



SHARKS WATCH

**SALE SHARKS FOUNDATION
IMPACT REPORT 2024-25**



» OUR VISION:

Is to use the power of our sport to change lives throughout the North West

» OUR PURPOSE:

As the charitable Foundation of Sale Sharks, our purpose is to use the power of our sport to provide life-changing opportunities in education, health and wellbeing

» WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- › Introducing rugby to people of all ages and abilities
- › Igniting and encouraging passion for our sport
- › Teaching vital skills
- › Tackling inequality
- › Uniting diverse groups
- › Supporting the most vulnerable

» WE PROMISE TO:

- › Improve wellbeing in our communities, specifically in the areas of social inclusion and loneliness.
- › Inspire greater participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity to improve health and instil long-term sporting activity habits
- › Provide opportunities and activities to improve mental health
- › Help young people gain qualifications, improve life skills and make better informed choices
- › Help bring our diverse communities together and enable greater understanding between them
- › Encourage greater involvement in Sale Sharks activities as a player, coach or fan
- › Develop a new women and girls programme to complement the recent addition of the Women's Premiership Team to the Sale Sharks family.

» OUR VALUES:

Passionate
Inclusive
Respectful

Kind
Fun
Proud

INTRODUCTION

It gives me a great sense of pride to introduce our Sharks Watch Impact Report for the 2024/25 delivery year, highlighting the transformative impact that our sport and programmes have on so many people's lives across the North West.



This report not only reflects our incredible achievements and the outstanding commitment of our dedicated and passionate team, it reaffirms the vital role that the Sale Sharks Foundation plays at the heart of our communities.

This year, we have worked alongside 21,000 people to tackle inequality, provide access to new opportunities and be the beating heart of a community club house for Sale Sharks. All this while empowering people to live healthier lives and achieve better outcomes. To every person we have worked with, thank-you for placing your trust in us.

The importance of our work cannot be underestimated. Our support is crucial to so many, and as we continue to adapt to the needs of our communities, the insights of our delivery and participants will help shape our strategy for the years to come.

As always, we cannot achieve the impact we do without the efforts of our amazing Foundation team and the support of our trustees, partners, funders, friends and the whole Sale Sharks family. We really do value your contributions and commitment to driving meaningful change throughout the region.

Together, we will continue to ensure that nobody is left on the sidelines.

ABI DEAN, CEO

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank the amazing Foundation team for another fantastic year of impactful delivery across the North West.



At a time when demands for services and support continues to grow, the Sale Sharks Foundation remains right at the heart of our communities, tackling inequality, bringing people together and helping those who need it the most.

As you will see from this report, the projects that the Foundation delivers can be life-changing for so many people. It also highlights how our wonderful sport and its values can act as a transformative platform for social change. It offers structure, connection, hope and fosters a sense of community that goes way beyond the pitch. Rugby has a place for everyone.

While we celebrate the success of 2024/25, the Foundation remains aware of the societal challenges ahead and continues to adapt its provision to meet the needs of our communities.

Your support is vital in helping the Foundation achieve its aims, and I would like to thank all the donors, sponsors, partners and people who continue to give their time, money and expertise to help the Foundation run our impactful programmes and initiatives.

Our highly skilled, dynamic and passionate Foundation team is already delivering for 2025/26 and remains driven to develop our offerings further.

Thank-you once again for your support. Here's to another year of life-changing impact.

**ANDY WATSON,
CHAIR OF
TRUSTEES**

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS:



21,212

people
engaged
with in
2024/25



17,708

people
played
some form
of rugby
through the
work of the
Foundation



47%

of programme
participants
were women
and girls*



860

children
involved in
a matchday
activity at a
Sale Sharks
home game



1,800+

children
attend
Festivals
as part of
programmes
delivered
by the
Foundation



656

year 3 and 4
children from
schools in the
Salford and
Trafford area
learn about
healthy eating and
lifestyle through
Eat Well, Play Safe
programme with
Cargill



1st

Sale Sharks
Foundation the
top delivery
team in the
country
for England
Rugby 6 to 12
programme



300+

hours of
inclusive rugby
and wheelchair
rugby sessions
delivered
through MBNA
supported
Tackle
Together
programme



£9,000

given back to
grassroots
rugby clubs



75

days of rugby
development
camps,
days and
residential



1,232

girls
introduced
to rugby
through
our Girls
Tackle Rugby
programme



803

mentoring/
tutoring
sessions
delivered to
pupils through
alternative
provision
programme

*of data recorded

DISABILITY

» TACKLE TOGETHER

462 school children worked with in SEN schools

Tackle Together is the Foundation's leading disability and inclusion schools programme, delivered in partnership with MBNA.

The programme sees Foundation coaches bring inclusive rugby sessions to Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools across the North West. The initiative aims to empower children and young people by helping them learn new skills and experience the joy of rugby in an accessible and welcoming environment.

Wheelchair rugby sessions are also offered to mainstream schools to educate children and raise awareness of disability sport, offering pupils the chance to experience this for themselves.

