



LEVELLING

THE FIELD



FIVE YEAR 2026-2031 STRATEGY



THE REAL POWER OF RUGBY LIES BEYOND THE PITCH.

It breaks barriers, builds belonging, and creates brighter futures. Through our Foundation, we stand by those too often left behind; women and girls, disabled people, those living in poverty, and young people at risk. Together, we are creating the heart of a Sale Sharks clubhouse where everyone belongs - a community built on connection, opportunity and wellbeing. By helping people eat well, be well and age well, we turn belonging into lasting, healthy futures.



A MESSAGE FROM

JACK LEECH

CEO OF SALE SHARKS FOUNDATION

“ This strategy sets out our vision for the future, building on everything we have achieved and challenging us to go even further in supporting our communities.

At the heart of our approach is a simple belief: rugby can be a powerful force for good, helping people improve their wellbeing, build meaningful connections and access opportunities they may not otherwise have.

Through the passion and dedication of our team, and with the support of our Trustees, partners, funders and the wider Sale Sharks family, we're ready to create lasting, meaningful change and make an even greater impact in the years ahead. ”



A MESSAGE FROM

NATASHA HANSON

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES,
SALE SHARKS FOUNDATION

“ This strategy is more than a plan, it's a promise to our communities across the North West that we will stand by them, break down barriers, and build a future where everyone feels they belong. Rugby is our platform, but people are our purpose. Through this strategy, we're not just supporting a sport, we're strengthening the fabric of our communities. One connection, one opportunity, one life at a time. I'm proud of the direction we're heading, and even prouder of the lives we'll touch along the way. ”



LEVELLING THE FIELD



To harness the **spirit of Sale Sharks** and the power of rugby to **boost health, fight inequality**, and foster a **sense of belonging** across the North West.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Address the intersectionality and disproportionate poverty that affects the communities of the North West.

Act as a trusted community connector, fostering unity, growing networks, and developing place-based partnerships.

Empower communities to thrive, offering education and tools to help people of all ages eat well, be well, and age well.

Engage and educate young people at-risk, focusing on providing mentorship and life skills, helping them navigate challenges and build a positive future.

Support the grassroots development of young players in our communities

IMPACT

3 YEARS

Engage **45,000** people across the North West

50% of our participants are **women and girls**

Social Value Report delivered

5 YEARS

Engage **75,000** people across the North West

30% of our participants are from the North West's most deprived communities

Developed a comprehensive, organisation-wide **volunteer programme**

VISION

To 'Level the Field' across the North West



To deliver impactful programmes, partnerships and pathways that use rugby to transform lives across the North West.

PROFESSIONAL



ROLE MODELS



INCLUSIVE



DYNAMIC



ENGAGING



GOVERNANCE



COMMUNICATION



DELIVERY



WORKFORCE



FUNDRAISING

VALUES

At Sale Sharks Foundation, our values aren't just words, they guide how we show up every day, in every community, with every person we meet.



PROFESSIONAL

We take pride in the things we do. We deliver quality, staying accountable, and always showing up with care and commitment.

ROLE MODELS

We lead by example and aim to inspire. Not just in what we do, but in how we treat people; with respect, kindness, and integrity.

INCLUSIVE

We ensure everyone feels welcome. We celebrate our difference, listen deeply, and make sure every voice is heard and valued.

DYNAMIC

We're passionate about making a difference. We work hard to meet the needs of our communities, adapting to change and showing resilience in everything we do.

ENGAGING

We bring energy, warmth, and a sense of fun. Collaboration, connection, and joy are at the heart of everything we do.



KEY MEASURES



3 YEARS

After three years, we'll be heading in the right direction if we've:

45k

Engaged **45,000 people across the North West**, creating opportunities for community involvement and fostering a sense of belonging through our programmes.

50%

of our participants are **women and girls**, promoting gender equality and inclusivity in all our programmes.



Measured and demonstrated the Foundation's impact and return on community investment, by developing a **Social Value Report**.

