

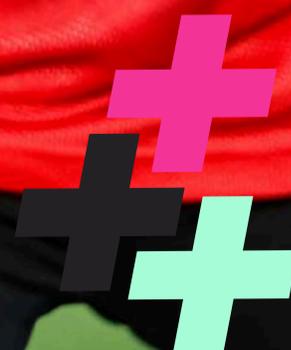


**NEWCASTLE  
RUGBY  
FOUNDATION**



# 24/25 IMPACT REPORT

reg. 1107851



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# WHAT YOU'LL DISCOVER.

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# THIS IS US.

Newcastle Rugby Foundation, established in 2005 as the charitable arm of Newcastle Red Bulls and Newcastle Thunder, exists to make RUGBY+ the positive difference that changes lives for good. We're more than a charity and more than a game—we're a small but mighty team driven by passion, humour, and genuine care for the people and communities we serve.

Our mission is simple: to use the power of rugby to boost wellbeing, grow skills, raise involvement and build a sense of belonging across the North East and Cumbria. From primary schools to community clubs, from further-education students to adults seeking support with health or confidence, we deliver inclusive, engaging programmes that create real, lasting impact.





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Whether we're introducing young people to rugby for the first time, supporting girls to stay active, or helping individuals develop self-belief and life skills, we champion the human moments that matter.

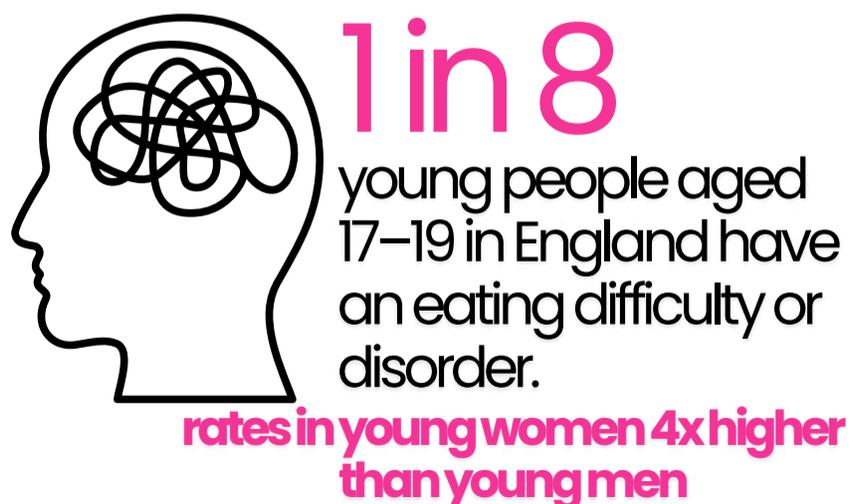
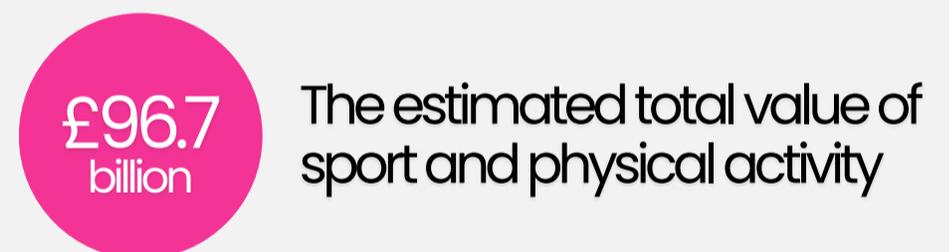
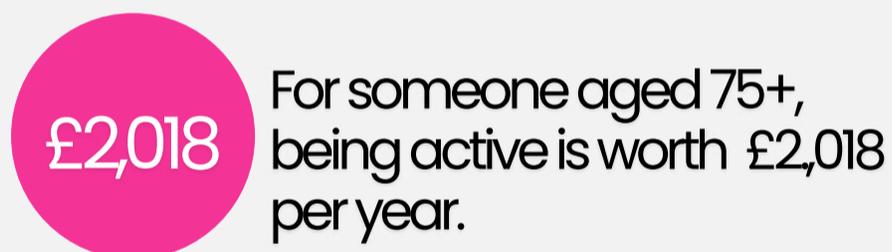
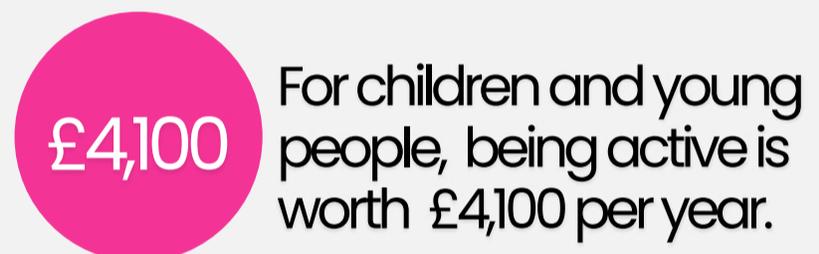
Each year, we connect with over 15,000 participants through around over 20 programmes—from grassroots development and women and girls rugby, to learning disability rugby, personal development courses, and wellbeing initiatives.