Our sessions delivered through the Tackle Together programme engage young people of all abilities, break down barriers and inspire connection.

20 SEN Schools engaged



"Our Tackle Together sessions have had a powerful impact on our students, promoting inclusion, teamwork, and physical confidence. These wheelchair rugby sessions are a highlight of the week — it's wonderful to see students who use wheelchairs playing alongside their ambulant peers, all equally engaged and excited by the fast-paced, competitive nature of the game."

"The sessions not only break down barriers and challenge perceptions around disability but also encourage teamwork, empathy, and mutual respect. Students develop vital skills such as communication and cooperation while improving their strength, coordination, and confidence. The joy, laughter and camaraderie shared on the court truly embody what inclusive sport is all about."

Sarah Marshall, Deputy Head, Lancasterian School

"It's been fantastic to see how Tackle Together continues to grow - not just in numbers, but in the impact it has."

"At MBNA, we're proud to support inclusive opportunities that help our communities thrive."

**Victoria Dowd,
Sponsorships Manager at MBNA**

841 school children taking part in Wheelchair Rugby taster sessions

300+ hours of inclusive rugby and wheelchair rugby sessions delivery combined

mbna

» TACKLE TOGETHER FESTIVAL

More than 70 pupils from Special Educational Needs (SEN) Schools across the North West came together for our Tackle Together Festival at Seashell Trust, the learning disability charity in Cheadle. Providing inclusive access to sport for young people with disabilities aged 9-16, the festival featured skill-building sessions, tag rugby games and team-based activities.

Each participant received a medal and gift bag, courtesy of MBNA, to mark the occasion.

“Over the years, Seashell have been delighted to receive support from the Sale Sharks Foundation, delivering rugby sessions that open the game up to students with the most complex disabilities. Hosting the rugby festival here at Seashell was more than just an event, it was a celebration of inclusion, teamwork, and opportunity. It strengthened the bond between the two organisations and created even more chances for young people with disabilities to experience the joy of sport. The festival brought together education providers from across the region, all in a top-class facility designed to meet every individual’s needs, which made this the perfect stage for the Tackle Together programme finale.”

Carl Cawood, Senior Physical Activity Development Officer (Service Development), Seashell Trust



» CRUSADERS FIN CLUB

The Crusaders Fin Club is a thriving tag rugby programme for young people with Down's syndrome. Delivered as part of our Tackle Together programme, in partnership with the MBNA Community Investment Programme, it welcomes players between the ages of 5 and 25 for free, inclusive, non-contact tag rugby sessions, every other Sunday at Sale Sharks' Carrington Training Centre.

Beyond the physical activity, the Crusaders Fin Club has also become a vital support network for both players and families. For many participants, the group offers a sense of purpose and belonging, a safe space to be themselves, enjoy the game they love, and build lasting friendships. For parents, it has created a network of shared experience, encouragement, and mutual support.

“James loved his training session. It was so good to see him running... a good sign which shows he’s enjoying himself and makes the journey so worthwhile.”

Parent of Crusaders Fin Club player

In 2024/25, the Crusaders Fin Club participated in the Wooden Spoon TagFest tournament, making up a TigerSharks team with the Leicester Tigers, plus took part in the Project Rugby Festival at Twickenham Stoop.

Another poignant moment was marking World Down Syndrome Day 2025 by running out as mascots with the Sale Sharks for the match against Northampton Saints. The fixture saw the sides support the 'Lots of Socks' campaign by running out in odd socks.



461 engagements across the delivery year

25 sessions delivered for children and young people with Down's syndrome

» BREAKING BARRIERS

Our Breaking Barriers programme provides access to holistic wellbeing and educational activities for children and young people who have hearing impairments. Supporting the development of positive social networks, mental resilience and healthy aspirations for the future, those attending our sessions showed clear improvements in skills and confidence through participation in structured rugby games and inclusive activities.

In 2024/25, we also built and deepened relationships with a range of local organisations and charities to raise further awareness of our provision, with the aim of reaching more children and young people who will benefit from the programme.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

HEADSTART | 172 sessions across 7 locations

HeadStart is a positive mental and physical wellbeing programme providing adults (18+) with regular, low-impact physical activity sessions mixed with social engagement and mental wellbeing discussions. The sessions help tackle inactivity and reduce social isolation.

With a focus on inclusivity, the sessions are tailored to be accessible to all, regardless of ability or background. We've seen a significant increase in participation across the delivery year, with sessions running across various locations in Manchester, Trafford and Salford.

The HeadStart programme is well established within these local communities and receives regular referrals through the community connector network.

Groups running include Sharks Together (working with men 50+ and living with long term health conditions, Let's Move Together (working with men aged 30-55 and living with common mental health conditions) and our HeadStart sessions, which focus on adult mental health improvement.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the HeadStart programme and its benefits for our participants



103 individuals supported with their mental health and long-term health conditions



"I feel within myself that I'm achieving something. I was very depressed when I was referred to the group and I'd lost all my confidence. Even walking around the block felt too much."