5 YEARS

In five years, we know we'll have fulfilled our purpose if we've:

75k

Engaged **75,000 people across the North West**, creating opportunities for community involvement and fostering a sense of belonging through our programmes.

30%

of our programme participants come from the North West's most deprived **communities**, supporting our mission to tackle inequality through sport.



Developed a comprehensive, organisation-wide **volunteer programme** that builds community connection and purposeful contribution.

CREATING PATHWAYS FOR GIRLS IN RUGBY: MAYA'S STORY

Girls Tackle Rugby is expanding opportunities for girls 11-14 across the North West by creating clear pathways from school to community rugby. Maya, introduced to the curriculum-based programme in Year 7, discovered a love for the sport through inclusive, confidence building sessions.

Supported by Sale Sharks Foundation coaches, including

elite female players, she transitioned into the community game, joining her local rugby club where she now trains regularly and plays competitively.

Maya's journey reflects the Foundation's commitment to linking with schools and clubs, ensuring girls can continue playing, developing and belonging within rugby long term.

Inspired by watching elite women's rugby, including the Women's Rugby World Cup and Sale Sharks Women, Maya has seen first-hand that rugby is a sport where girls belong at every level.

Maya's story demonstrates how Sale Sharks Foundation is driving participation and empowering girls to thrive through rugby.



**“I’VE REALLY ENJOYED THE
GIRLS TACKLE RUGBY
SESSIONS BECAUSE THEY’RE
FUN, CHALLENGING AND
EVERYONE SUPPORTS EACH
OTHER. BEING PART OF THE
TEAM MAKES ME FEEL PROUD.”**



