement of standards which would help to keep players in the game. This improvement of standards is also seen as a necessary target for observers/assessors who should be included in Society/Federation training plans. A 'Best Practice' definition of the base level of training would be desirable given the current variation in extent, approach and style throughout the various Societies/Federations. Whatever the approach there will be a considerable demand on the RFU Match Official Development team to ensure that a range of updated training modules are available.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations.

The conclusions and recommendations are based upon consideration of the responses from Societies and Federations and review and discussion in the various meetings and telephone conferencing. The conclusions and recommendations can be summarised as:

- a. The PFR process via CB's is clearly not seen as effective in funding Societies/Federations projects (based on both questionnaire response and the attached comments from Societies/Federations) and therefore should be replaced.
- b. Direct funding of Match Official T&D would be beneficial to Societies/Federations and a direct and flexible approach would be an appropriate and positive solution to the current process for Match Official projects.
- c. Direct Funding of Match Official T&D would give a reduction of costs to clubs (by any reduction in costs to Societies and Federations). However this may not be seen as a significant reduction due to both the need to get Training to a minimum level within all Societies and the level of training costs against operational costs and the number of games to which referees are appointed. Further work is needed to establish the details of a proposed new funding system to establish its exact impact.
- d. A "Best Practice" re charging to clubs based on a charge per game with referee expenses claimed from Societies/Federations via an auditable process should be established and promoted to Societies and Federations.
- e. The Task Group agree with the proposal that training sessions should be run by RFU Educators/Developers (or their equivalent) as long as there is provision for the delivery sessions on appropriate topics presented by suitably qualified/experienced presenters
- f. There should be a "Best Practice" definition of a base level of training for all Society Match Officials. This base level should be supported by Direct Funding for all Societies.

ANNEX F

SUMMARY OF REPORT OF RFRU TASK GROUP CONSIDERING PAYMENT OF MATCH FEES FOR ALL MATCH OFFICIALS²

1. Background & Methodology.

A task group (TG) was established to examine the viability, or otherwise, of introducing match fees for referees appointed to U13 matches and above. More specifically, the TG was asked to “review the possibility of moving to a framework where all (or more) Rugby Union referees receive a match fee in the context of maintaining/increasing the number of qualified referees and produce recommendations for consideration by the RFRU Committee”: a clear assumption that payment would aid the recruitment, development and retention of referees. However, based on empirical data gathered by the task group, it became clear that other factors influenced whether an individual would take up the whistle and, more importantly, remain an official beyond eighteen months, than just financial considerations. Therefore, the TG concluded that it was better to also consider, *what are the underlying behavioural and cultural motivators which might improve the recruitment, development and retention of referees?*

The TG conducted research into other national sports (cricket, association football hockey and rugby league, including the views and experiences of their senior match official executives); accessed RFU professional staff across legal, taxation and match official departments; and conducted an on-line opinion survey of society referees. Finally, the TG was provided data drawn from a recently conducted survey of Level Two (formerly ELRA) participants. The TG also considered the legal and income tax implications of referee match fees; how such a fee might be disbursed to individual referees, including who pays; together with some ‘framing’ of the cost of paying all or subsections of the refereeing community.

2. Results.

The experience of other sports was helpful in understanding some of the obstacles which would need to be surmounted for widespread remuneration of rugby referees. Our sister sport, rugby league has broadly the same payment structure as currently operated in the RFU national league, with only travelling expenses paid below this level. Hockey does not pay officials. Cricket and association football pay officials fees which broadly range from £20 to £40 plus travelling expenses, the cost of which is usually borne by the home team. The Football Association has reached an accommodation with the HMRC while the England & Wales Cricket Board is engaged with HMRC on a range of income tax issues. In both sports, individual officials are treated as self-employed and as such, responsible for the own tax affairs. It was also understood that some student Level Two trained referees receive payment for officiating inter-mural rugby matches or festivals. The implications for rugby union were clear (together with the advice from legal and tax professionals): any widespread remuneration would be on the basis of self-employed status, ideally with an accord with the HMRC as to the tax status of such payments.

