

# SHARKS WATCH

SALE SHARKS FOUNDATION  
IMPACT REPORT 2023-24



SALE  
SHARKS  
FOUNDATION

# INTRODUCTION

**Our vision is to use the power of our sport to change lives throughout the North West.**

The last 12 months have been challenging for so many people right across the North West, but when times are hardest, that's when the impact of the Sale Sharks Foundation is felt most acutely.

During the 2023/24 season we're incredibly proud to say that we worked with almost 30,000 people, making it a record-breaking year for the Foundation.

We made a pledge to be right at the heart of OUR communities, using rugby and the power of sport to change lives, especially during the hard times and that's what we did in 2023/24.

## Our Purpose

As the charitable Foundation of Sale Sharks, our purpose is to use 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

## Our Values

- Passionate
- Inclusive
- Respectful
- Kind
- Fun
- Proud

Scan the QR code to see more of what we do



**We promise to:**

- + Improve wellbeing in our communities, specifically in the areas of social isolation and loneliness.
- + Inspire greater participation in, and enjoyment of, physical activity to improve health and instill 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 life 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 grow the game, attract new fans and to complement the recent addition of the Women's Premiership Team to the Sale Sharks family.



It's been another incredible year for the Sale Sharks Foundation as our staff continue to work tirelessly to impact the lives of people in communities all over the North West.

This report gives you a flavour of some of our incredible achievements and on every page, it highlights the passion and dedication of our team that makes it all possible. It really is a team effort and I hope that comes through. Speaking personally, I'm so proud of every single member of staff and I'd like to thank them for what they have done over the past 12 months.

Our activity is centred around our wonderful game of rugby union but this report demonstrates that is merely our starting point! Our work is as diverse as the communities we reach and we truly have made every effort to stand by our commitments and those values that we all believe in.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone else who has made this year so memorable. Thank you to our trustees, partners, supporters, friends, funders and lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I'd like to thank the 30,000 people who we have worked with this year. Thank you for putting your trust in us.

**Abi Dean, CEO**

- 29,720** people engaged with in 2023/24
- 18,093** people played some sort of rugby through the work of the Foundation
- 9,605** primary and secondary school children engaged with our Mission Sharks programmes
- 1,078** children were involved in a matchday activity at a Sale Sharks home game
- 1,047** girls were introduced to rugby via Girls Tackle Rugby



On behalf of myself and the rest of the trustees, I'd like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to Abi and her incredible Foundation team for delivering another memorable, life-changing year of activity to so many people in our region.

It's been a challenging year for so many in our region, but through the power and values of rugby, the work of our Foundation truly provides hope and support to our community.

But don't take my word for it. From HITZ and Sharks Forces to our rugby camps and work with the Sharks DPP, this report highlights the incredible range of work our dedicated, passionate team delivers to make sure we grow our game and support those who really need it the most.

I also want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our donors, sponsors, partners and anyone else who has backed us with money, time or expertise this year. Your support means the world and it really does make a difference. Without you we simply couldn't do what we do.

2023/24 was a fantastic year, but the team are already delivering in the 2024/25 season and I know they are motivated and driven to push on and keep developing our offering even further.

So, thank you once again, and here's to another brilliant year.

**Andy Watson, Chair of Trustees**



# DISABILITY

**"The pupils have really enjoyed it and have benefitted in so many ways." Lancastrian School**

## TACKLE TOGETHER

The Tackle Together programme, led by our Foundation coaches, brings inclusive rugby sessions to Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools across the North West.

Sponsored by MBNA, this 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. In addition, the programme offers mainstream schools the opportunity to participate in wheelchair rugby sessions, providing a unique insight into the sport and raising awareness of disability sport.

Our commitment to inclusivity is further demonstrated through our disability awareness days, fostering understanding and awareness within the community.



**483** children worked with in SEN schools  
**20** SEN schools engaged  
**25** wheelchair rugby taster sessions delivered  
**300** hours of delivery, including 45 hours of wheelchair taster sessions

Scan the QR code to see our wheelchair rugby



### Our Tackle Together Festival

More than 60 children attended a festival at the Salford Community Stadium. The festival involved a mix of rugby skills and tag rugby matches and all participants received a bag and a bottle from MBNA.