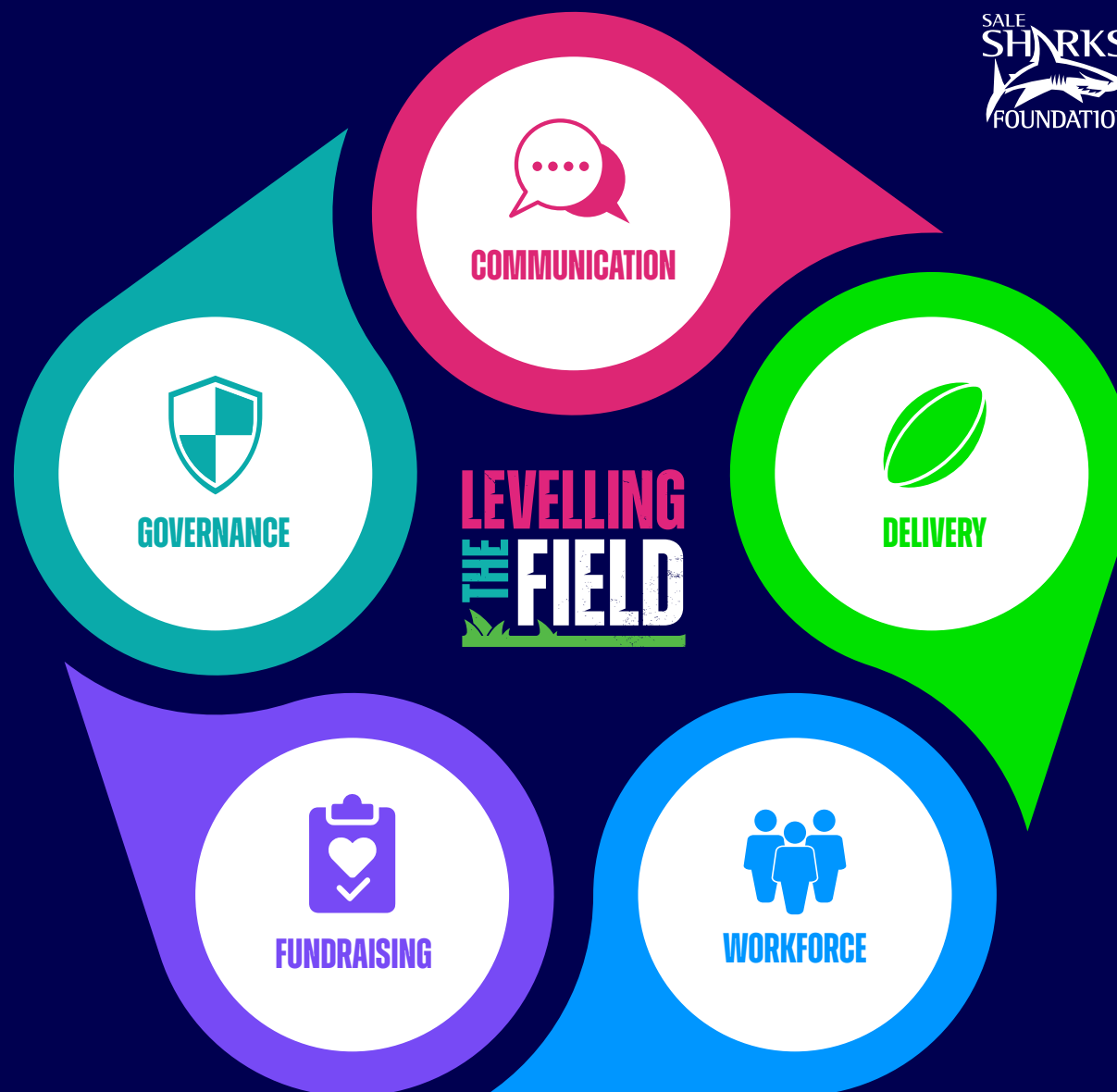


ENABLERS

Our impact depends on the strength of our people, systems, and sustainability. To achieve our mission to deliver impactful programmes, partnerships, and pathways that use rugby to transform lives across the North West, we rely on five core enablers that power our purpose and sustain our impact.

This approach focuses on developing strong governance systems, building a skilled and informed workforce, having clear messaging and communication, and developing diverse revenue streams to support sustainable long-term delivery.

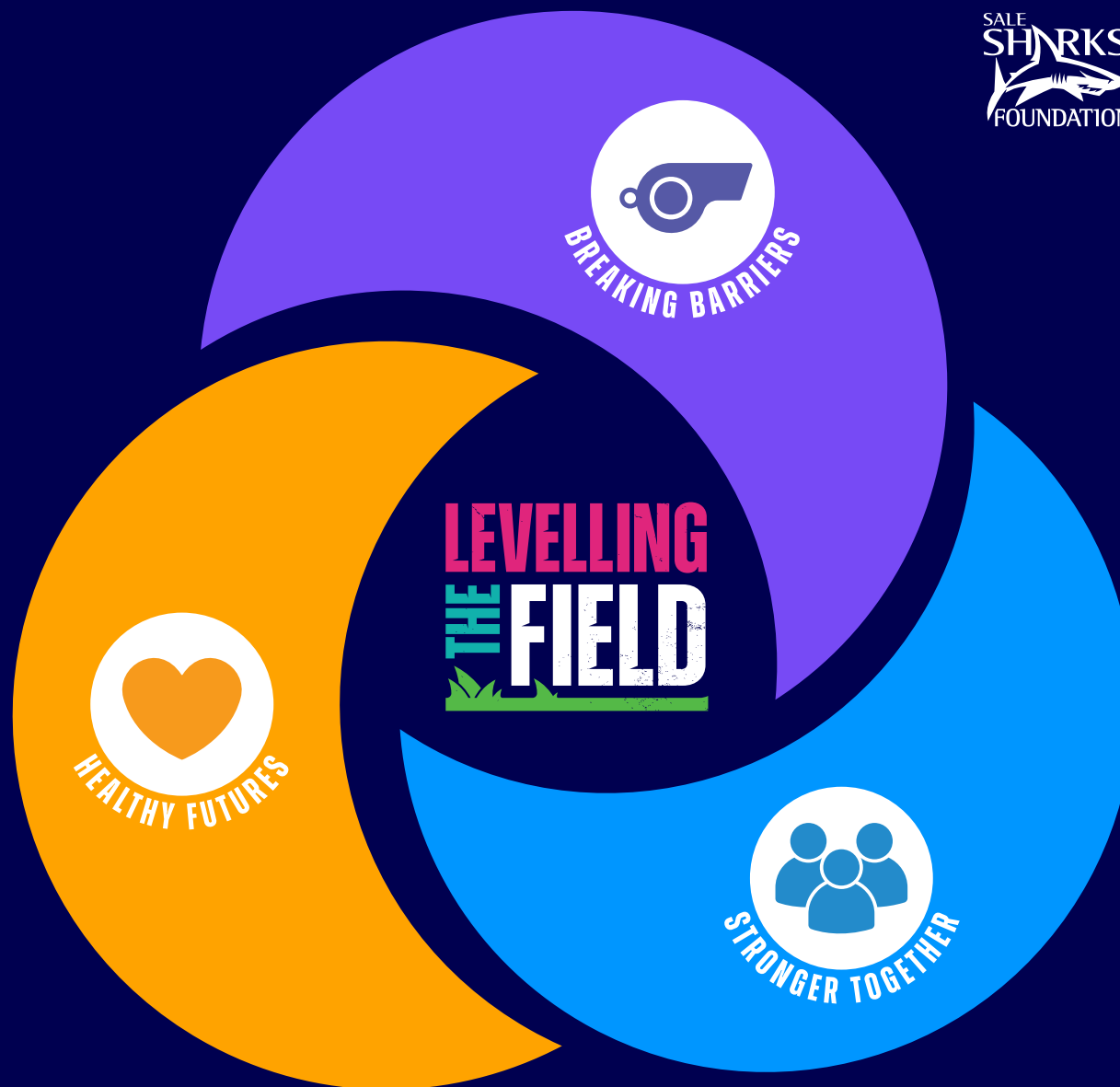
By focusing on these key areas, we strive to bring about lasting and positive transformation within our communities. Together, we can make a big difference and build a brighter future for our local communities!