We celebrate the messy, the joyful, the transformational—and we work hard to make every space welcoming, accessible and rooted in community. This is who we are: a team committed to helping people thrive, on and off the pitch, and to building a stronger, more connected region for all.

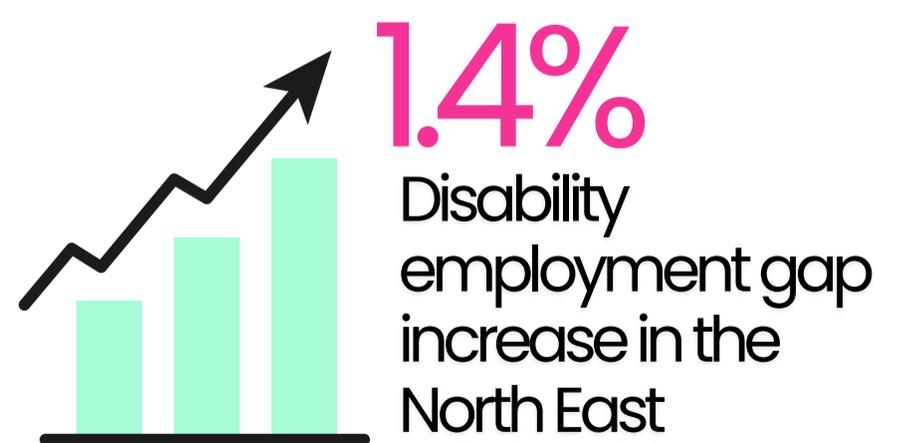
# WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Sport is not just a spectacle, it's a lifeline.

Sport is proven to improve quality of life and bring a wider value to society. The North East is one of the most deprived areas in the UK, so the delivery of our programmes is needed. Our aim is that by the end of any programme, project, or interaction, we leave someone in a better place than when we found them.



*The Big Mental Health Report 2024 - Mind*



*The Employment of Disabled People - GOV.uk*

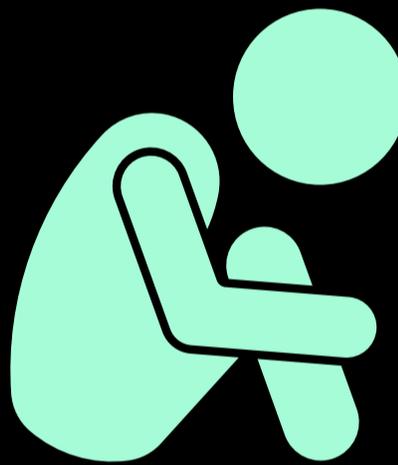
# WHY DOES IT MATTER?



4.3%

Unemployment rate  
in the North East

*North East Evidence Hub 2024*



7.8%

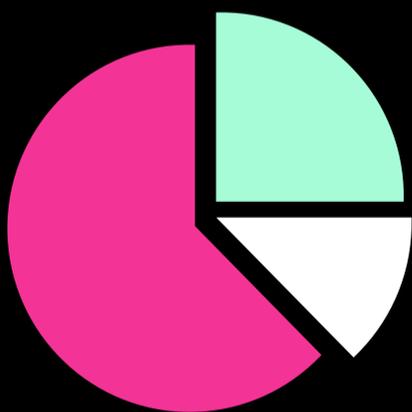
of adults in the  
UK feel lonely  
'always or often'.