**"The Sale Sharks Foundation coaches have been amazing with our learners. They have all learnt and developed so much over the sessions." Bleak Hill Primary School**

**"Blossom had their first Sale Sharks Foundation session yesterday and the coach was just amazing. He adapted so quickly to the needs of my class. He accepted them for who they were and what they could achieve. Thank you for giving this session to Blossom, it is an amazing chance for them to have a PE session which can build skills without them even knowing it." Jackie Greenwood, Lancastrian School**

### Our sponsor

**"The sessions have been designed so that we're able to engage as many young people as possible, whether that's through mainstream schools learning about disabilities in sport through to giving more access to specialised tag and touch rugby sessions, the Tackle Together programme is a special one and we're proud to throw our support behind it." Victoria Dowd, Sponsorships Manager at MBNA**

mbna



**"It makes me feel happy and included. I feel like I matter." Jaz, player for the Crusaders Fin Club**

## CRUSADERS FIN CLUB

As part of our Tackle Together programme, and through the partnership with MBNA, Sale Sharks Foundation delivered our hugely successful Crusaders Fin Club Down Syndrome rugby programme throughout 2023/24.

These sessions, for children and young people with Down Syndrome between the ages of five and 25, see Foundation coaches provide inclusive tag rugby sessions, demonstrating that rugby union truly is a sport for everyone.

As well as attending a number of Sharks home games, during 2023/24 the team also attended two festivals organised by the Wooden Spoon Charity, in Leigh and Coventry.

One of the year's highlights for the group was being involved in the reveal of the Sale Sharks first team line-up for the annual 'Lots of Socks' game to mark World Down Syndrome Day 2024. Our Crusaders appeared in the Sharks kit on social media with the players' names on

the back to mark the special matchday. The team also ran out with Georgie Perris-Redding and the Sale Sharks Women players in January ahead of their fixture against Leicester Tigers.

**24** children and young people with Down Syndrome attending regularly  
**21** sessions delivered

**"I love rugby at Sale Sharks because whenever we have been to a match all the players are so nice and accessible. Fin Crusaders are definitely like a family to me and I look forward to rugby all the time and I wish I could go more. I have lots of memories from Sale Sharks, meeting the players, watching the women's team who are also amazing and always have time for us. We all love road trips together. I have made amazing friends too. Every coach we have had all give more than 100%." DJ**



**"Watching my brother inspired my love for rugby. I enjoyed watching him play and it is always on TV at home. I've always supported Sale Sharks because my mum and dad took me to watch them when I was younger and I loved it. Rugby keeps me fit and I like the social side of it. I've made friends for life and I love the coaches. It makes me feel happy and included. I feel like I matter. I like that my whole family can be involved. Going on the pitch at half-time at Leicester was epic." Jaz**



# HEALTH AND WELLBEING

## HEADSTART

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 facilitated discussions to help tackle inactivity and reduce social isolation. Over the past 12 months we have seen continued progression in regular participation at our sites in Eccles, Wythenshawe, Whalley Range and Walkden. Sessions last for one hour, and

include a warm-up, appropriate fitness/sport for all participants, health and wellbeing workshops and social time as well. The Headstart programme is well established within the local communities and receives regular referrals through the community connector network.

The programme will be expanding in 2024/2025 to delivery in more locations across Trafford.

In Salford, we engaged with 54 people through the programme with 96% of those surveyed reported feeling less lonely and isolated.



“It’s got me moving again which has had a big part in me feeling better about myself”  
Male participant, 50s

Sharks Forces is proudly supported by Armed Covenant Fund and Veterans Foundation.

“I’ve been a veteran since 1993 and I’ve been going to veterans’ hubs for a few years now. I first started getting support through the NHS, Combat Stress and Walking With The Wounded, after I found myself struggling with my mental health. I started attending Sharks Forces over four years ago but I’ll always come back here. I still go through issues now and then, but I find coming to the hub helps me get through the week and weekend. The wellbeing walk on a Friday is very good and you always get to meet other people, it’s very open for veterans and you always hear a lot from everyone. I think that helps me, as well as each other, it’s very relaxing and dependable.” Mark, veteran



providers, we are able to support those on the programme further by signposting to other services available to them.

