

# WRU Independent Review

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New Welsh Rugby Union chair Richard Collier-Keywood, incoming Group CEO Abi Tierney (who joins in January 2024) and interim CEO Nigel Walker have welcomed in full the publication today of the [INDEPENDENT REVIEW](#) which was commissioned in February 2023.

The review makes around 36 recommendations in total, and the WRU has already committed to ensuring that all of the recommendations are actioned.

Statement from Richard Collier-Keywood: “We are publishing today the Independent Panel report and we are grateful for the hard work of the Independent Panel and to the many people who contributed to this review both from inside and outside the WRU.

“I want to start by saying again that on behalf of the whole WRU, we are truly sorry to those who have been impacted by the systems, structures and conduct described in the report which are simply not acceptable.

“As the report outlines, the WRU is an iconic institution which reflects society across Wales and plays a vital role in our national public life. We have let people down. We have to do better and we will.

“This report covers our governance, our culture, our approach to women’s and girl’s rugby and behaviours of leadership. For anyone who cares about rugby in Wales it is a very difficult read and it is a particularly difficult read if you work at the WRU. It is clear that there were many opportunities to avert the serious problems described which were simply not taken.

“We have a lot of work to do to win back the trust of our staff, our players, the volunteers who are the heart of our community game, and the supporters that buy tickets week in week out.

“This report goes some way to show us what we need to do to earn back that trust. And with the oversight body in place, it will help us navigate the journey we need to take.

“We have already committed to listen, learn and change. Nigel Walker, Ieuan Evans, Abi Tierney and I have all committed to accept the findings on behalf of the WRU. We have also committed to implementing the recommendations and we intend to do that at pace. We welcome, in particular, the proposal for there to be ongoing monitoring and independent oversight of our progress.

“We have already made significant progress this year in a number of areas referenced by the report and its authors. Thanks to the changes voted through by over 97% of member clubs in March this year we have of course made significant changes to our governance. We have a new Chair, a new and reformed Board, a new CEO and a new Executive Director of Rugby all in place from January 2024.

“The Board should consist of eight appointed directors and four directors elected by the community game. Six of the new appointed directors have been announced, with one

more to be named, and four of these are women. The elections for the remaining places will take place later this year.

“Progress has also been made on improving our employment practices, training and staff support to help transform our working culture. A new EDI network has been established amongst staff with a policy and statement of intent published alongside a refreshed complaints procedure. There is also an external whistleblowing line and policies have been refreshed in this space, including completing an internal ‘Have a Voice’ project in which staff engaged confidentially to promote equity of voice and provide feedback on the advancements made and to express their needs. We are engaging with external collaborators to support our journey to take meaningful action and embed lasting change.

“There has also been a step change in the way that the women’s high-performance programme is supported in the last few years. The professional women’s rugby programme has received significant investment with 32 full-time contracts now in place for our players, and a wider strategy for women and girls rugby will be delivered in 2024.

“We are on a journey and significant change is never easy. We are committed to operating transparently and building trust across and beyond the game of rugby in Wales. We look forward to developing a new wider strategic plan with our member clubs and engaging with internal audiences and external collaborators to support our journey to take meaningful action and embed lasting change.

“It has been a very difficult time for our players and many of the staff who work at the WRU and I want to say thank you to all of them. Despite these troubled times, they have continued to deliver an elite, professional and community rugby programme for men and women, girls and boys that is such an important part of Welsh society.”

Nigel Walker, Interim Chief Executive said: “We very much welcome the hard work and scrutiny of the review panel and we have already said that the recommendations of the Independent Review will be implemented in full. We are determined to lead a culture everyone in Welsh rugby can be proud of.

“We will make sure we have understood all the recommendations and the implications of these and work hard with our stakeholders to implement the necessary changes.

“Many of the recommendations in relation to our Board and on enhanced investment in the women’s game at a national level have been delivered or are in progress, but we recognise that we still have much more work to do.

“Some of the changes will need consultation with our wider rugby family and in particular our clubs. I am confident we will be able to put all the recommendations into practice, and I am heartened that we have already seen a strong commitment of our clubs to reform.

“The report provides a wider challenge to us, to better listen and learn as an organisation. We will be talking to our staff and our partners to make sure that the recommendations are put in place through effective collaboration.

“We have been heartened by the support we have received from those who want to help us renew. We are committed to continuing to improve our culture, to transparency and to rebuilding trust across all aspects of the game.”

Abi Tierney, WRU Group CEO (from January 2024) said: “The Independent Review’s report is incredibly humbling and describes issues, actions and attitudes that are hugely regrettable. They should not exist in our, nor any, workplace.

“Of course, as leaders of the organisation, we will all wholeheartedly condemn the attitudes and issues described but we are equally aware that our response needs to be greater than this.

“We will implement all of the recommendations the Independent Review panel has made. My colleagues have committed to doing this and I commit to doing this too

“But we will also go deeper than this. We will take what the review has found to heart and not only fix the issues identified but also to build a culture and values that we can all be proud of.

“We will do this together. We will, because of the pain we are going through now and with gratitude to those who have spoken up and made us listen, become better

“The fact that we have a report like this from an independent source identifying any issues and problems that exist in our culture is a great opportunity for us to transform the way we work

“We can feel inspired that everything is out in the open. We can feel empowered that our people know they will be listened to and that we will act proportionately and appropriately to behaviour that is called out in the future.

“We can feel confident that we not only have procedures and structures in place to make this achievable, but that we have a workforce which is encouraged and able to speak out, to talk to us and to help us improve.

“We will only improve if we do this together, if we listen, and not only listen but hear, and if we act appropriately in response. The review and its recommendations will help us do that, but we must also be fully invested in the idea that we all need to evolve, change and progress together.”