OUR PRIORITY PILLARS

We will deliver against three priority areas, each one interwoven, never working alone, but instead reinforcing and amplifying each other to drive lasting, meaningful change.



BREAKING BARRIERS

We tackle inequality head on, standing by women and girls, disabled people, those living in poverty, and young people at risk. We show up, speak out, and break down the barriers that hold them back.



WHY NOW

Now more than ever, communities across the North West are facing deepening inequalities. With 37% of children living in poverty and persistent gaps in access to sport, the need for inclusive, accessible programmes is urgent. Rugby can be a powerful tool to reach those who are too often left behind – offering structure, connection, and hope. This is our moment to stand up for those facing the greatest barriers and ensure no one is left on the sidelines.

1/3

of disabled children take part in less than 30 minutes of sport and physical activity per day (Activity Alliance, 2023–24).

44%

of girls in Trafford are less likely to be active (Sport England Active Lives, 2023–24).

29%

of the small area neighbourhoods in the North West are ranked among the 10% most deprived across England (Northern Housing Commission, 2025).

37%

Child poverty in the North West stands at 37%, significantly above the national average (DWP, 2023).



WE COMMIT TO:

» **Engage** and educate young people at-risk, focusing on providing mentorship and life skills, helping them navigate challenges and build a positive future.

» **Create** inclusive rugby programmes specifically designed for disabled people.

» **Grow participation** of girls aged 6–18 in rugby, within schools and community settings across the North West.

» **Address** the intersectionality and disproportionate poverty that affects the communities of the North West.

» **Develop** a skilled workforce, leading with trauma-informed practices to better support at-risk populations.

» **Strengthen** monitoring and evaluation to maximise social impact and deliver greater social value across all Foundation initiatives.



BREAKING BARRIERS THROUGH INCLUSIVE RUGBY:

JAMES' JOURNEY

Crusaders Fin Club, Sale Sharks Foundation's inclusive tag rugby programme for young people with Down's syndrome, creates a space where participants can build confidence, friendships and a strong sense of belonging.

After moving to Derbyshire, James struggled to find a team that offered sessions with people his own age. Meeting the Crusaders at a festival changed everything. He immediately connected with the players and soon joined sessions at our Carrington training centre.