## SHARKS FORCES

Sharks Forces has continued to grow in 2023/24, supporting service personnel, veterans, and their families with enhancing their physical and mental wellbeing. Our mission is to foster a welcoming community, provide essential support, and offer guidance and opportunities that promote better health, employment prospects, and overall quality of life.

As part of the programme we run coffee mornings, wellbeing walks, low-impact exercise sessions and workshops to help them achieve their goals and support those not currently in employment back into the workplace.

Working closely with a variety of local partners and service

“The coaches are very professional, engaging and supportive. The children had lots of fun trying a new sport and learnt different skills which helped them to progress and improve each week.”

## EAT WELL PLAY SAFE

Eat Well Play Safe, run in partnership with Trafford food producer Cargill, is a healthy eating and lifestyle programme for schools in the Salford and Trafford area. During the five-week programme, year three and four pupils learn how eat healthily and the importance of having a healthy lifestyle. Our coaches also promote physical activity, running tag rugby sessions alongside the classroom work, and the children get to show off everything they’ve picked up at the now annual Cargill Cares festival.

9 schools delivered in across Salford and Trafford

172 coaching hours delivered by Sharks Foundation coaches

312 participants

“Cargill is proud of its long-term partnership with Sale Sharks Foundation on the delivery of the “Eat Well, Play Safe” programme. Since its inception the programme has raised awareness with over 1,500 primary school children about the importance of food safety, nutrition and exercise. This is particularly necessary at a time of increasing obesity rates and falling activity levels amongst this age group. Crucially, the sustainable element of the programme means that schools can continue to run the programme once the delivery from Sale Sharks Foundation has been completed.”  
Sally Easterbrook, Cargill.



## School Feedback

“It was really good and the kids enjoyed it, I think it’s important to be teaching about foods as bad or good and overall wellbeing and mental health are more important than BMI.”

“It was fantastic and the children loved it. They all had a great time at the festival. It was a great way to finish off the programme.”

“I just wanted to email to say a huge thanks from the staff and children at St Charles. The children had a great time and the teachers were really impressed with how well organised it was.”





## TRY2CONNECT

Schools programme  
Try2Connect is delivered in partnership with children's mental health charity Place2Be, which works with pupils, families, and staff in schools to provide mental health support through one-to-one and group counselling sessions.

The programme promotes positive mental health for primary school aged children. Sessions include classroom workshops discussing the five ways to wellbeing (Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Take Notice and Give), followed by tag rugby and multi-sport sessions that incorporate the themes discussed in the classroom.

**"We are so proud of our enduring partnership with Sale Sharks, the successful roll-out of our joint wellbeing programme 'Try2Connect' and the difference young people tell us it is making for them.**

**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 Northwest."**

**Catherine Roche  
Place2Be  
Chief Executive**



# SOCIAL INCLUSION

## RUGBY IN THE PARK

Rugby in the Park went from strength to strength in 2023/24. When the programme was initially set up in 2023, we worked in partnership with Powerhouse Youth Centre in Moss Side, but in 2024 we expanded the programme to work alongside Partington Youth Centre, delivering a block of sessions to young people in the area.

Rugby in the Park is all about engaging those young people not currently accessing or involved in community activities, and those who potentially are at risk of being involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. The programme has received amazing feedback from participants, and we expect to build on what we have achieved as we continue to expand our delivery into new areas of the North West.

### Rugby in Park:

**140**  
dedicated staff hours  
delivered across locations

**400**  
attendances across delivery  
locations



**10**  
schools delivered in  
**578**  
children supported



# EDUCATION

**"Philippa has been there for Sophie not just with the education side but also when she was finding things tough."**

## HITZ

HITZ is an employability and life skills programme which was delivered from Sale West Community Centre in 2023/2024. The programme was funded by Premiership Rugby and delivered in partnership with YMCA as our Education Partner. HITZ focuses on engaging 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.

This year, we worked with 30 young people – up from 15 last year – giving them the opportunity of a work placement as well as access to six-week courses in sexual health, sports leadership, and support of a mentor every fortnight with our partner, 1 Million Mentors.

The focus has been on confidence building, aspiration and goal setting within sessions linked to the Level 2 employability certificate. We also offered qualifications in Maths and English GCSE/Functional skill.