The electronic survey produced a good result with 36% (1070) of all society referees responding. As might be expected, there was a wide range of opinions. In summary, respondents are divided on whether voluntary officials should receive payment in future (42% strongly agree or agree, 39% disagree or strongly disagree). As referees aged, however, there was increasing scepticism about the payment of officials and any related benefits. Interestingly, while there was general agreement that payment would improve referee recruitment and retention, it was, paradoxically, not felt that payment would improve standards of officiating! There was also overwhelming support for paying assessors and referee coaches at levels where referees are paid.

Finally, 95% of respondents felt that midi/mini referees should not be paid; 63% felt all matches at U18 grade or below should not have paid officials, and 55% felt schoolboy rugby should be exempt.

The recent survey of individuals completing the Level Two (formerly ELRA) referee programme which, although a relatively small sample of 300, did produce some interesting and potentially powerful results. These data suggested that some form of mentoring support, opportunities to referee in a 'safe' environment, affiliate emotional needs, educational development as well as recognition through branded clothing are as important (or maybe more so) than financial incentives. It is worth remembering that a good proportion of the participants of this training would, almost by definition, be young, inexperienced officials. However, these propositions needed to be tested further. These data, albeit limited, point to how resources might be best applied to reach the RFU's desired strategic objective for officiating.

The estimated cost of a match fee for all games at U13 to Level 5 (based on season 2016/17) would be between £2m and £3m based on a £20-£30 fee. The TG postulated a variety of sub-sections of this group ranging from paying for all league matches at and below level 5, 2nd XV and Merit table games (cost £900K) to extending payment of referees from level 4 to level 5 at a cost of approximately £79K per season, plus travelling expenses. Reflecting the feedback from referees who felt coaches and match observers should be paid too, as an example, were that to be the case at level 5, this would roughly double the cost.

A key question in considering widespread payment of referees is who pays and how the match fee is disbursed? Essentially, there are two sources of funding: either through the central funds of the RFU or the clubs themselves. If the Union decides it wishes to bear the costs of match fees, then it faces the unpalatable and highly problematic option of paying match officials directly or the more practical route of reimbursing clubs for the match fees they incur. It also implies, given finite resources, that other activities may have to be foregone or curtailed to meet these costs? If, on the other hand, the clubs themselves are required to meet the costs of referee match fees, this could impose a financial burden which many clubs would find difficult to meet, especially at more junior levels of the Game, with all the consequences that implies.

3. Discussion and Recommendations.

Payment of referees raises a number of important issues for the game. First, the fact that a substantial number of referee responses supported the payment of other officials such as observers and coaches raises an interesting question of how those groups might react if all referees were paid. One outcome could be a decline in numbers of individuals willing to discharge those 'support' activities or, alternatively, increased pressure to remunerate them too. A more subtle point perhaps is the impact on the culture of refereeing, with referees, however junior and inexperienced, remunerated while the remainder of match officials unrewarded? Might a more venal, less 'public good' attitude emerge?

Second, there are other cultural implications of paying referees, the most important of which is between a paid referee and non-remunerated players and officials. Currently, paid officials at levels 1 to 4 offers little by way of cultural dissonance - players, match officials and coaching staff etc. mostly receive some form of remuneration. (The same point increasingly applies to level 5). This would be very far from the case at more junior levels of the Game, the cultural outcome being quite difficult to predict but it would undoubtedly change the relationship. For example, referees below level 4 have the 'shield of the volunteer' to protect them when their performance does not meet the expectation of coaches and spectators. That would not be the case if referees were paid. Arguably, players and club officials would feel they have a 'right' to be more critical to what they perceive as inadequate standards of officiating. A more 'challenging' environment might be counter-productive, potentially driving officials out of the game? There is also the potential impact on the Game's core values. To what extent would universal payment have an impact on Teamwork or Respect? For example, 'we respect match officials and accept their decisions' or 'we hold in high esteem our sport, its values and traditions and earn the respect of others by the way we behave' might come under considerable strain between players, coaches and referees, not to mention potential discord between teams of referees, coaches and match observers when one group is remunerated, the others not.