The adapted, non-contact format and supportive coaching have helped him thrive, while for parents the group has created a network of shared experience, encouragement and mutual support.

"We are prepared to travel one-and-a-half hours to get to Sale as James adores playing rugby and has been so welcomed into the team," Linda, James' mum, explains. "Also, with the players being older, James now has a better training session and manages to play some games."

James' story reflects how inclusive sport removes barriers and opens doors to meaningful participation.



**"I LOVE IT
HERE! WE'RE
A FAMILY OF
SALE SHARKS.
PLAYING HERE
MAKES ME FEEL
EXCITED. THE
COACHES ARE
LOVELY AND
KIND."**



STRONGER TOGETHER

At our heart is the spirit of Sale Sharks. A clubhouse for all, where everyone belongs, and no one is left behind.



WHY NOW

In a region as diverse and dynamic as the North West and Greater Manchester specifically, building a sense of belonging has never been more important, particularly among young people. With nearly 29% of the population from ethnic minority backgrounds (Census, 2021) and rising levels of social isolation, we have a unique opportunity to use the spirit of Sale Sharks to bring people together. As the community arm of the club, we're seen as trusted connectors bringing schools, clubs, and families together.

44%

of young people in the North West report high or very high feelings of loneliness (OnSide: Generation Isolation, 2024)

6.9%

The region's population grew by 6.9% between 2011 and 2021 (Census, 2021), with Trafford specifically showing a 14% increase in older adults (55+) (Sport England Active Lives, 2023-24).



Sports participation improves wellbeing and reduces loneliness (Anglia Ruskin University, 2023; Frontiers in Public Health).



The RFU's 'Enriching Lives: The Social Value of Community Rugby Union in England (2024)' showed that being involved in rugby can create stronger and better-connected communities, improve health and wellbeing and increase economic growth.

WE COMMIT TO:

» **Empower** adults to build local connections, reducing loneliness and isolation, and fostering a strong sense of community.

» **Act** as a trusted community connector, building unity, growing networks, and developing purposeful place-based partnerships.

» **Create** safe spaces, where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and inspired to thrive.

» **Give** back through rugby, growing and utilising our platform to create positive change and support the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

» **Inspire** young people through rugby, creating engaging experiences that spark a lifelong passion for the game.

» **Support** the grassroots development of young players in our communities, helping them maximise their potential and become Sale Sharks players of the future.



GIVING BACK TO GRASSROOTS RUGBY: SANDBACH RUFC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sale Sharks Foundation is committed to giving back to rugby by supporting grassroots clubs and creating positive change in local communities across the North West.

Our Rugby Development camps are a key part of that commitment, giving back to the sport and providing more opportunities for young people from U7s to U18s to play rugby.

Through our host club incentive scheme, clubs like Sandbach RUFC receive vital funding that can be reinvested into facilities, equipment and mini and junior sections, helping to strengthen long-term sustainability at grassroots level.

By reinvesting in clubs, inspiring young players and strengthening community connections, Sale Sharks Foundation is helping to future-proof the grassroots game and ensure rugby continues to thrive for generations to come.

“THE HOST CLUB INCENTIVE SCHEME HAS PROVIDED MUCH NEEDED FUNDS BACK INTO OUR MINI AND JUNIOR SECTION, DIRECTLY SUPPORTING KEY PROJECTS LIKE THE CLUBHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT AND THE CAR PARK RESURFACING THAT ARE CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. WHAT MATTERS JUST AS MUCH, THOUGH, IS THE IMPACT ON THE YOUNG PLAYERS. THEY HAVE AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF FUN, AND THE CAMPS GIVE THEM A REAL SENSE OF CONNECTION TO THEIR LOCAL PREM CLUB.”

PAUL JACKSON, CHAIRMAN AT SANDBACH RUFC



We champion healthier lives, supporting our communities to eat well, be well, and age well with confidence and care at every stage of life.



WHY NOW

Health inequalities in our region are stark. Men in the most deprived areas of Greater Manchester live less than those in the least deprived areas. The pandemic only widened these gaps. Through sport, we can inspire healthier habits, build resilience, and support people to eat well, be well, and age well. The need is urgent, but so is the opportunity. We can help shape a healthier future, starting today.