**"Our daughter has just completed her Maths G.C.S.E with Sale Sharks. She could not have done this without the help of Philippa and other members of staff and gained student of the year."**



At the 2023 Premiership Rugby HITZ Awards, one of the Foundation's learners – Romeece Dillon – was nominated for the prestigious Young Achiever Award. **Scan the QR code to hear from Romeece:**



**90%**  
of learners to complete their qualification

**100%**  
of learners to complete their functional skill

**83%**  
of learners went on to employment or education

### PARENT FEEDBACK:

**"Philippa has been there for Sophie not just with the education side but also being there when she was finding things tough, guiding her and helping."**



Scan the QR code to find out about how former HITZ learner Eve secured an apprenticeship at Connolly Ltd:



**1,800+**  
educational hours provided

**"We really value our partnership with Sale Sharks Foundation and the fantastic team there are supporting us to facilitate the programme. Our mentors are really keen to support the young people at HITZ, who may feel at first like there aren't opportunities out there for them."**

**"They develop a lot of pride in their mentees, reporting how much insight and fulfilment they get out of the experience, and how much they actually learn from their mentees! They are also always impressed by how above and beyond the staff at HITZ go for the young people."**

**"At our recent programme launch, the whole centre was buzzing with conversation as our mentee & mentor pairs hit of their relationships and began planning their goals. We're excited to see what this opportunity will bring in terms of increased skills, confidence and achievements for this group."**

**Holly Openshaw**  
1 Million Mentors

### CASE STUDY: KYRON:

**"When we first met Kyron he was very quiet but loved to help people. When Kyron was in school he was bullied and due to his behaviour, he was going to be moved to a PRU school. He was offered a place at a school which specialised in people with special needs and autism. This has a negative effect on Kyron's mental health and he felt lost within himself. He described himself as someone who was compared to other people and didn't know what direction to go in."**

**"At the start of the programme, he lacked confidence but over the course of the programme he slowly came out of his shell. He started to gain the confidence by going on work experience without staff support putting himself completely out of his comfort zone. Getting the bus which was a big struggle for him and mixing finding new friends within the course."**

**"Kyron has been a great role model within HITZ this year and someone that other students have looked up to, especially with how he conducts himself and how he is always willing to help others before himself."**



**“All students became more confident at teamwork and communication.”**

**K Clarke, Lostock High School**

## HITZ ON TRACK

HITZ on Track is a six-week programme delivered in secondary schools across Manchester, working with 14-16-year-olds at risk of becoming NEET. The programme focuses on RSHE curriculum and 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 180 students across six different schools ranging from girls-only to pupil referral units (PRU), from all of which we had excellent feedback.

**“We have just finished a very successful six-week programme with Philippa. All students learnt what they wanted to achieve in life through the tasks set and became more confident at teamwork and communication, some leaderships skills were also developed. Trying to get them to listen was first challenge, but working as a team and enjoying the social aspect was developed through the 6 weeks. The boys looked forward to the sessions and a mixture of games and partner challenges really suited their needs and was successful.”**

**K. Clarke - Lostock High School**



## ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

This year, Sale Sharks Foundation has provided specialised Alternative Provision mentoring sessions to 24 learners across Trafford and other parts of Manchester. The programme provides 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. This year there has been a significant increase in demand for tuition support across schools, and as a result we have found ourselves delivering support in maths and English to students from Key Stage Two up to Key Stage Four.

Through collaboration with schools, we reinforce learning of the young people we support to increase understanding and develop their confidence.