Third, there is the question of organizational priorities. The vast majority of matches are handled by non-society referees, most of whom have received little or no formal training. The introduction of Club Referee Co-ordinators (CrC) is widely

regarded as inadequate, largely because, despite the good intent of most clubs, it has simply been a lower priority than getting players out each weekend. Referee coverage is therefore reliant largely on hand to mouth, match by match activity. If the RFU wish to achieve its strategy of a qualified referee to all matches at U13 and above, infrastructure and resources need to be devoted to the recruitment, training and retention of club referees beyond the existing volunteer work-force. Local referee societies must clearly play their part too but without full-time professional support directed at the clubs, they cannot provide the consistent and sustainable infrastructure necessary to achieve its desired ends. The evidence from association football unambiguously supports this conclusion in terms of refereeing standards and match official retention.

It would therefore be a bold move to introduce universal match payments which although would probably have a positive impact on referee recruitment, may not necessarily improve the retention and overall standards of officiating (especially if it were absent any CPD like infrastructure). It would, however propel forward structured training, better data and the licensing of referees as a quid pro quo for payment. On the assumption that clubs would bear the cost, even at £20 per match, there would be serious financial implications for the majority of community game clubs, potentially placing an inordinate burden on already cash strapped organisations. In effect, universal match payments would drain money out of the game, potentially detrimental to its further expansion and development. As discussed earlier, the unintended consequences of remunerating all matches in terms of game culture, relationships with players and club officials, not forgetting referee support groups such as coaches and match observers, are both difficult to quantify and predict with any degree of certainty. In short, the TG firmly believes that universal payment of referees is unworkable, financially damaging to the Game and would cause serious cultural perturbations which would be difficult to control. It seems hard to justify a business case to support this proposition.

4. **Recommendations.**

- a. There should be no universal payment of referees from U13 to level 6 inclusive;
- b. Referees appointed to level 5 league games should receive payment proposed at £75 per game. Those officials would become, for PAYE and employment purposes, part of the existing PNR payroll management process and employed by the Union. The cost of payment would be approximately £79K, plus travelling expenses. Further work will be required to define fully other Level 5 matches which might be eligible for payment;
- c. A network of full-time professional local referee development officers should be established principally to support club referee development. RFU executive management need to determine the details, including the need to balance workloads between areas; developing role descriptions and where the role might integrate into existing structures and reporting lines; and a more detail assessment of the total costs;
- d. Re-launch and re-energise the Club Referee Coordinators (CrC) to build ‘communities of interest around the clubs’. Consider clustering clubs with each Constituent Body and examine other forms of co-ordination, for example, cluster referee coordinators;
- e. Provide strong encouragement for newly qualified Level Two (formerly ELRA) referees to take up membership of the local society. This would help establish early links to society activities and allow the society to communicate regularly with the newly qualified referee to stimulate continuous professional development.

ANNEX G

REPORT ON RFRU GOVERNANCE MATTERS

1. Background.

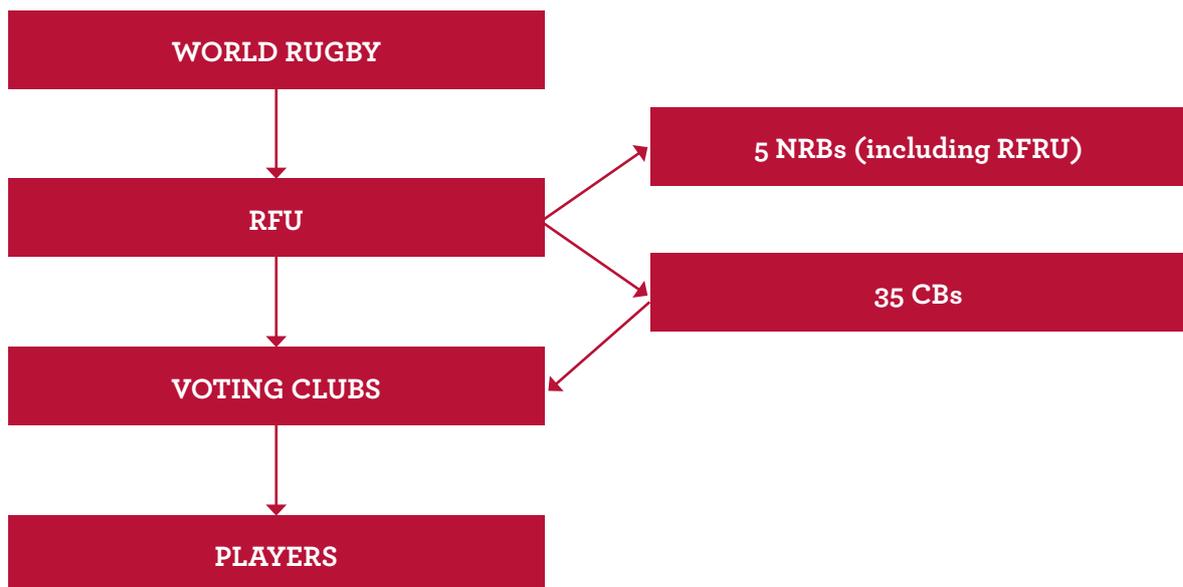
A working group was formed to review the governance structure of the bodies involved with refereeing in England. The reasons for this were two fold. The first was to ensure that the governance structures were fit for purpose. The second was to ensure that those bodies, their officers and the referees themselves, were subject to the RFU's jurisdiction for disciplinary purposes.