Female participant on the HeadStart programme

"It's got me moving again, which has had a big part in me feeling better about myself."

Male participant, 50s



SHARKS FORCES

Our Sharks Forces programme promotes positive mental and physical wellbeing, supporting service personnel, veterans and their families. Our mission is to foster a welcoming community where participants can reconnect, stay active and access essential resources and support.

As part of the programme, we run weekly social hubs, wellbeing walks and a monthly community allotment project. We also work closely with a host of local partners and service providers to support those on the programme further by signposting to other services available to them.

Allowing the forces community to bond with others who have shared experiences, programme participants report reduced feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

Proudly supported by the Armed Covenant Fund and Veterans Foundation, Sharks Forces helped 44 programme participants stay engaged and active in the community during 2024/25.

In May, we also marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day with a get together for local veterans to share their stories and remember those no longer with us.

"We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Sale Sharks Foundation for their incredible support of veterans from the Salford Area Veterans Enterprise (SAVE). Through their commitment to community engagement, the Foundation has provided invaluable opportunities for our veterans to reconnect, stay active, and feel supported."

"From facilitating regular sporting activities to support from their Monday Morning Social Group, Sale Sharks Foundation has made a real difference to the lives of those who have served. Most recently, their generous support helped make our D-Day outing to the Imperial War Museum North a memorable and meaningful experience for all involved."

"A special thank you goes to Ollie and his dedicated team for their continued support and partnership. We deeply appreciate all you have done – and continue to do – to support our veterans. We look forward to working together in the future to build on this strong foundation."

Dave Marriott, Peer to Peer Lead, SAVE



Sharks Forces helped 44 programme participants

"The sessions I've been to have been intriguing. Since having my meltdown in 23/24 I've not really ventured out, only to work, so it's helpful and has helped somewhat building the courage to go out and meet others. It brings back memories, with a great bunch of people."

Paul, veteran

» EAT WELL PLAY SAFE

Run in partnership with Trafford food producer Cargill, our Eat Well, Play Safe programme empowers Year Three and Four pupils to make healthier lifestyle choices.

Delivered to schools in the Salford and Trafford area, the five-week programme emphasises the importance of healthy eating and lifestyle. It combines education and physical activity, with our coaches running tag rugby sessions alongside classroom learning.

Scan the QR code to find out more about the Eat Well, Play Safe programme with Cargill.



The programme delivery culminates in the now annual Cargill Cares festival, which invites schools and pupils to showcase the knowledge and skills they've learnt by coming together for some healthy, friendly fun.

"We've worked with the Sale Sharks Foundation on the Eat Well, Play Safe programme for over 10 years and we helped them develop it. We really like it because it's teaching children the importance of eating healthy, it's teaching the importance of exercise, staying fit and healthy, and it's sustainable. Once we've been and delivered the programme, they carry it on in the schools."

Sally Easterbrook, Cargill

300 coaching hours delivered by Sale Sharks Foundation coaches

SCHOOL FEEDBACK:

"The Cargill Eat Well, Play Safe programme has impacted our school by giving children healthier choices when they want their dinners. It's also encouraged them to be a bit more diplomatic with their team skills."

"Our children loved every part of it. Inside and out. It was a great experience for all of us."

"The positive way the staff supported the children enabled more reluctant pupils to take part in the festival."



656 participants

15 Schools delivered in across Salford and Trafford

» WALKING RUGBY

Our walking rugby programme in Salford is designed for men 60 and over, offering a welcoming and accessible way to stay active, connected, and healthy. By combining the fun and camaraderie of walking rugby with life skills, personal development and health and wellbeing workshops, we create a supportive environment where participants can boost their fitness, build new friendships and gain valuable knowledge for everyday life.

This holistic approach helps older men stay engaged, confident and empowered on-and-off the pitch.

In 2024/25, we had a Walking Rugby festival as part of the 25-year celebrations of Sale Sharks adopting the 'Sharks' name. Ten teams participated in the event, held at Sale FC.



» TRY2CONNECT

Delivered in partnership with children's mental health charity Place2Be, Try2Connect is a schools programme designed to promote positive mental health among children of primary school age.

The programme combines classroom-based workshops with physical activity, using the five ways to wellbeing framework: Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice and Give.

Each six-week programme also includes tag rugby and multi-sport sessions that incorporate the themes discussed in the classroom.

9 schools delivered in

465 children supported

"The programme's mix of themed classroom workshops with tag rugby and sport sessions is enabling young people to build skills to better understand and manage their emotions, make positive connections, embrace new experiences, and make healthy life choices. These are all vital skills which are needed to navigate life's ups and downs. The programme is also a really great example of how physical health can play an important role in developing good mental health.

Through their foundation and community outreach, Sale Sharks are making such a positive and lasting impact for children in their local communities across the North West."