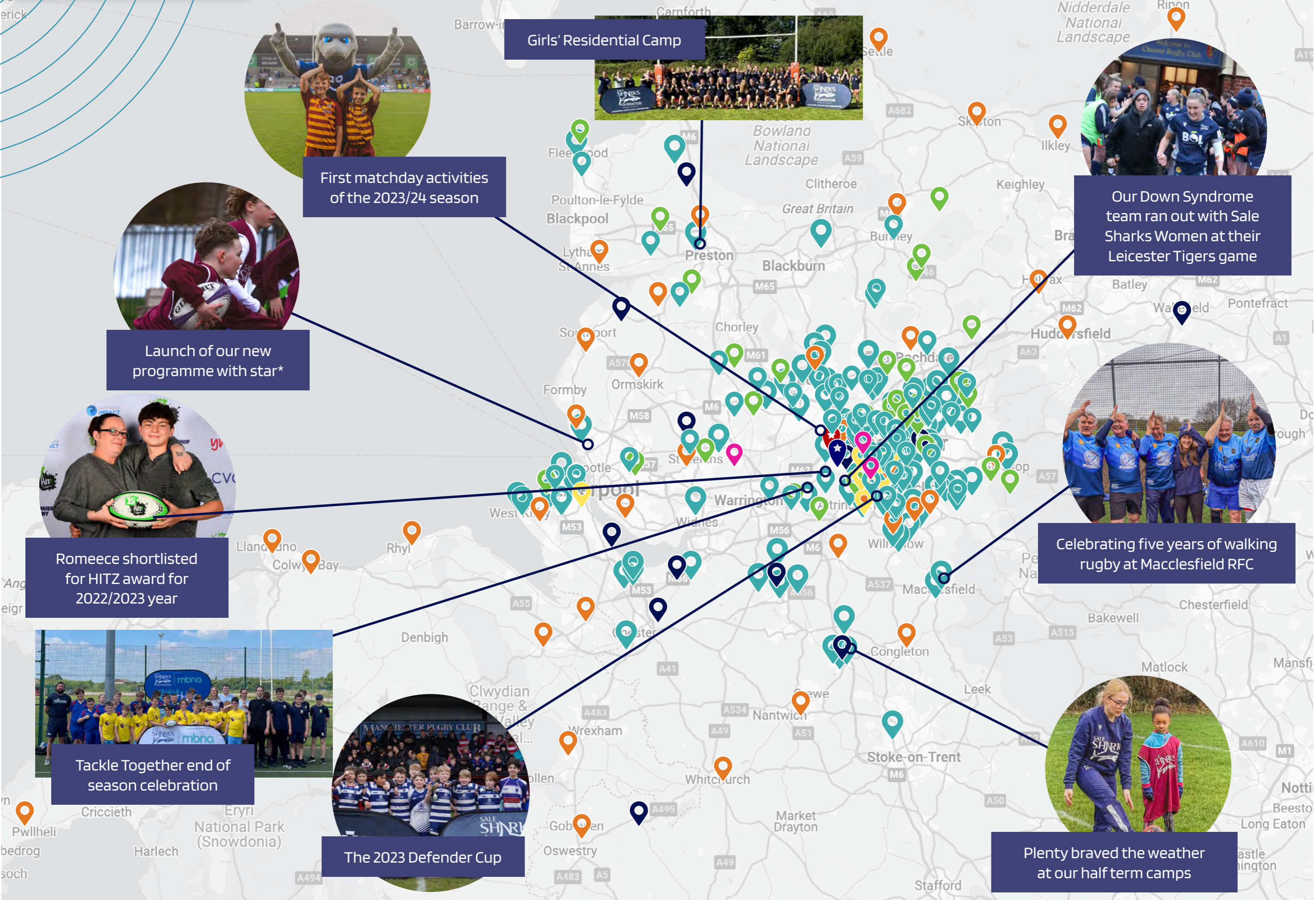
**“James has been excellent in his work at SJV. He has fitted in seamlessly with our school and our expectations and had a significant impact. He has built up trust and X has been far better regulated in school since we have had James offering mentoring support. Thank you James, for the positive relationship you have built with X and the improvements we have witnessed in his self-esteem and confidence.”**

**St John Vianney School**

## 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 Easter and Summer holidays for primary school children who are entitled to free school meals. This year we have targeted and delivered to 60 children at Sale West Community Centre. We have worked in partnership with other external providers to provide various activities for the children such as arts and crafts, boxing, sports, and games, and Sale West arranged for healthy meals for those on the programme via the community cafe.