Since the Working Group was formed, a separate Match Officials Blueprint Working Group has been formed to look at a wide range of issues relating to match officials. It would be sensible for the work of the Governance Working Group to be aligned with the work of that Blueprint Working Group.

2. Governance Structure of the RFU.

The RFU derives its jurisdiction to govern rugby in England through its membership of World Rugby. In turn it imposes its jurisdiction through its constitution (ie its Rules) on voting and non-voting member clubs and ultimately on the players who are members of those clubs.

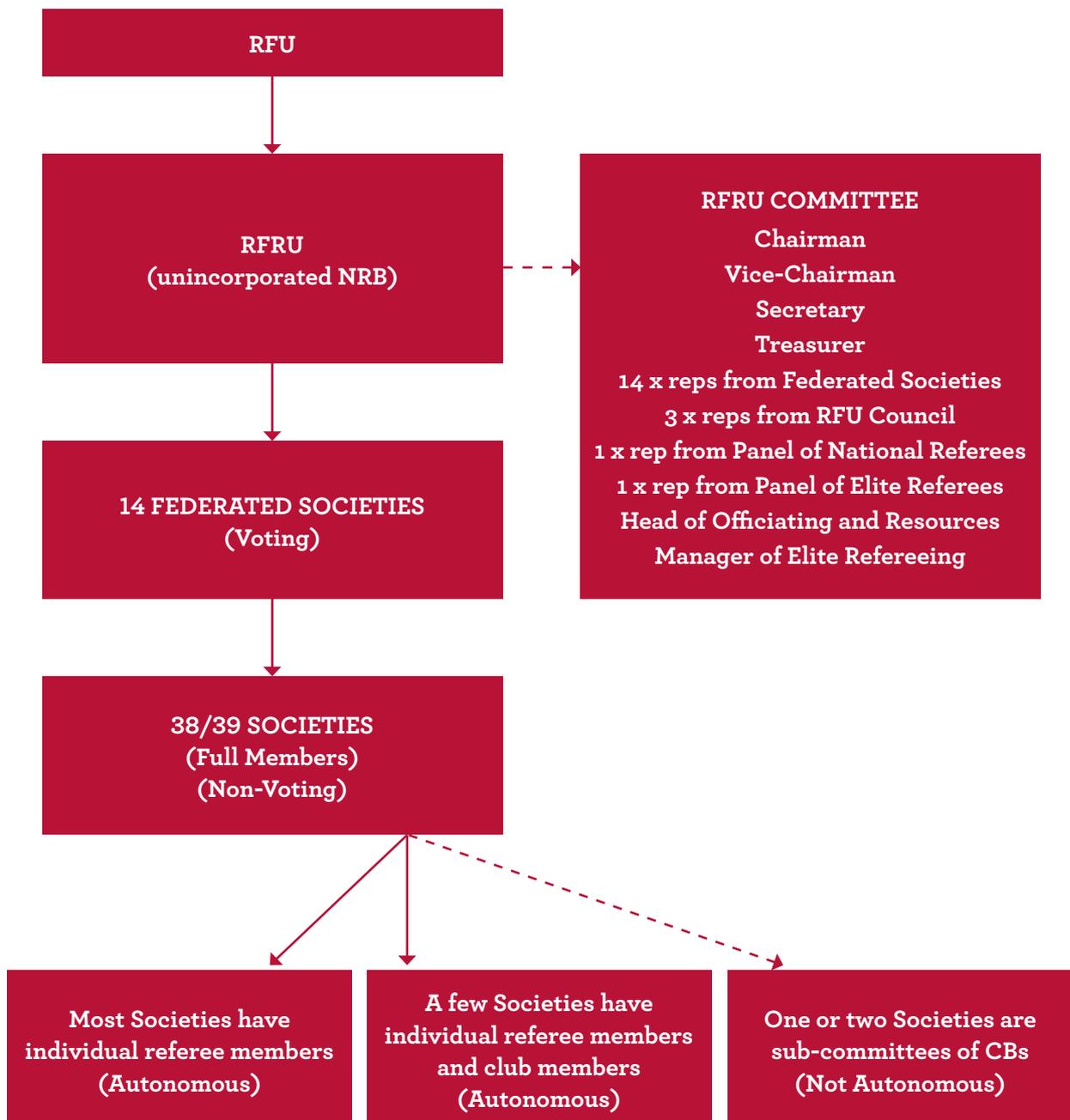
Constituent Bodies and National Representative Bodies are also members of the RFU and as such must abide by the RFU's Rules and Regulations.