Catherine Roche
Place2Be Chief Executive



SOCIAL INCLUSION

» ENGAGE – POWERHOUSE

Our sessions at Powerhouse Youth Centre in Moss Side engage young people not currently accessing or involved in community activities, and those potentially at risk of being involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. Participants engage in multi-sport activity, arts and crafts, community youth group planning meetings and team working sessions.

A player of the session award was implemented for participants demonstrating good behaviour and sportsmanship, while a group also got to experience a matchday at Sale Sharks in February.

44 sessions delivered

416 programme participants supported



» ENGAGE – WIDNES

Delivered through our Sports Plus model, this Engage programme harnesses the power of Rugby Union to support young people at risk of anti-social behaviour or criminality. By providing structured, positive sports sessions, Engage offers a safe space for participants to build confidence, learn respect, and develop life skills. Our coaches use rugby's core values—teamwork, discipline, and resilience—to inspire better choices and brighter futures. Through Engage, we are not just teaching rugby; we are helping young people find belonging, purpose, and new pathways away from negative influences.

More than 50 young people engaged through the year

24 young people regularly engaging in sessions on streets and parks of Widnes

EDUCATION

» HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND FOOD PROGRAMME (HAF)

Working in partnership with Sale West, our HAF programme is a school holiday activity camp that ran during the summer holidays for Primary School children who are entitled to free school meals. An inclusive and fun environment, the HAF programme promotes achievements and aspirations through participation in positive activities and promotes cohesion between young people and the community.

This year we delivered to 36 children at Sale West Youth and Community Centre, working in partnership with other external providers to provide various activities, such as arts and crafts, sports and games. Sale West arranged for healthy meals for those on the programme via the community café.



» ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

The Sale Sharks Foundation has provided specialised Alternative Provision mentoring sessions to 20 learners across Trafford and other parts of Manchester in 2024/25. The programme offers one-to-one and group mentoring support for those who are experiencing challenges in their education within mainstream schools and alternative provision.

The provision offers a safe space for learners where they feel they can express their emotions to adults not affiliated to their school or personal life. There continues to be a significant demand for tuition support across schools, which has resulted in Foundation staff delivering support in Maths, English and Science to students from Key Stage Two up to Key Stage Four.

Through collaboration with learner's schools, we can reinforce their learning to ensure understanding and develop their confidence.

SCHOOL & PARENT FEEDBACK:

"The mentoring has helped 'X' massively. I feel that she is in a position where her behaviour has massively improved."

Stretford High School

"James has been fabulous in his support of 'X' and this is clear to see in 'X's engagement in these sessions as well as positive impacts in his lessons, attendance and punctuality."

Blessed Thomas Holford School

"I just wanted to say a massive thank-you for all your help and support with 'X'. He has calmed down so much with your support. You have made a massive difference to him, and we really do appreciate it."

Parent

20 pupils
supported
through
**Alternative
Provision**

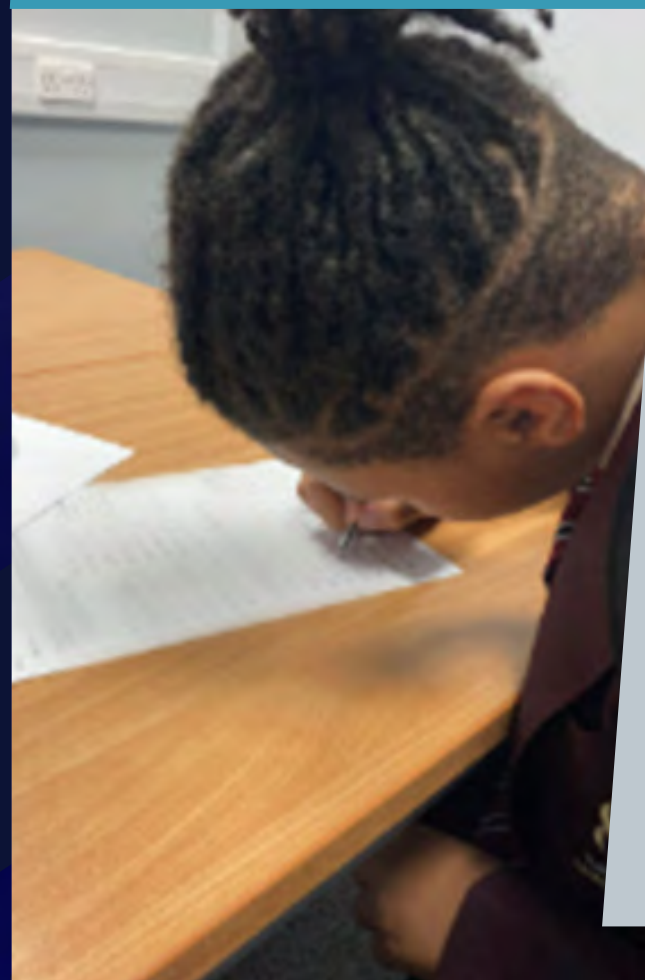
**667 mentoring
sessions
delivered**

**136 tutoring
sessions
delivered**

**8 schools
worked with
as part of the
programme**

CASE STUDY

'X' is a High School student who has been receiving mentoring support from the foundation since Year 7 and is now entering Year 10. 'X' has been receiving support primarily to support his social anxiety needs. This had led him to struggle with public transport due to crowds and as a result he gets a taxi to and from school. We have worked hard on this through discussions and scenario-based work, and he was able to attend a Sale Sharks game, with his family, in October 2024. He is very keen to attend another game soon. As we continue to support him, we now complete homework with him and assist with coursework when provided.