Girls' Residential Camp



First matchday activities of the 2023/24 season



Launch of our new programme with star\*



Our Down Syndrome team ran out with Sale Sharks Women at their Leicester Tigers game



Romeece shortlisted for HITZ award for 2022/2023 year



Celebrating five years of walking rugby at Macclesfield RFC



Tackle Together end of season celebration



The 2023 Defender Cup



Plenty braved the weather at our half term camps

- Rugby Development
- Schools Engagement
- Attended a Match Day
- Rugby Camp
- Alternative Provision
- HITZ On Track



# OUR FIRST EVER FOUNDATION DAY

**"I felt proud knowing we have a positive impact on people's lives." Sharks fan Ann Ford**

The day highlighted the incredible work the Foundation does and through fundraising activity around the match, raised vital funds for Foundation programmes. The day celebrated our community initiatives and the unwavering support of our fans and partners. Engaging activities, player interactions, an online raffle and auction for money can't buy experiences – like

our Golden Ticket - helped raise over £9,000, ensuring we can continue delivering life-changing work. We look forward to making Foundation Day 2025 even more impactful, uniting the community through the power of our Sale Sharks! Foundation Day has now become an annual event in the Sale Sharks Calendar and each year we plan on making it even bigger!

**"I think all the ideas and initiatives coming from the Foundation sound great, I signed one of the walls at the last home game which I thought was a lovely idea." Judith Mayne**

**"We love our Sharks, and we are proud of what we are doing to give back to the community. We are not just any ordinary rugby club, we are different...and being different is not only okay, it's great!" Dean Lynn**

Scan the QR code to read how we raised vital funds at our first ever Foundation Day:



SALE SHARKS  
**FOUNDATION DAY**  
BITE TOGETHER. GIVE BACK FOREVER!

**"I really enjoyed being part of the Sale Sharks Foundation Day as I was the winner of the Golden Ticket Experience from the online raffle. The whole day was really well organised and as a fan, I felt proud knowing we have a positive impact on people's lives. I will always support the Foundation when I can." Ann Ford**

# GRASSROOTS & RUGBY DEVELOPMENT

**“The inclusion of all the children is paramount to the ethos of school life and the Sharks Coaches are excellent in promoting this.” St Matthews CofE**

## ARE YOU A-OK?

We continued the hugely successful 'Are you A-O-K?' programme in 2023/24 in partnership with AO. The positive mental wellbeing programme is shaped around the five ways to wellbeing and was delivered in schools nominated by AO employees. This year's programme worked with ten schools across Trafford, Bolton, Warrington and Salford.



**10**  
number of schools

**510**  
participants

**216**  
coaching hours

**“The coaches are very professional, engaging and supportive. The children had lots of fun trying a new sport and learnt different skills which helped them to progress and improve each week.”**  
Freckleton CofE



**“Great guys who are great with the kids. Good practical lessons.”**  
Cledford Primary

**“They are brilliant, great classroom activities and very well managed games outside.”**  
Chorlton Park



## PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CHAMPIONS

Premiership Rugby Champions is a Premiership Rugby Initiative that part-funds 30 classes of delivery in primary schools across the North West. The Champions programme aims to Tackle Health, Tackle Numeracy or Tackle Literacy through joined-up classroom-based delivery and outdoor introductions to rugby.

Last season due to the success of the delivery, the Sale Sharks Foundation took on extra delivery to reach approximately 600 young people across the North West.



## star\*

This was our first year working with star\* and their first venture into the North West! Their Mission is, **“to make a material difference in the lives of young people and their families who have multiple adverse childhood/ community experiences (ACEs) or mental health issues.”**

In the first year of this delivery we worked with schools across the North West to provide opportunities for young people to experience rugby union and then to give them the opportunity to attend their local rugby club.



**14**  
schools delivered in

**750**  
students impacted

**40%**  
percentage of students interested in joining their local rugby club

## PROJECT RUGBY

Project Rugby is a grassroots rugby programme designed to increase participation in rugby by people from traditionally under-represented groups.

Part of a national initiative launched by England Rugby and Premiership Rugby, it provides accessible opportunities to experience, enjoy and play rugby, across over 200 community locations within England. The primary focus of Project Rugby is to transition new players and volunteers into local grassroots rugby clubs. The project's innovative approach looks to utilise rugby's core values, increasing levels of resilience and confidence among participants, as well as helping people to feel more connected to their local community.

This year our two dedicated coaches linked up with Bolton RUFC and Oldham RUFC, with each working closely with the local communities to encourage participation and engagement with the clubs.