3. The Governance Structure of the RFRU.

As a National Representative Body the RFRU is a member of the RFU and subject to the jurisdiction of the RFU and must abide by the RFU's Rules and Regulations. The governance structure beneath the RFRU is complicated. There are 14 federations that sit between the RFRU and the referees societies. Most of the referees societies have individual referee members, a few have individual referee members and club members and one or two referee societies are sub-committees of their CBs.

The referee societies are neither voting nor are they non-voting members of the RFU.



4. **Role of the Federations.**

It is difficult to see what role the federations need to play in pure governance terms. With only 38/39 referee societies, it should be possible for those referee societies to appoint the committee of the RFRU. If the federations were removed from the governance structure, it would make sense for the referee societies to become voting members of the RFRU.

5. **National Representative Body or Constituent Body.**

A CB is an association or combination of Clubs, schools or universities. Therefore, it would not be possible for the RFRU to become a CB as opposed to a National Representative Body without a Rule change. However, in pure governance terms, there is little difference between CBs and National Representative Bodies under the RFU's constitution. Both CBs and National Representative Bodies are members of the RFU. Any decision to propose a change in the RFU's Rules to expand the definition of CBs to include associations or combinations of referees' societies could only be made if it was agreed that referees' societies should be voting members of the RFU.

6. **Why is it Important to Have Jurisdiction?**

Jurisdiction enables a body to take action against those who are subject to its jurisdiction. Jurisdiction can be created by being a member of a body or by those agreeing to be subject to that body's jurisdiction.

For example, the RFU has jurisdiction over the clubs in its membership because it is a condition of membership that those clubs abide by the RFU's Rules and Regulations. The RFU's Rules and Regulations oblige each club to have as a condition of membership of that club that its members also abide by the RFU's and World Rugby's Rules and Regulations.

With the RFRU, the referees' societies are not voting members of the RFRU and they are not voting members of the RFU. It would be very difficult for the RFU to successfully assert jurisdiction over the referee society and even harder still to successfully assert jurisdiction over an individual referee who was a member of the referees society should a challenge to jurisdiction be made.

7. **Jurisdiction over Referees Societies.**

If the referees' societies were voting members of the RFU, the societies themselves would be directly subject to the Rules and Regulations of the RFU. The RFU would in turn oblige the referee societies themselves to impose, as a condition of membership that individual referees must abide by the RFU's Rules and Regulations. In addition, it would no doubt also be important to set criteria for referees' societies to be able to be members. It is anticipated that the Blueprint Working Group will be formulating expectations in relation to referees' societies.

8. **Discipline.**

There is no separate disciplinary process for referees. The RFRU is not set up, nor should it be, to deal with a disciplinary issue arising in relation to an individual referee. At the moment, if there was a serious disciplinary issue involving a referee that would be referred to the relevant CB to deal with. There would be no issue on jurisdiction if that referee was also a member of a club within the jurisdiction of the CB. However if the referee was not a club member, it might be difficult to withhold a challenge to jurisdiction.

Given the CBs and the RFU are set up to deal with disciplinary matters, it would make sense to ensure that the CBs and the RFU had the relevant jurisdiction to deal with disciplinary matters involving referees.

