



facilities guidance for

# CLUBHOUSES







# Clubhouse design and site layout

The importance of providing adequate changing facilities and social facilities is often the key to survival of many clubs. It is often the case that many clubs do not provide decent changing rooms let alone social facilities to accommodate their teams. This makes it extremely difficult to maintain a focus at the club and develop it beyond merely a game on Saturday, cold shower and then down the road to the local for an after match drink.

Unfortunately this situation prevents clubs developing and encouraging junior and new members whilst retaining existing players. It has been recognised that the future development of the game is dependant upon the quality of facilities that participants and spectators alike require in order to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.

## General facility requirements

For an average sized club (running say 3 - 4 men's teams, perhaps 1 women's team and a mini's section) the requirements for clubhouse facilities are fairly similar. Clubs should be looking to provide 2 - 4 flexible changing areas, showers and toilet facilities, male and female, officials changing rooms, medical room, disabled access to all areas, social/community area and bar, bar storage area and cleaners and equipment storage areas.

## Changing rooms

Changing areas can be provided as either individual team changing rooms, large communal areas or a combination of the two where it is necessary to have some degree of flexibility. The latter may be useful if the club runs an extensive mini's section and or hosts large events or tournaments. However the key points in terms of ensuring that you provide adequate changing areas are that:

- Layouts provide for flexible male/female use
- Changing areas should be large enough to accommodate the maximum number of players/coaches likely to use the room
- A general rule of thumb is to allow 1m<sup>2</sup> per person when calculating the size of a changing room
- In terms of bench area per player allow for a minimum of 500mm bench length and 450mm depth (N.B. 2 places are lost when a bench is carried around an internal corner)

The recommended minimum area for a Rugby team is 25 m<sup>2</sup>.

## Shower and toilet areas

Each changing unit should have its own shower area and it should be located as far as possible from changing room entrances and W.Cs in order to prevent water migration and to separate mud and water. Shower areas should allow one shower point for every 3 changing spaces including 1m<sup>2</sup> for showering and the same for a drying area.

Each changing unit should also have access to toilet facilities that provide the following minimum requirements:

- Male Changing: 1 x WC, 2 x Urinals, 2 x Washbasins.
- Female Changing Unit: 2 x WC's and 2 x Washbasins.

## Officials changing area

It is important to provide good changing facilities for officials both male and female.

It is suggested therefore that 2 official changing rooms are provided. These should be at least 5m<sup>2</sup> in size and contain a shower, a washbasin, a wc and a bench space.



## Medical room

It is recommended that all rugby clubs have a designated medical room. This room should be a minimum of 10m<sup>2</sup>. The medical room should be secure, easily accessible and demarcated as a Medical Room. Access to the room should ideally be through a double door, that will easily accommodate a player on a stretcher. The keys for the room should be available at all times when there is activity in the club, with instructions on the door as to the location of the keys. A list of standard equipment for a medical room in a rugby club will be available on the IRFU website.

## Club room/social/bar area

The club room or social area should provide for the full range of activities that they may be required to accommodate. First and foremost it needs to provide for the needs of the players, members, spectators and guests on both match days and training nights. The bar and kitchen areas (incl storage) need to be able to support and service the maximum number of teams that potentially could be using the facility at any one time and provide sufficient area for players and members to socialise after a game. It is worth considering having sufficient space or a storage area for tables, chairs and any indoor sports/activity equipment.



### Disabled access provision

It is important that any pavilion or clubhouse design provides for the needs of disabled people and not only meets the need of relevant legislation but also looks to apply best practice in its provision for disabled people. The issue is not about making special provision for a special class of citizen but making the building accessible and safer for the whole population which includes those with varying levels of disability and impairment. Generally basic designs need to follow a number of key principles of access and movement and the majority of buildings will go some way towards providing equal access and provision for all.

Firstly, 'easy access for all' means that the facility will need to provide for a wide diversity of groups including children, older people, players with kit bags, carers with small children, people who are fit and not so fit as well as those who are more easily recognisable as having a disability. Issues to consider therefore include:

- Easy ramps and stairs
- Handrails and grab rails
- Slip resistant floor surfaces
- Wide doors and corridors
- Appropriately sized and equipped lifts
- Spacious and sufficient toilet and changing areas
- Clear building layouts
- Signage and lighting
- Tactile signs
- Audible aids, such as PA and induction loops

Secondly, in terms of understanding the needs of people with a disability and consequently influencing the design and layout of their facilities, clubs should consider the obstacles that need to be negotiated throughout a visit to the facility, such as;

- Parking the car or arriving by public transport
- Finding and getting to the entrance
- Passing through the clubhouse or locating the playing areas
- Access to the playing areas
- Finding and using the changing rooms
- Finding and using the toilets
- Having to leave in an emergency

Generally the key points about the building design are adequate widths, shallow slopes, firm nonslip floors and keeping all handles/push buttons and other controls low enough to be reached by a sitting person.



### Site layout

In terms of the best location for a clubhouse/pavilion, the shape of the contours of the land and pitch locations will go some way to determine the best site. However the proximity of existing access roads and services will be the prime determining factors if large site development costs are to be avoided.

In terms of the ideal orientation of a pavilion, the main entrance should be away from the direction of the prevailing wind. However in terms of spectators, the principle viewing area should not face the direction of the setting sun. In general terms, determining the orientation of pitches and the clubhouse and their relationship to each other, clubs should consider the following:

- Facilities and viewing positions should be orientated to avoid low sun angles
- There should be no conflicting relationships between users (particularly with users of multi sport sites) for matches, training, etc.
- Issues relating to access and security: visibility, lighting, roads, footpaths, etc.
- Ensure adequate car parking
- Consider car parking, access and potential effect on neighbours for planning permission purposes
- Protection of users from the elements
- Sufficient space for proposed pavilion and potential expansion
- Access for service and emergency vehicles
- Relationship with the pitches it serves.

### Planning permission

Planning permission is used to control new development and is usually issued by the local county council.

Most forms of development require planning permission. This includes new buildings and extensions to existing buildings, new access points, changes to external appearance, demolishing of buildings and felling of trees. If any of the above work is undertaken without planning permission being granted, the planning authority can demand that the land/building is put back to its condition prior to the work undertaken.

It is therefore vitally important that the local planning authority is contacted at an early stage in any proposed development to ensure compliance with their conditions.





**For further information contact the  
Branch Club Rugby Development Manager:**

**Connacht**

**John Power**

Tel: 091 561568/0909 643 062

Mob: 087 232 0036

Fax: 0909 643 083

Email: john@jmpower.com

**Leinster**

**Declan Fassbender**

Tel: 01 223 5116

Mob: 086 6014168

Fax: 01 269 3142

Email: declan.fassbender@leinsterrugby.ie

**Munster**

**Damon Urlich**

Tel: 021 432 3563

Mob: 087 258 6832

Fax: 021 432 3956

Email: damonurlich@munsterrugby.ie

**Ulster**

**Mark Holland**

Tel: 02890 493 111 ext 230

Mob: 07917 732 658

Fax: 02890 491 522

Email: mark@ulsterrugby.com

The IRFU shall not be liable for any loss or damage whatsoever arising from the use of or reliance on the information contained in this Guidance Note. The IRFU reserves the right to amend or withdraw the information contained in this Guidance Note. Produced in association with the RFU.