**1630**  
young people engaged and introduced to rugby

**286**  
young people retained in the game

**71**  
young people who transitioned to their local rugby club

**14**  
Players from Oasis Academy Leesbrook represented Sale Sharks at the 23/24 Premiership final



**"Teddy has naturally taken a leadership role in the PE and rugby sessions which has been lovely to see. I really hope Teddy joins a club after these sessions because he clearly has a lot of potential."** Miss Klays P.E Teacher, All Saints Catholic College



We also worked with around 100 young people with a disability and saw 40 continue playing rugby in their school.

**"The rugby sessions with Mark have taught me lots about rugby and the rules have also made my resistance of the cold weather much higher. Mark's rugby training has helped me with my teamwork skills. It has made me feel better as I have never played rugby before and every week, I noticed my skill was improving and I was scoring more tries every session. It has also taught me to encourage my other team mates to try their best even when it's 10 o'clock in the morning on a Monday and the field's icy."** Teddy Brown, student, All Saints Catholic College

## BREAKING LIMITS

Funded by Rexona, Breaking Limits is delivered in partnership with the foundations at all ten Gallagher Premiership clubs. The programme aims to train coaches, teachers and community leaders in inclusive coaching.

In 2023/24, the Sale Sharks Foundation reached more than 5500 young people as a result of training coaches.

## GIRLS TACKLE RUGBY

Girls Tackle Rugby has moved forward again this year, with support from not only the owners of Sale Sharks, but also now from England Rugby. This has allowed us to work closely with ten schools across the region, utilising a team of female role models to help grow the game among women and girls.

During this year we also began a research project with the Manchester Metropolitan University Institute of Sport looking at the effectiveness of the programme and the influence of female role models on girls' perceptions of self and the sport.

**"A team made of female role models has seen us push the boundaries." India Perris Redding (Sale Sharks Foundation Women and Girls Coordinator)**



**1000+**  
girls engaged in the programme

**10**  
schools delivered in

**"It's been incredible to bring Girls Tackle Rugby to even more girls again this year. The delivery has really kicked on and to be able to utilise a team made up of female role models to deliver the programme has seen us push the boundaries in terms of our engagement."** India Perris Redding (Sale Sharks Foundation Women and Girls Coordinator)

## MISSION SHARKS

Our Mission Sharks programme aims to grow rugby union and give the young people in our communities around Sale, Salford and South Manchester the chance to play. Working in partnership with Sale Sharks, the Sale Sharks Foundation delivers the engaging five-week programme to primary and secondary school children, to connect them with our sport, our club and our values!

**86**  
primary schools delivered in (years five and six)

**108**  
secondary schools

**9,605+**  
young people engaged

**"The children thoroughly enjoyed the sessions. Activities engaged even the reluctant children."** Elworth Hall School

Alongside the rugby union sessions delivered by the Foundation, we established 13 opportunities for players to play at their local rugby club in order to connect school and club sport.

**"The sessions were an opportunity for CPD for myself in a sport I am not familiar with. The children thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and I saw progress in their ability. Activities engaged even the reluctant children. The activities were age appropriate for the two different year groups taught. The addition of the Rugby festival was a great way to celebrate the progress made by the children."** Elworth Hall 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. We continue to inspire more players and coaches by providing opportunities for people across the North West to engage in the sport more regularly or for the first time.

## RUGBY DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

Our Rugby Development Camps are run throughout the school holidays to provide opportunities for young players from U7s to the U12s with more opportunities to play rugby union.

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 rugby clubs.

**"I absolutely loved the camp. It was brilliant to meet new people and learn loads of new skills from the coaches." Freddie Bland, Knutsford under 8s**

**1,140**  
attendees

**31**  
different camps run by  
the Foundation coaches

**23**  
different venues

**£9,000**  
money given back  
to local clubs

**"Thank you to the team, they did such a good job with the kids in all weather conditions. The feedback from players and parents, as always, has been fantastic"**  
**Natasha - Tarleton Rugby Club**



## 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 the 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 residentials attracted players from across the globe including Croatia, Holland, Spain and many more!

This year, for the second time, we hosted a week-long residential girls' camp.

