

READING

I was born in Lewisham in South London, and then moved to Edmonton in North London, which is where I spent most of my childhood. I grew up on a council estate¹ with my mum, who was a single parent, and

5 went to school at my local comprehensive².

I first started playing rugby after a conversation with one of my teachers [...]. Without that conversation and without that teacher, my life would have been very different.

10 As a girl who was black from a football-mad council estate, there just weren't very many people like me at the top of rugby, or at the top of any of the sports that I saw. But when I started playing rugby, and found that I was good at it, I discovered that my background

15 didn't matter. The sport completely changed my life. Following my retirement³ from professional rugby, I moved into the world of media, and now work as a sports broadcaster⁴ and keynote speaker⁵. It has been challenging to try to change people's perceptions

20 around rugby union, as it's often thought of as a male sport, and not as a game that women play. When I first started in my current role, I felt I had to convince people that I was capable of talking about the sport. I feel very proud of my progression, but I am very

25 aware that my success has been achieved in spite of⁶ the system, not because of it. I am pleased that, through my actions, I have opened up the door for other women and people from similar backgrounds to mine to be able to follow in my footsteps.

1 *parc de logements sociaux* • 2 *collège* • 3 *end of career* •
4 *animatrice* • 5 *conférencière* • 6 *malgré*

Elitist Britain,

Study "The educational backgrounds
of Britain's leading people", 2019



Maggie Alphonsi, former England rugby player and current sports broadcaster