*The Big Mental Health Report 2024 - Mind*



Children and young  
people of Black, Asian  
and other ethnicities  
are the least likely to  
be active.

*Active Lives Children and Young People  
Survey 2023-24 - Sport England*



69.7% of North East  
adults are classified as  
overweight or obese



75%

of people aged  
65+ have  
experienced  
significant anxiety  
or low mood at  
least once since  
turning 65.

*The Big Mental Health Report 2024 - Mind*

A young man with short dark hair, wearing a black and grey Newcastle Rugby Foundation jersey and a black cap with a white brim, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is holding a rugby ball with both hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting, likely a stadium.

# PEOPLE POWERUS

We are powered by a dedicated team of 21 professionals, bringing together diverse expertise in delivery, coaching, operations, marketing, fundraising and youth work.

Each team member shares a deep commitment to our community and mission, combining passion with professionalism to create meaningful impact.

**24/25  
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# OUR VALUES



## ■ **RUGBY+**

Our aim is to foster personal growth, encourage resilience and nurture the potential in every person we support. Underpinning this are our values, and it's important that our partners align with them too.

**P**OSITIVE ENERGY

**L**ET'S MAKE CONNECTIONS

**U**P FOR A CHALLENGE

**S**UPPORTIVE + CARING

Supporting this core team is a group of trustees who provide strategic oversight, governance, and guidance, ensuring the Foundation stays true to its purpose and maximizes its impact. Together, our staff and trustees work collaboratively to deliver quality programmes that inspire, support, and uplift making Rugby+ a powerful force for positive change.

# OUR TRUSTEES

**IAIN RAMAGE (CHAIR)**

**TRACY LYNCH (VICE CHAIR)**

**LISA HAMILTON-MURRAY**

**MICK HOGAN**

**JACK SPOOR**

**SUNIL MEHRA**

**JAMES PONTON**

**JEFFREY BALL**

**ROB VICKERS**

**MIKE STEPHENSON**

**STEPHEN SAVAGE**



# WELCOME FROM OUR CHAIR

**As we reflect on another remarkable year for the Newcastle Rugby Foundation, I am filled with pride and gratitude for the incredible work of our team, partners, and supporters.**

**Our mission to make rugby the positive difference that changes lives for good across the North-East has never been more vital. This year, we have continued to reach over 17,000 individuals, providing opportunities that not only foster a love for sport but also equip them with essential life skills.**

**As we look to the future, we are excited about the opportunity to make an even bigger impact. With Red Bull now owners of the club, we are hopeful of being able to change even more lives and create a brighter future for our communities. I invite you to join us on this journey.**

**Thank you for your support.**

**IAN RAMAGE**



# REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CEO



MEL MAGEE

**Against a challenging landscape for our communities and charities, this year has been one of our most inspiring yet, with growth across many areas of our work and a deepening impact in the communities we serve.**

**From grassroots clubs to schools, colleges, and inclusive rugby environments, we've expanded our reach and brought the power of RUGBY+ to more people than ever before.**

**Our programmes now engage thousands across the region, creating opportunities to boost wellbeing, grow skills, raise involvement and build a genuine sense of belonging. Our community rugby programmes continue to flourish, with more schools and community clubs joining our Club and School Connections networks.**

**These initiatives are helping young people discover rugby—often for the first time—through high-quality coaching, fun festivals, enrichment sessions and match-day experiences that build confidence and spark long-term participation.**

**We're especially proud of the strides made in our women and girls pathway with the inspirational opening fixture of the Women's Rugby World Cup taking place in Sunderland in 2025. Through targeted development work, festivals, and inclusive entry points such as Project Rugby and WRWC project, more girls and young women are enjoying the game, forming new friendships and gaining the resilience and teamwork skills that rugby uniquely provides.**



One of our most impactful new developments has been the Body Confidence Programme, supporting teenage girls at a pivotal stage in their lives. **Over 450 girls have already taken part**, exploring topics such as confidence, wellbeing and healthy relationships with sport – helping to close the gender gap in physical activity and giving young women tools they can use far beyond the rugby pitch.