**200**  
attendees at two week-long boys' residentials

**39**  
attendees at the week-long girls' residential



## DEVELOPMENT DAYS

These days are designed to develop the Sharks DNA in our young players aged 12 to 18. Sessions focus on developing Creative Attackers, Defensive Warriors, Best Teammates and Relentless Athletes to prepare them for competition throughout their rugby careers.

**7**  
development days

**210**  
attendees

**7**  
different venues



## #YOURSCHOOL

Our #YourSchool programme sees us provide school provision for schools who want to develop their rugby union offering. In 2023/24 we reached 1620 young people through this programme and worked with Ashton College to develop a team from scratch and then build it to a point where they were playing games against other colleges.



# MATCHDAYS

**"It's fair to say Sale have got themselves a load of new fans, many of whom hadn't been to a game before." Alex, West Park (Leicester Tigers – May 2024)**

2023/24 was another fantastic season for our matchday activity, not only because of the success on the pitch but also because of the range of activity we ran for our community clubs and young players. Our Rugby Development team ran a range of events such as guard of honour, half-time and full-time tag, and pre-match coaching clinics.

**1,100**  
players experienced a  
matchday activity

**3,100**  
Sharks match tickets  
sold as part of the  
Foundation's activity



**"Thanks very much for yesterday, great day had by all the kids and the parents. What a good game to book on to. Big thanks as well goes to Mark and his team for the coaching and the guard of honour. Looking forward to booking the next visit already."**

**John – Didsbury Toc H (Stade Francais – December 2023)**

**"On behalf of West Park players, parents and coaches can we just thank you and the Sale Sharks Foundation Team for all you did for us on Friday. We had a great night, the whole evening was really well set up and everybody loved it. Plenty of favourable comments from kids and parents as to how good the night was, it's fair to say Sale have got themselves a load of new fans, many of whom hadn't been to a game before."**

**Alex – West Park (Leicester Tigers – May 2024)**



## DPP

Sale Sharks prides itself on the number of homegrown players who come through the academy system to become first-team regulars and, in many cases (for example Ben Curry, Tom Curry, Tom Roebuck, Bevan Rodd, Raffi Quirke, Arron Reed and more) international rugby players and the Sale Sharks Foundation plays a key role in this pathway.

Foundation coaches work with the club's DPP (Developing Player Programme) to provide coaching, talent ID and talent development for under 14s and under 15s players at the first stage of their academic journey.

In 2023/24 our staff worked with around 600 players across the six DPP centres – North Lancashire, Manchester, Merseyside, West Cheshire, East Cheshire and Central Cheshire – to identify and develop the Sharks of the future.

**"The Foundation's coaches play a crucial role in the DPP. Their knowledge and expertise as well as their connection to the grassroots game is invaluable to engaging players, parents and coaches from the start of their academy journey."**

**Noel Speed, Junior Academy Manager**



# DEFENDER PREMIERSHIP RUGBY CUP



Defender is the Official Vehicle Partner of Premiership Rugby; a partnership that has been running for nearly two decades. The automotive brand's support of rugby in the UK is at all levels of the game, from grassroots to the elite.

Defender's support for the grassroots area of the game in the UK is typified by the Defender Premiership Rugby Cup. A nationwide series of rugby festivals for U11 and U12 teams, run in conjunction with all ten Gallagher Premiership clubs. The Defender Premiership Rugby Cup allows youngsters to discover rugby, and over the years the nationwide festivals have provided a vital platform for several young rugby stars to go on and play professional rugby.

We collaborate with Manchester Rugby Club to host the Defender Cup each year, and this year's event took place in March, when we welcomed 32 teams from across the North West to take part in a brilliant day of Rugby. Sale FC and Tarleton RUFC ran out winners of their respective festivals, earning themselves a trip to Twickenham for the Premiership Final.



**1**  
day  
**32**  
teams  
**600**  
players  
**1000**  
spectators



Scan the QR code to see the best of the action from this year's Defender' Cup



# THANK YOU!

The Sale Sharks Foundation would like to thank all the individuals, businesses, organisations and local grassroots clubs that it has worked with during 2023/24.

The wide support the Foundation receives enables it to work with an increasing number of people each year.



**Sale Sharks Foundation**  
Carrington High Performance Training Centre  
Carrington Lane, Sale, M31 4AB  
foundation@salesharks.com | 0161 672 9928  
Registered Charity Number: 1142956