If the referees' societies were voting members of the RFU in their own right and if the RFU's disciplinary regulations were amended to provide that the societies themselves and the individual referees fell within the RFU's disciplinary regime, it would be very difficult indeed for a referee to try and say there was no jurisdiction over him or her.

In this way, referees could be dealt within the same way as players. The relevant CB for the area in which the Referee lives would deal with most matters but matters such as safeguarding and anti-doping would automatically be referred to the RFU. In addition, the RFU would be able to call in the more serious matters to be dealt with by RFU disciplinary panels.

Matters relating simply to competence as a referee would of course continue to be dealt with by the relevant referee society.

9. **RFRU.**

The RFRU is an unincorporated association. Its constitution is rather complicated. The constitution could be simplified so that the referees' societies were voting members and they appointed the committee. However, if this exercise was to be undertaken, consideration should also be given to the RFRU becoming a company limited by guarantee. This would save the RFRU Committee Members being exposed to unlimited personal liability as they are now.

10. **Referees Societies.**

Consideration should also be given to the referees' societies each incorporating if they are not already. The RFU could draft a precedent constitution for a company limited by guarantee for referees' societies to adopt. In this way, we could ensure that the referees' societies have the correct wording to ensure it was clear that all referees were subject to the jurisdiction of the RFU and had to abide by the RFU's Rules and Regulations.

A recent serious safeguarding incident regarding a mid-week appointment secretary has highlighted the need for referees societies to be incorporated to avoid their committee members having unlimited personal liability for the acts of others.

In addition, each referee society should ensure that as a condition of membership all its members are obliged to abide by the RFU's and World Rugby's Rules and Regulations.

The membership application form for each society should in addition provide that the member expressly agrees to the following:

"I understand and I agree that I will be bound by and subject to the Rules and Regulations of the Society, the Rules and Regulations of the RFRU, the Rules and Regulations of the RFU and the Regulations of World Rugby at all times whilst I am a member of the Society".

11. **Summary of Recommendations.**

- a. The referees' societies should become voting members of the RFU. The RFU's membership regulations would need to be amended to provide for this. There would need to be criteria by which referees' societies qualified as voting members and it is anticipated that the Blueprint Working Group will set out its expectations in relation to this.
- b. The RFU's disciplinary regulations should be amended to ensure that referees and referee societies can be dealt with in the same way as players and clubs are dealt with for disciplinary purposes.
- c. The RFRU should consider simplifying its constitution and structure so that referees societies are full members and responsible for appointing the committee of the RFRU. In addition, the RFRU should consider if it really needs to have federations within its governance structure. This will need to be considered as part of the wider review by the Blueprint Working Group.
- d. The RFRU should consider incorporating as a company limited by guarantee.

- e. Any referees society that is not yet incorporated, should consider incorporating and the RFU should provide a precedent constitution to assist with this.
- f. All referees societies should ensure that their constitutions provide that their members must abide by the Rules and Regulations of the referees society, the RFRU, the RFU and World Rugby.
- g. All referees societies should ensure that their membership application form contains the appropriate wording to ensure that the referees abide by the Rules and Regulations of the referees society, the RFRU, the RFU and World Rugby.
- h. The work of the Governance Working Group is now fed into and carried forward by the Match Officials Blueprint Working Group.

ANNEX H

SUMMARY OF THE WORKING GROUP'S PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

	PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION	ENDORISING ORGANISATION	FURTHER COMMENT
1 ST	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The current Level 2 (Refereeing the 15-a-side Game) will remain the initial qualification for those who wish to referee the 15-a-side game. 2. To retain that qualification and the status of a qualified referee, within 2 years of completing that initial qualification an individual must: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Referee a minimum of 15 games (including matches that are part of a festival). b. Have a satisfactory current performance review (or a development plan to achieve this within 4 months beyond those first 2 years). c. Complete at least 2 player safety CPD courses (such as "Scrum Factory" and the new on-line "Incident Management" currently under development by the RFU). d. Complete at least 2 of the accredited referee development CPD courses; the current list of such courses is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Referee Match Preparation. ii. Managing Captains and Coaches. iii. Communication and Management. iv. Game Understanding. v. Discipline and Report Writing. vi. Applying Advantage. <p>An individual meeting the conditions set out in 1&2 above would retain the qualification and status of qualified referee in perpetuity.</p>	CGB	
2 ND	<p>The RFU develop an on-line course, primarily for rugby coaches, to improve their knowledge of match officiating.</p>	GDSC	<p>This would also need the support of the RFU's Development Director in providing the human resource to undertake the work.</p>

	PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION	ENDORISING ORGANISATION	FURTHER COMMENT
3 RD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RFU identifies the requirement and then resources an RFU-employed workforce to provide the structure to support those refereeing at Levels 3-5 as set out in sub-paragraphs 31a&b of the main report. 2. The RFU identifies the requirement and then resources an RFU-employed workforce to provide the structure to support those refereeing at Levels 10 & below, who are not members of a referee organisation, as set out in sub-paragraphs 31d&e above. (This would be one of the Working Group's highest priorities for resources). 3. The RFU work with the RFRU and its member organisations to establish the support structure for all active referees as set out in paragraphs 30&31 of the main report. 	CGB	As this recommendation effects the RFU staffing levels it also needs the support of the RFU's Development Director.
4 TH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The RFU works with the RFRU and its member organisations to develop a new framework, based on the principles at Annex D, for prioritising the appointment match officials. 2. All ensure that the new framework is consistently applied across the country, subject to the very occasional local needs. 	CGB	To initiate this recommendation will also need support from the RFRU and its member organisations.
5 TH	All referee societies and federations adopt what is considered the "best practice" in the RFRU study of charging clubs based on the actual number of games for which match officials are provided, with the match official's expenses being paid by the society or federation from that club charge.	RFRU ¹	
6 TH	The funding of match officials' training and development financed through the PFR process should be administered directly by referees' organisations, subject to appropriate governance arrangements to ensure accountability are in place.	CGB	Those appropriate governance arrangements are set out in the 9th principal recommendation.
7 TH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All those officiating at Levels 3 - 5 or equivalent matches in other RFU competitions receive a match fee (on a sliding scale between the levels) and expenses. 2. All referee coaches and assessors working with those officiating at Level 3 - 5 receive a payment, as well as expenses, to recognise their responsibilities and expected commitment. 	CGB	<p>Resourcing of match fee payment to those refereeing at Level 5 is our lowest priority for additional funding.</p> <p>Again, resourcing of this would be our 2nd lowest priority for additional funding.</p>

¹ Currently the RFRU would need the agreement of the referee societies. However, as it is considered "best practice" among societies, then one would hope it is adopted by all across the country.

	PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATION	ENDORISING ORGANISATION	FURTHER COMMENT
8 TH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Referees' societies retain responsibility for the training, development and deployment of the majority of their members who referee at Level 6 and below. As a minimum, referee federations have responsibility for the identification, development and appointment of match officials, currently refereeing at Level 6 and below, but with the potential to officiate at Level 5; any wider remit can be agreed locally with its member referees' societies. 	RFRU ² & CGB	
9 TH	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Referees' societies consider becoming voting members of the RFU. In doing so, they agree to the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Their constitution is approved by the RFU, Their membership application form is agreed with the RFU. They appoint to an RFU Adult League. They sign up to a set of standards that includes responsibility for referee development. They provide a 5 year action plan to help achieve the vision of all 15-a-side matches in the society's geographical area being officiated by a trained and qualified referee. If referee societies seek voting member status of the RFU, as set out in 1 above, then the RFU Council agrees the appropriate RFU Regulation change. 	RFU Council	However to progress this, referees' societies have to decide to pursue this recommendation.
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The RFRU seeks CB status at the 2016 RFU AGM. 	RFU AGM	Again to progress this, the RFRU has to decide to pursue this recommendation.
10 TH	The RFRU and its member organisations agree the principle of having a mandatory match officials' registration and licensing system, and then work with the RFU to introduce such a scheme from 2019 with an absolute commitment to scheme being sought in 2018.	RFRU and its member organisations	
11 TH	The RFU works with the RFRU and the latter's member organisations to develop an improved IT and CRM systems, including where appropriate already proven commercial solutions, to support match officiating. The improved RFU systems must be capable, as a minimum, of supporting the outcomes of the recommendations in this report.	CGB	As this involves operational matters it would also need the support of the RFU's Development Director.



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