Our commitment to personal development also continues to grow. This year we have grown the Futures and HIZ projects designed to help young people strengthen emotional intelligence, self-belief and life skills. Delivered in schools and colleges, it is **already empowering participants to understand themselves better and aim higher in their education, relationships and future careers.**

Our inclusive rugby pathway also continues to thrive. With support from partners and new funding, our Learning Disability Rugby programme has **expanded to include younger age groups**, giving children and adults a safe, welcoming space to be active, make friends, build skills and feel part of a team.

None of these achievements would be possible without the commitment of our staff team, the incredible energy of our volunteers, and the generosity of our partners and sponsors. **Your belief in our mission drives our work and enables us to reach more people, in more places, every year.**

*Wendy Magee*  
CEO, NRF

# OUR FOUR PILLARS

At the heart of Newcastle Rugby Foundation's mission are four core pillars that guide our work and ensure we make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve.

## GROWING SKILLS

We believe in developing not just rugby skills, but essential life skills that help individuals thrive both on and off the pitch.

### ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES

**HITZ** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEWCASTLE COLLEGE, NEW COLLEGE DURHAM  
**TACKLING INSIGHTS** DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SAGE FOUNDATION  
**FUTURES** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BANKS, BERNICIA, PORT OF BLYTH AND ST JAMES'S PLACE  
**RUGBY COLLEGE** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TYNE MET COLLEGE.

## BOOST WELLBEING

Improving both physical and mental health through various initiatives, ensuring that everyone can live a healthier, happier life.

### ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES

**FIT AS A BULL** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NUFFIELD HEALTH & SPORT ENGLAND  
**WALKING RUGBY**

## BUILD BELONGING

We strive to create a sense of community and belonging for all, fostering inclusivity and diversity through rugby and beyond.

### ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES

**CAST** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEWCASTLE COLLEGE  
**LEARNING DISABILITY RUGBY** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL LOTTERY & WOODEN SPOON

## RAISE INVOLVEMENT

We work tirelessly to increase participation in rugby and community activities, making sure that everyone has the chance to get involved and be part of something special.

### ASSOCIATED PROGRAMMES

**PROJECT RUGBY** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PREM RUGBY AND ENGLAND RUGBY  
**CLUB CONNECTIONS** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHUMBERLAND RFU  
**SCHOOLS CONNECTIONS** IN PARTNERSHIP WITH AK TEACHING AND FUSION FOR BUSINESS.  
**WOMEN AND GIRLS COACHING CAMPS**  
**SUMMER OF TOUCH**

# THIS YEAR IN NUMBERS

It's been a big year, and we know there's still plenty of work to be done, but before we get going again, let's take a moment to reflect on what we've achieved this year.

**TOTAL PARTICIPANTS** 18,500

SCHOOLS/COLLEGES 13880

CAMPS 1137

MATCHDAYS 2750

WELLBEING ACTIVITIES 1100

10,829 HOURS OF COACHING

SESSIONS DELIVERED  
ACROSS THE NORTH  
EAST AND CUMBRIA

4,045

15% OF PARTICIPANTS HAD A  
DISABILITY OR LEARNING NEEDS

WOMEN & GIRLS  
INTRODUCED TO RUGBY

6,950

700+

HOT NUTRITIOUS MEALS  
PROVIDED TO YOUNG CHILDREN  
IN THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

# A DEEPER LOOK

**PROGRAMME SPOTLIGHT: TACKLING INSIGHTS**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SAGE FOUNDATION

Since its launch in 2023, our Tackling Insights programme has engaged over 3,000 North East school children in a unique five-week journey inspiring STEM learning through rugby.



## THE REGION + DEMOGRAPHICS

(based on 24/25 delivery)

Schools in the lowest 20% IMD – NE and SR postcodes

Rugby tech – from pitch to classroom inspiring learning

## THE IMPACT

**3000+**  
YOUNG LIVES IMPACTED

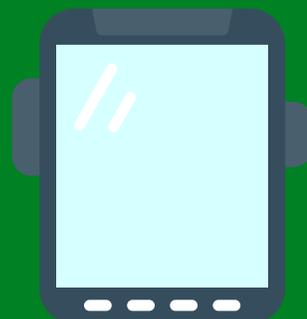
**37%**  
INCREASE IN FEELING INSPIRED

**26%**  
INCREASE IN ENJOYMENT OF STEM SUBJECTS

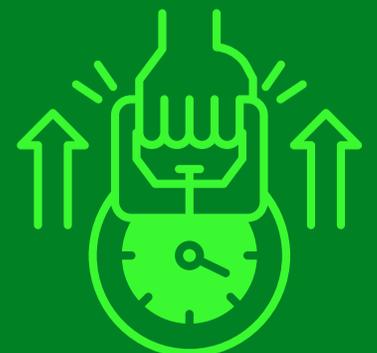


Smart ball technology

Data analysis on iPads ✓



Grip strength dynamometer ✓



# A DEEPER LOOK

## PROGRAMME SPOTLIGHT: HITZ

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEWCASTLE COLLEGE AND NEW COLLEGE DURHAM

