

RED ROSES MATERNITY POLICY
CASE STUDY

Abbie Ward

Background

Women in the UK are not obliged to tell their employer they are pregnant until 25 weeks. However, World Rugby's guidelines state pregnant women should not play or train, leaving players to face the tough decision of when to tell coaches about their pregnancy.

Whilst there was an existing staff maternity policy for the RFU, there wasn't a bespoke policy for players who were employed. Looking at examples of world leading maternity policies (e.g New Zealand Rugby, Women's Super League) the RPA and RFU worked in consultation with players who were able to provide significant input at every stage.

Key policy highlights

- Provides opportunity for players due to go on maternity leave (26 weeks on full pay), to move into safe employment within rugby network until they start their maternity leave

CHRISTIAN DAY, RPA SECRETARY GENERAL:

"We are delighted to have been able to work with the RFU in such a positive way for our members, with today's announcement signifying another significant step forward for the women's game in England. Player welfare and wellbeing will always be something that the RPA will strive to advance and this new policy ensures that our women's players will be better supported through parenthood when representing England. Perhaps the most pleasing aspect has been the way that it is the players themselves who have been engaged with and included in discussions to help shape and develop its formulation. With this policy now in place, not only will it provide safety and security for the players, but it also makes becoming a parent more normal and less taboo, which is exactly as it should be."

PPF FEMALE ATHLETES WEEK



ABBIE WARD, ENGLAND RUGBY, BRISTOL BEARS: FIRST PLAYER TO HAVE BENEFITTED FROM POLICY

"There has been a great deal of work carried out by players, the RPA and the RFU to get to this point. I am confident that the policy will help normalise motherhood in sport and give players the best possible chance of returning to play should they wish to do so in a secure and safe way."

- If selected within 12 months of giving birth, they can travel with their infant to training camps (with a support person to assist)
- If during pregnancy their contract is renegotiated or extended, they'll be included in all discussions and have their contracted extended for a period not less than 12 months.
- Flexibility to allow each mother to make choices that work for their individual circumstances with players on the team already benefitting from the policy.

Benefits for players

- Removes the stigma of becoming a mother when still a professional athlete. There is now clear guidance which sets out expectations for both players and the RFU.
- Players can now play & train knowing that they have some financial certainty if they become pregnant and they can develop opportunities and pathways whilst they are not playing.
- Demonstrates the positive role players can play as partners in the development of the game.

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