Life expectancy gaps in Greater Manchester are 8.1 years for men and 7.3 years for women (GM Health and Social Care Partnership, 2021).



An estimated 43,328 children aged 5–17 in Greater Manchester are affected by mental health disorders (GMCA, 2021).



Children in deprived areas are more likely to be obese (Public Health England, 2023/24).



Disabled people are nearly twice as likely to be physically inactive (Sport England, 2022/23).



WE COMMIT TO:

» **Empower** communities to thrive, offering education and tools to help people of all ages eat well, be well, and age well.

» **Support** healthy aging by providing opportunities and resources for individuals to maintain independence, health, and connection throughout their lives.

» **Create** engaging, fun, and interactive sessions that inspire the next generation to lead healthier lifestyles.

» **Motivate** individuals to cultivate self-confidence, driving positive change in their future aspirations.

» **Build** robust wellbeing and lifestyle measurement tools, ensuring that we can accurately assess and enhance the impact of our programmes.

» **Utilise** messaging to inspire and inform, fostering a culture of wellbeing where individuals are empowered to lead healthier lifestyles.





DRIVING HEALTHIER FUTURES:

PHIL'S STORY

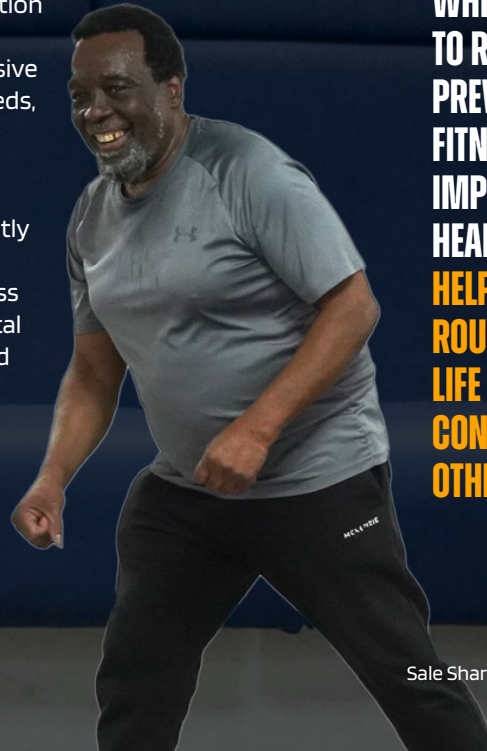
HeadStart is Sale Sharks Foundation's free physical and mental wellbeing programme supporting adults with long-term health conditions to move more, feel better and stay connected through safe, structured exercise.

Phil, a veteran from our Sharks Forces community, joined to improve his mental health and rebuild his fitness. Through regular low impact sessions and wellbeing walks, he has built confidence, increased his stamina and formed stronger social connections. Collaboration with local partners ensures sessions are accessible, inclusive and rooted in community needs, strengthening referrals and participation.

Phil's story reflects consistently positive outcomes: improved confidence, reduced loneliness and better physical and mental wellbeing, helping people lead healthier, more active and connected lives.



“MY MAIN GOALS WHEN I STARTED WERE TO RETURN TO MY PREVIOUS PHYSICAL FITNESS LEVELS AND IMPROVE MY MENTAL HEALTH. THE SESSIONS HELP ME TO ADD ROUTINE TO MY DAILY LIFE AND IMPROVE MY CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PEOPLE.”





Sale Sharks High Performance Training Centre, Carrington Lane, Carrington, Manchester, M31 4AB

Email: foundation@sale sharks.com

Website: sale sharks.com/foundation



@sale sharksfoundation



@SaleSharksFoundation



@SaleSharksFdn



SaleSharksFoundation



DONATE



By supporting Sale Sharks Foundation, you can help us Level the Field for communities across the North West.

Whether you donate, fundraise, or champion our work, your contribution plays a vital role in enabling us to deliver meaningful and lasting change.

Together, we're Levelling the Field.