OUR YEAR IN PICTURES

JULY



Our Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) returns for the summer, providing free activities and food, in partnership with Sale West, for 36 children.

AUG



Camps and Residentials take place during the summer holidays, with a record 42 girls attending our week-long residential.

JAN



Year 3 and 4 pupils from schools in the Trafford and Salford area learn about healthy eating and lifestyle through the Eat Well, Play Safe programme. Run in partnership with Cargill, it culminates in a festival in May.

FEB



A celebration of the upcoming Women's World Cup with an England Rugby Impact 25 Festival, hosted and delivered by Sale Sharks Foundation coaches.

SEPT



32 teams from across the North West participate in the Defender Cup, a festival for U11 and U12 teams.

OCT



Trustee Steve Newton runs the MCR half marathon, the first of two charity runs in aid of the Foundation in 2024/25, raising £1,192.

MAR



Crusaders Fin Club participants take to the field with Sale Sharks to mark World Down Syndrome Day, prior to the match versus Northampton Saints.

APR



The return of our Foundation Day raises more than £9,000 for the impactful and life-changing work of the Sale Sharks Foundation.

NOV



DJ Alderson, a talented tag rugby player from our Crusaders Fin Club, is a finalist in the Junior Sports Achiever category at the MCR Sports Awards.

DEC



Molly, a Year 11 pupil from Westhoughton High School and participant on our Project Rugby programme, is showcased as a great success story, featuring on Capital FM.

MAY



Marking the 80th anniversary of VE Day, local veterans come together to share stories and remember those no longer with us.

JUNE



Pupils from SEN schools across the North West take part in the MBNA-supported Tackle Together Festival at Seashell Trust.



HITZ

HITZ was an award-winning employability and life skills programme, delivered from Sale West Community Centre.

Funded by Premiership Rugby and delivered in partnership with YMCA as our Education Partner, the programme is designed to support and engage with NEET young people who are not quite ready for college or work but need a new approach to help them progress into the next stage of their lives.

The focus of the programme is on confidence building, aspiration and goal setting within sessions, which are linked to the Level 2 Employability certificate. We also offered GCSE and Functional Skills qualifications in Maths and English.

We worked with 30 young people in 2024/25, giving them the opportunity of a work placement, access to a Sports Leadership qualification - in partnership with Access Sport - and facilitated an impactful sexual health workshop with NHS Sexual Health. Students accessed money budgeting courses and enhanced interview techniques, too! The young people enrolled on HITZ also received the support of a mentor every fortnight via our partner, 1 Million Mentors.

94% of learners who completed HITZ achieved the L2 Employability Qualification

89% of learners have since progressed to education, employment or training following HITZ completion

89% of learners who completed HITZ achieved their functional skill

"From the moment I heard about HITZ I knew this was the course where I was able to be myself and achieve my goals. Through coming to HITZ I have massively improved in the sense of that I now come in everyday and complete my work. I look forward to coming to HITZ and the environment. HITZ is the best thing I have ever done."

Participant enrolled on the HITZ programme.



HITZ ON TRACK

HITZ on Track is a six-week programme delivered in secondary schools across Manchester, designed to support 14-16-year-olds at risk of becoming NEET. The programme focuses on the RSHE curriculum and tackles issues affecting young people today. HITZ staff can engage with young people on a level that can be difficult for traditional schoolteachers to establish.

We delivered within schools across the Trafford area, working closely with a network of schools that had identified students who were at risk of becoming NEET. In total, we worked with 175 students across 6 different schools. Teachers provided excellent feedback, highlighting how much students enjoyed the programme and their high level of engagement.

"An engaging rugby session for 40 Year 8 girls, many of whom were new to the sport. The focus was on fun and participation, with activities designed to build confidence and introduce fundamental skills. The session incorporated a variety of games that encouraged the girls to think about invading space and develop their ball-handling abilities. Through these enjoyable and inclusive activities, the girls were able to experience the core principles of rugby in a low-pressure environment. The positive atmosphere and emphasis on engagement helped ensure that all participants had a fun and valuable introduction to the game."

Teacher, Stretford High School



RUGBY DEVELOPMENT

The Rugby Development Department aims to grow Rugby Union across the North West by providing more opportunities for players and coaches within the sport. Through a variety of programmes, we continue to inspire players and coaches to engage in the sport more regularly, or for the first time.