The HITZ programme at the Newcastle Rugby Foundation is an award-winning education and employability initiative that supports young people aged 14–24 in building confidence, developing life skills, and progressing into education, employment, or training. It aims to change perceptions of education and employment by creating a nurturing environment where teamwork, respect, discipline, and sportsmanship are central.

100%

Increase in students who identified a career pathway whilst on HITZ

78%

Showed increased satisfaction with their life

83%

Progressed into education, employment, or training after completion

I'M NOT SURE WHERE I'D BE WITHOUT HITZ. IT HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED MY LIFE.

CHARLIE, STUDENT



# A DEEPER LOOK

## PROGRAMME SPOTLIGHT: FIT AS A BULL

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NUFFIELD HEALTH, SPORT ENGLAND AND NORHUMBRIA HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Fit as a Bull is a free, 12-week health and well-being programme held at Kingston Park Stadium, designed for individuals aged 16 and over who want to improve their physical fitness, mental health, and overall lifestyle.

79%

Of participants saw an increase in their confidence thanks to taking part

71%

Said they felt closer to others upon completion of the programme

83%

Said they have now incorporated physical exercise into their daily routine

60+  
LIVES  
IMPACTED

130  
HOURS OF  
PRACTICAL AND  
EDUCATIONAL  
DELIVERY

-129kg  
COMBINED  
WEIGHT LOSS  
FROM 24/25  
PARTICIPANTS

16



**REECE.**

“I can't wait for the future. I want to build my skills up and help the community as much as possible. I am motivated everyday by what the Foundation has done and given me.”

After the tragic losses of his father and grandfather, Reece Wray joined the Foundation's *HITZ* programme at his darkest time mentally, with his confidence at an all-time low.

Unsurprisingly, the events had impacted his relationship with his mother and his education suffered as a result. Reece left school with no Maths or English GCSEs and despite his efforts, caused a plummet of confidence that left his path uncertain. Once he joined *HITZ*, Reece grew in strength, embracing work and saying yes to every opportunity.

Today, we couldn't be prouder of the young man Reece has become. From arriving at *HITZ* during one of the darkest periods of his life, he has grown into a confident, committed and inspirational member of our community.

Reece is now an integral part of our *CAST* group, attending every matchday to raise money for the Foundation through the Flutter and proudly serving as a flag bearer.

He speaks at our events, supports younger participants, and uses his own journey to help others overcome their barriers. Reece's resilience, generosity and determination shine in everything he does — a true reflection of how far he's come and the bright future he continues to build.



# BE ONE OF THE MANY MAKING IT POSSIBLE.

We are deeply grateful to our corporate partners. Their support broadens the horizons of young people and adds vital strength to our work. Together, we're creating real, lasting change in lives and communities across the North East. Thank you for believing in our mission and helping us make a difference.



# WHAT'S NEXT?

**IMPACT  
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outcomes across our four pillars — boosting wellbeing, growing skills, raising involvement and building belonging.

As we look ahead, our ambition is simple: to widen access, deepen our impact, and continue using rugby as a force for positive change.

