



FUTURES PROGRAMME 2026 APPLICATION SERIES

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1. Development & background of the programme

The Futures programme was established in 2022, building on the legacy of the World Cup to develop a playing offer for more high-school aged girls in community clubs. The programme aims to support clubs to prioritise the establishment of a sustainable offering for girls, consisting of a training and development group to participate in informal offerings and develop confidence and skills, before eventually progressing to form a team to participate in structured competition play.

2. Programme outline: 2026 Application Series

AGE GROUP – U12s

The programme targets the U12 age-group, with this being the first age where single-gender games are mandated. This draws from the understanding that whilst many clubs may have some girls participating in their younger, mixed teams, this is often not enough to form a complete team once they reach U12. In order to support this transition for clubs and players into the U12 age group, Futures provides a recruitment opportunity specifically for this group, with an opportunity to grow confidence and develop skills whilst playing friendly and low-stake matches in order to ease players into the game and foster a love for the sport.

PROGRAMME INCLUSIONS

The intention of the Futures programme is to initially create regular club-based training, which in time will produce a team that can proceed to participation in local festivals, friendly matches and enter a league when they are ready.

Club-based training sessions are the weekly feature of the programme and can be arranged for the time that best suits both the club and the participants. These sessions are delivered by the club's coaches, with a focus on skill development, game understanding and building confidence to play. These are recommended to take place weekly, for around 1 hour per session. Coach development and support will be available from RFL.

When appropriate, teams would be eligible to join the girls Development League to play friendlies and festivals as they become ready throughout the season. Festivals weekends are incorporated into the playing season calendars, and we initially recommend participation in festivals when the team is ready to access a more structured playing opportunity. Friendly matches can be arranged between Development League clubs as desired. Contacts for clubs will be provided to all involved in the programme and the RFL competitions team will assist with game set-up. Please email competitions@rfl.co.uk to set up your game.

FUNDING & SUPPORT

The following funding and support will be available to participating clubs.

- £500 of funding which **must** be invested in the girls' programme
- Friendly match set-up support
- Social media highlight of the club's programme on the RFL socials

CLUB OBLIGATIONS

Staffing/volunteers required: Head Coach (Level 2 qual), 2 x Assistant Coach (working towards coaching qualifications/licensing), Team Manager/Administrator (can also hold a coaching role).

First Aid: First aid qualification from at least one volunteer, and DBS from all volunteers. Nominated point of contact (Team manager or other rep). Team manager can hold another role.

Training and fixtures: Clubs are expected to offer a regular training slot, ideally on a weekly basis. If and when teams are ready to participate in structured activity, the RFL will support in the arrangement of Friendly fixtures or access to festivals.

Reporting: Reporting will be completed via a mid-season and post-season Microsoft Form. This form must be completed and is an important part of understanding the narrative, successes and challenges for each Hub.

Registration: Players are required to be registered to play in the GameDay system. Links for this will be provided to Hubs and registrations will be free.

Recruitment: Clubs should complete sufficient promotion of the programme to recruit new players, including school engagement, use of social media, and engagement with the local foundation. The RFL will also provide a highlight of the club's programme on the RFL social media channels.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Clubs must complete and submit the application form available in the Futures section on [Women & Girls Rugby League](#). The applications will be reviewed by the development team, and any clubs deemed to have met the standards for the funding will be passed onto the management group for approval to join the league in the future. Factors including geographical location, local saturation of clubs and scope for league placement will be considered. Once both groups have confirmed the viability of the club, their application can be approved and funding released.

Applications may take up to one month to be processed.

Any questions, please contact Mikayla; Mikayla.Gillespie@rfl.co.uk