» PROJECT RUGBY

Project Rugby is designed to introduce as many people as possible to rugby, engage new audiences and stimulate a lifelong interest in the game. The programme specifically aims to increase participation in the game from traditionally underrepresented groups: people from ethnically diverse communities and lower socio-economic backgrounds, and disabled people, positioning rugby as a sport for anyone regardless of background or ability.

Launched as a joint initiative between England Rugby and Premiership Rugby, it provides accessible opportunities to experience, enjoy and play rugby across more than 200 community locations within England.

The primary focus of the project is to transition new players and volunteers into local grassroots rugby clubs. Helping people to feel more connected to their local community, the project's innovative approach looks to utilise rugby's core values, increasing levels of resilience and confidence amongst participants.

In 2024/25, we provided seven different playing opportunities, with 250 young people now playing rugby union more regularly.

"I just wanted to say how grateful I am, and WHS is, for how much school's rugby in Bolton has benefitted from all of your support over the last two years. Without your support and hard work the improvements that have occurred would have been nowhere near possible.

"Thinking back to the first rugby tournaments when there were two schools there with no more than 10/15 students from each school playing; to the final block of tournaments this year where we had 3 separate boys tournaments all with minimum 3 schools and a girls tournament attended by 4 schools, all who have been introduced to rugby through the Project Rugby initiative.

"A massive THANK YOU to all of the coaches that have facilitated sessions, and for giving our students to opportunity to experience rugby union (most of whom, for the first time), some of which at Twickenham!"

**Mr Shacklock, Teacher of PE,
Westhoughton High School**

1,090 young people engaged and introduced to rugby

250 young people playing rugby union more regularly



CASE STUDY: MOLLY

Molly's rugby journey began when she attended her first Project Rugby session at an after-school club, delivered by the Sale Sharks Foundation, sparking an interest that has been life changing.

Inspired by Foundation coach and Sale Sharks Women's player Laura Perrin, rugby offered Molly something unique and she quickly realised it was a sport she loved and wanted to pursue. Teachers soon noticed a boost in Molly's confidence at school, observing that she had become more outgoing and had made new friends through her involvement in rugby.

Now a positive role model to others, Molly credits rugby for improving her fitness and widening her circle of friends, factors which have led to her improved application and attitude at school.

The coaches from the Sharks' Foundation team guided her to Bolton Rugby Club, where she joined the girls' team and started training and playing regularly. Since joining the Bolton Amazons U16s team, Molly was awarded Captain's Player of the Match in only her first full season.

Her passion for the sport doesn't stop there – she became a vocal advocate for girls' rugby at her school, attending every girl's rugby session this year and encouraging more girls to participate in after-school clubs to help grow the game.





» 6 TO 12

As part of the Women's World Cup Impact 25 legacy, Sale Sharks Foundation has been delivering the England Rugby 6 to 12 programme, providing high-quality Rugby Union sessions for girls aged 6 to 12 across Liverpool and Manchester.

The initiative supports girls in schools, helping them develop core rugby skills, confidence, and a love for the game, before guiding them to transition into their local rugby clubs.

As part of the programme and World Cup celebrations, one of our participants, Orla, featured on a mural painted at Salford Watersports Centre alongside England international Morwenna Talling, of Sale Sharks Women.



Scan the QR code to watch Orla's story



1,560 girls benefitted from the delivery of the 6 to 12 programme

"The staff and children enjoyed the sessions you delivered. They were such a success I have changed the PE LTP to include tag rugby in the curriculum."

Meadowbank Primary School

"The girls absolutely loved it! They want lots more rugby."

Firs Primary School



» BODY CONFIDENCE

Project Rugby's Body Confidence programme, delivered by Sale Sharks Foundation, empowers girls to develop positive self-esteem and a healthy body image through rugby.

By providing inclusive, non-contact sessions in schools and clubs, the programme helps girls celebrate what their bodies can achieve, build resilience and feel confident both on-and-off the pitch.

Through this supportive environment, more girls are discovering the benefits of physical activity and making lasting connections in their local rugby communities.

1000 girls participating in the programme

10 of our Rugby Development and Wellbeing coaches trained in Body Confident coaching

10 other pathway coaches trained through the Body Confidence programme

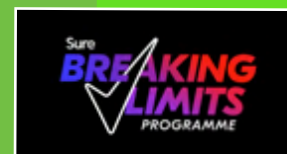
» BREAKING LIMITS

The Rexona Breaking Limits Programme helps young people overcome barriers related to gender, race or ability, to improve their confidence to move more.

By cultivating self-esteem, teamwork and resilience and by training coaches, teachers and community leaders, it creates supportive environments for movement. This empowers young people to realise their power to break societal and self-imposed limitations.

In 2024/25, the Sale Sharks Foundation reached 5,400 young people through this programme as a result of training coaches.

5,400 young people reached through this programme



» GIRLS TACKLE RUGBY

Girls Tackle Rugby was developed to challenge stereotypes, create opportunities, and inspire the next generation of girls to play rugby.