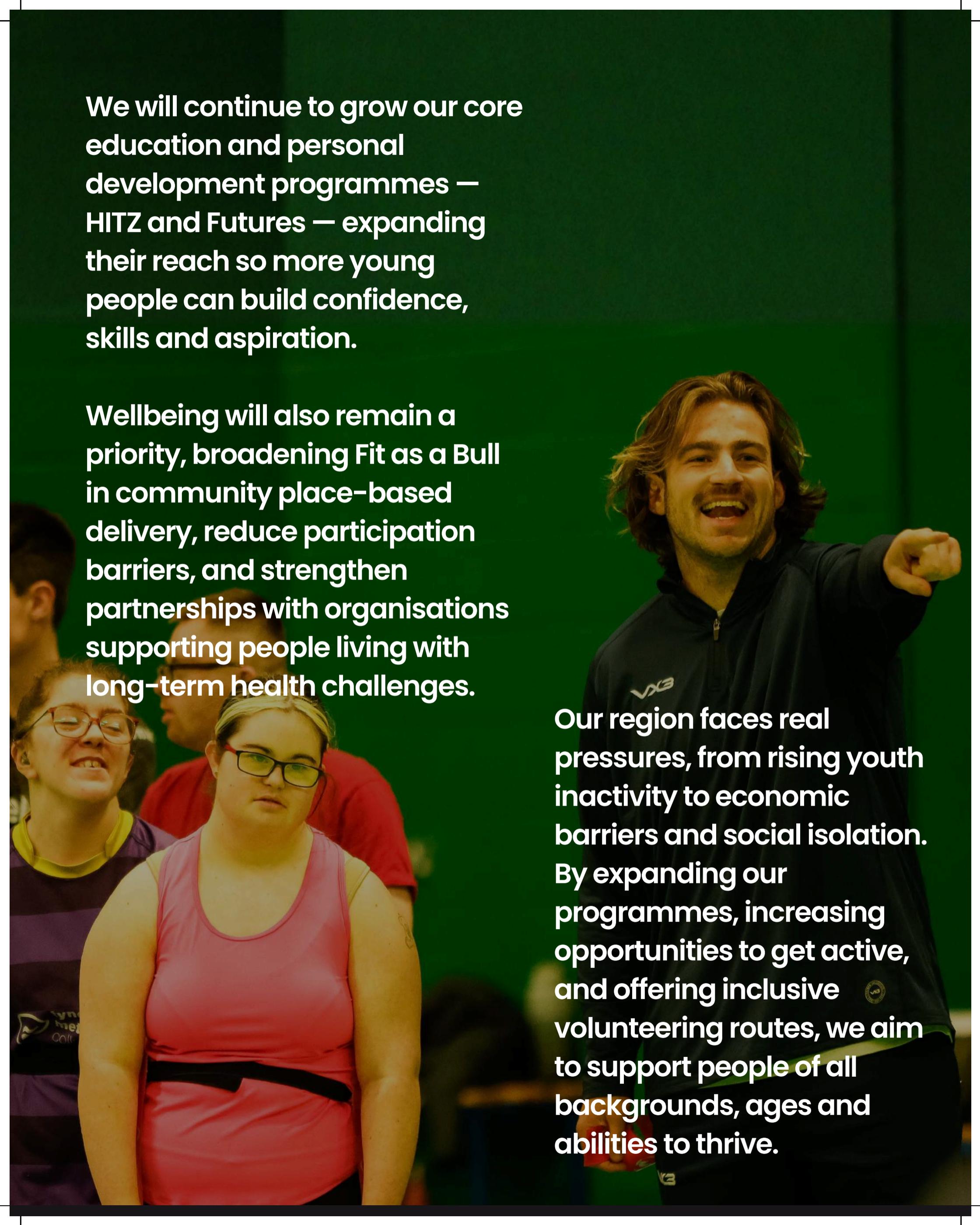
Following a full review of our programmes, we will focus our resources on the areas delivering the greatest