Supported by England Rugby and the owners of Sale Sharks, the programme targets girls in Years 7 to 9 (aged 11-14 years) and is delivered through curriculum-based sessions led by elite female players from Sale Sharks Women. It aims to provide high-quality coaching that develops rugby skills, physical literacy, confidence, resilience, and wellbeing.

By embedding rugby within the school environment and connecting girls with professional players, Girls Tackle Rugby aims

to make rugby an accessible, enjoyable, and sustainable option that supports the growth of the female game.



In 2024/25, our commissioned research with Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport, evaluating the impact of the programme, continued, with 266 girls, two teachers and three Girls Tackle Rugby coaches participating in the research.

The evaluation demonstrated that Girls Tackle Rugby is effective in promoting girls' physical literacy, wellbeing, confidence and positive attitudes towards rugby, providing a strong evidence base to support the programme's continued investment, delivery and expansion.

1,200+ girls engaged in the Girls Tackle Rugby programme

"The legacy that has been sustained from the Girls Tackle Rugby programme now sees our school offer it to all Key Stage Three on our curriculum. We can now provide more opportunities for girls to get involved in rugby. They love identifying with something that has made them feel more confident and special."

Jill Howarth, Head of PE, Stockport School



MMU INSTITUTE OF SPORT RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTED:

6% INCREASE IN THE GIRLS' PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING SCORE

20% INCREASE IN THE GIRLS' OVERALL PHYSICAL LITERACY SCORE

88% OF GIRLS REPORTED FEELING MORE CONFIDENT

97% OF GIRLS DESCRIBED THE GIRLS TACKLE RUGBY COACHES AS INSPIRING PRACTITIONERS

97% OF GIRLS REPORTED A MORE POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF RUGBY

*Based on research with 266 girls participating in the programme

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK:

"Girls Tackle Rugby has made me want to experience rugby in every year of High School."

"Playing rugby has definitely increased my confidence."

"I've been able to talk to new people and learnt lots of new skills."



"The survey data shows that just one hour a week led to statistically significant improvements in girls' wellbeing and physical literacy."

Dr Kelly Bowden Davies, Senior Lecturer in Exercise Physiology, Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport



Scan the QR code to learn more about the Girls Tackle Rugby Insight Report



» PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CHAMPIONS

Premiership Rugby Champions is a Premiership Rugby initiative that part funded 7 classes of delivery in Primary Schools across the North West in 2024/25, engaging with 210 young children.

An education programme designed around key National Curriculum strands, it uses the inspiration of rugby players and teams to engage young children to learn, be active and discover their own inner champion.

The programme aims to Tackle Health, Tackle Numeracy or Tackle Literacy through joined-up classroom-based delivery and outdoor rugby sessions.

210 young children engaged with the programme



» star*

Our second year working with star*, a trauma-informed sports charity dedicated to transforming the lives of young individuals who have, or are currently facing adverse childhood experiences, continued to help schoolchildren transition into their local rugby clubs.

Leveraging the power of rugby, star* provides a safe and nurturing environment for young people to heal and thrive.

Research shows that in order for young people to overcome the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences, they need to build resilience through relationships with trusted adults, and grassroots rugby is the perfect space for this to happen.

We worked with schools across the North West to provide opportunities for 360 young people to experience rugby union and then gave them the opportunity to attend their local rugby club.

» RUGBY DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

Our Rugby Development Camps offer exciting opportunities for young players, from U7s to U12s, to develop their rugby union skills during the school holidays.

Our curriculum of delivery is designed to develop the Sharks DNA in line with England Rugby's age grade laws. Our Rugby Development Camps are two-day events hosted at local grassroots clubs.

1,181 attendees on Rugby Development Camps

More than 9k given back to grassroots clubs as part of the programme

#YOUR SCHOOL

Our #YourSchool programme sees us provide school provision for schools who want to develop their rugby union offering. In 2024/25, we reached more than 1,400 young people through this programme.

1,400+ people reached

#YOUR CLUBS

Our coaching support programme is the heartbeat of rugby clubs throughout the North West. By equipping coaches with expert guidance, fresh ideas and practical resources, we help clubs create vibrant, welcoming environments where players of all ages and backgrounds can thrive. From grassroots sessions to advanced skills workshops, our support empowers coaches to inspire, nurture talent and build strong, connected rugby communities. Together, we are growing the game, one club at a time.



» RESIDENTIAL CAMPS

Our Residential Camps are week-long camps hosted at Myerscough College, near Preston. The experience replicates a training week at Sale Sharks, with sessions designed around developing skills, tactical understanding and the players' game sense.

Away from the pitch, players follow a programme of holistic development, focusing on strength and conditioning, mindset, nutrition and individual development plans.

Along with developing players from across the North West and wider UK, our residential camps continue to attract players from other countries in Europe and beyond too!

The popularity of our residential camps for girls continues to grow year-on-year, with a record number attending this year's week-long camp.

"My son Eneas had the best week ever apparently, and made really good, nice friends. Thank-you all so much from the bottom of my heart for making this possible! Everything was well organised, and the accommodation, food and care was fantastic."

Cerian, parent of Residential Camp attendee

"We just wanted to say thank you to everyone involved in the Residential at Myerscough last week. He had an "awesome week", wanted to stay longer and will be taking some new drills and skills back to Winnington Park Colts."

Janine and Kyle, parents of Residential Camp attendee

202 attendees at our residential camps

Record 42 attendees at the week-long girls' residential



» DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Development Days are for young players aged 12 to 18 to develop their Sharks DNA. Sessions focus on developing Creative Attackers, Defensive Warriors, Best Teammates and Relentless Athletes to prepare them for competition throughout their careers.

225 attendees at Rugby Development Days



» DEFENDER PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CUP



» PDG

The Foundation plays a key role in the pathway of players who come through the academy system to become first-team regulars, with Sale Sharks priding itself on its development of homegrown talent.

Foundation coaches work with the club's PDG (Player Development Group) to provide coaching, talent ID and talent development for under-14s and under-15s players.

This is the first stage on the pathway towards the professional game and aims to develop the best local talent.

In 2024/25, our staff worked with 650 players across the six PDG Hubs – North Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, East Cheshire, West Cheshire and Central Cheshire – to identify and develop that Sharks DNA in players of the future.



The Defender Premiership Rugby Cup is a key fixture in the grassroots rugby calendar every season.

Supported by the long-standing Official Vehicle Partner of Premiership Rugby, it is a nationwide series of festivals for U11 and U12 teams, run in conjunction with all ten Gallagher Premiership clubs.

The events are designed to provide aspiring young players with the chance to play competitive fixtures in a format to aid their development, all within the spirit of rugby's core values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Providing a vital platform for several bright, young stars to go and play professional rugby, we collaborate with Manchester Rugby Club to host the Defender Premiership Rugby Cup each year.

The 2024/25 season event was held in September, when we welcomed 32 teams from across the North West to participate in a brilliant day of rugby. Manchester Rugby Club and Fylde RFC ran out winners of their respective festivals, earning themselves a trip to Twickenham for the Premiership Final.

1 Day

32 Teams

620 Players

1000 Spectators

» MATCHDAYS

Community clubs and young players immersed themselves in the Sale Sharks matchday experience through a range of memorable activities run by the Foundation's Rugby Development team in 2024/25.

From welcoming Ben Curry and the boys onto the pitch to showing off their skills in front of the club's passionate fans, juniors aged 7 to 16 were presented with opportunities to form guards of honour, play half-time and full-time tag and receive pre-match coaching clinics.



"Many thanks for the experience yesterday. All the kids - and their parents - loved it. A lot of them were already talking about doing the same next year."

Ian, Vale of Lune RUFC (attended vs Leicester Tigers - December 2024)

"The whole package – the game itself, the activities as well as the whole atmosphere – made for a fantastic experience for the Sandbach U10s party. We've had some great feedback from the kids and parents alike – many of whom have never attended a 'live' rugby match before (although we also have quite a few regulars). Hopefully, we can potentially do it again next season."

Chris, Sandbach RUFC (attended vs Bristol Bears – May 2025)

860 juniors engaged in match day activities



» TOUR GROUPS

When school and club teams tour the North West, our coaching support ensures their rugby experience is truly memorable. We deliver dynamic, tailored coaching sessions for visiting groups, helping players of all abilities sharpen their skills, build team spirit, and immerse themselves in the region's vibrant rugby culture. Whether it's a one-off masterclass or a series of workshops,

our expert coaches create fun, challenging, and inspiring sessions that leave a lasting impression – making every tour more than just a trip, but a rugby adventure to remember.

That was certainly the case for the 245 young players who were part of Tour Groups in 2024/25.



Please scan the QR code to donate to the work of the Foundation



FOUNDATION DAY

Our second Foundation Day took place on 25th April 2025, highlighting the incredible community impact of the Sale Sharks Foundation.

Fans enjoyed a packed programme of activities at the Sharks' home fixture against Saracens, including inflatables, exclusive photo opportunities with players, and community-themed activations.

This year, the raffle and auction returned with an expanded selection of prizes, raising vital funds for the Foundation's work. The fan zone atmosphere was electric, and a new centralised layout meant all activations were brought together in one main area,

enhancing the overall experience for supporters. Hospitality guests also enjoyed an improved Foundation presence, helping to showcase the breadth of the Foundation's community outreach.

The now annual event raised more than £9,000, with a huge thank-you to everybody who turned out, took part in the activities and made incredible donations. Every penny raised directly benefits the Sale Sharks Foundation's impactful community programmes, helping to support education, inclusion, health, and rugby development across the North West.

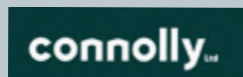
More than £9,000 raised to support the work of the Sale Sharks Foundation

Abi Dean, CEO of the Sale Sharks Foundation





THANK YOU!



If you would like further information about working with Sale Sharks Foundation, or the many programmes we deliver, please contact:

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