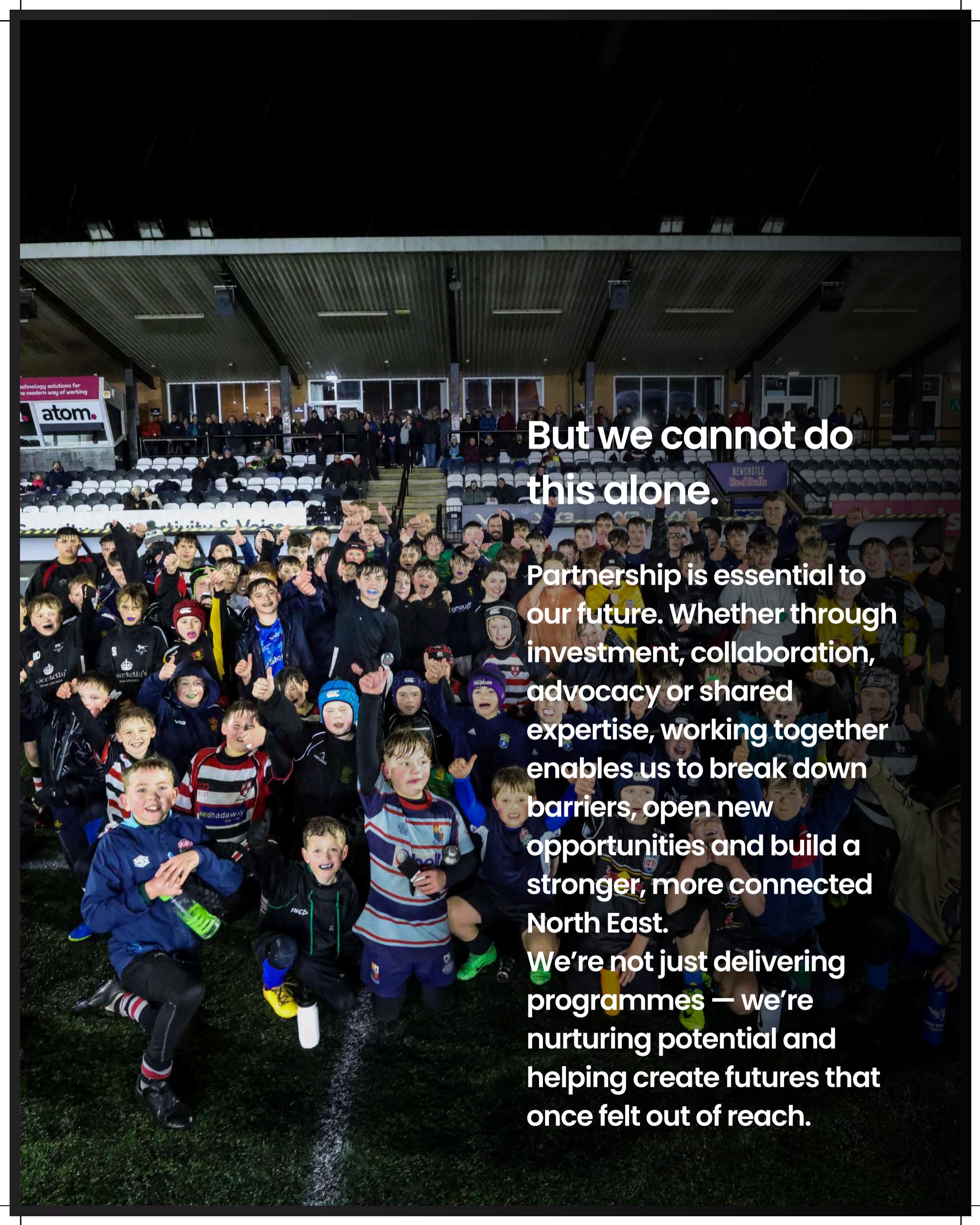
Rugby union development remains central to this, with a strong emphasis on expanding Women's and Girls' rugby and building on the momentum created through the Women's Rugby World Cup activity in Sunderland.

**We will continue to grow our core education and personal development programmes — HITZ and Futures — expanding their reach so more young people can build confidence, skills and aspiration.**

**Wellbeing will also remain a priority, broadening Fit as a Bull in community place-based delivery, reduce participation barriers, and strengthen partnerships with organisations supporting people living with long-term health challenges.**

**Our region faces real pressures, from rising youth inactivity to economic barriers and social isolation. By expanding our programmes, increasing opportunities to get active, and offering inclusive volunteering routes, we aim to support people of all backgrounds, ages and abilities to thrive.**





**But we cannot do this alone.**

**Partnership is essential to our future. Whether through investment, collaboration, advocacy or shared expertise, working together enables us to break down barriers, open new opportunities and build a stronger, more connected North East.**

**We're not just delivering programmes — we're nurturing potential and helping create futures that once felt out of reach.**

**MAKING RUGBY  
THE POSITIVE  
DIFFERENCE  
THAT CHANGES  
LIVES FOR GOOD  
ACROSS THE  
NORTHEAST.**

To contact us, visit [newcastle rugby foundation.co.uk](http://newcastle rugby foundation.co.uk)

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