



LEICESTER TIGERS

Foundation

Newsletter

First Edition



Table of Contents

p.1 A word from
our CEO and
Ambassadors

p.2 Our Impact

p.3 SEND Group
Case Study

p.4 AAA Active
Case Study

p.5 HITZ Student
Case Study

p.6 Down
Syndrome Rugby
Launch

p.7 Wheelchair
Rugby Treble

p.8 CEO Sleepout

p.9 Powerhouse
Games

p.10 Leicester
10K

p.11 Inside Sport

p.12 HAF Camps

p.13 Ed Mowe -
Champion Award

p.14 A Thank you
to Our
Benefactors



A word from our CEO & Ambassadors

Sam Swift - CEO



"2023 has been another wonderful year for the Foundation, which has seen a doubling of beneficiaries, across an even broader spectrum of programmes. We will continue our strive to support some of the most vulnerable people within our community, across our core pillars of Health, Disability, Education and Heritage, whilst sharing the inspirational journeys of those involved."

Ofure Ugiagbe



"I'm super proud to represent the women's team and be among the first player ambassadors for the Foundation. Having been involved and an advocate over the last year, it's amazing to see the incredible work that the team do. Everyone is so passionate about enriching people's lives, and running some fantastic projects, so I feel very honoured to play a small part in that."

Ollie Chessum



"I think it's vital that the Foundation has a link between itself and the men's first team, and from a personal point of view I'm really proud I can be that voice. Helping to raise issues that members of the squad feel passionate about but also engage in projects associated with the Foundation."

Tom Folwell



"I have been part of Leicester Tigers Wheelchair Rugby team for more than 3 years, and I have really enjoyed my time. Being one of the captains has been an honour, and now I have the privilege to be an ambassador to the Tigers Foundation, something I'm very much looking forward to getting involved in and promoting the great work they do."



Our Impact



Disability

20% of people in LLR are living with disabilities.

Our treble winning wheelchair rugby team consists of **~50** players

The brand new down syndrome rugby team has already registered **~40** players

There are **~600** other people with disabilities taking part in programmes at the foundation

Health

40% of over 60's living with life-limiting health conditions.
26% of year 6 pupils are clinically obese.

~250 over 60s attending regular sessions, across multiple foundation programmes

~1,750 children taking part in weekly health related sessions

We support **~300** pupils on FSM each year by providing food and activities during the holidays

Heritage

1 year anniversary of the Remembrance Monument unveiling.

~50,000 annual visitors viewing the monument

~1,500 people are visiting the Mattioli Woods Welford Road in stadium tours

Education

5.2% NEET in LLR compared to **3.7%** national average.

~1,000 children visiting Mattioli Woods Welford Road throughout the year

~350 young people achieving qualifications at the foundation

*NEET - Not in education, employment or training

*LLR - Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland

*FSM - Free School Meals



SEND Group Case Study: Niyan



Niyan has been coming to our weekly multi-sport sessions for over a year and half now with a group of eight other vulnerable adults. When he first arrived, he was non-verbal, very shy and reluctant to join in the activities.

The team took the time to engage with Niyan on an individual basis, which has really brought him out of his shell. He is now comfortable sharing photos from his recent holiday to Paris with the team and helping to take a register of attendees. He is well engaged in the sessions and always greets the team personally, which was something he previously did not do. Once he's involved in sports, he is extremely outgoing and gets excited when he has the opportunity to succeed and discover his own ability. His understanding of what is required of him in the different sports allows him to develop skills week on week.

His favourite sports include rugby and New Age Kurling, where he is able to help others as well as play himself. He also enjoys music and often joins in dancing when we have a dance break during the sessions!

There is nothing better than seeing Niyan smiling and giving the thumbs up before, and after a session expressing his enjoyment of the activities.



AAA Active Case Study: Alan and Les



AAA stands for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, and the group is for those that endure or have endured the disease. Alan (81) and Les (71) joined Triple A in August 2022 and have been regular attendees since.

Alan bought an electric bike shortly after joining the group and cycles in from Glenfield each week. Alan puts his all into the sessions despite his age and often has to be reminded that he is not a 17 year old young man. He reports that he is "much fitter than he was". This was borne out in September 2022 when he was sadly hit by a car en route to the AAA session. Despite sustaining two fractures to his spine, the injuries were not nearly as serious as they could have been and, just two weeks after the accident, he was at home and able to come and visit us at the stadium (albeit still in a brace). He puts his speed of recovery and the reduced severity of his injury down to his residual fitness as a result of the programme.



When Les started attending sessions, he also began attending a local Parkrun; whilst he doesn't run, his walking pace is something to behold. On October 5, 2023 Les had an open repair to an aneurysm. This operation usually takes two weeks to be recovered enough to be sent home following surgery and involves a spell in intensive care. Yet, just eight days post-surgery, Les was at home. This is a massive saving to the NHS, reduces his risk of postoperative infection and has huge benefits to Les' mental health.

These stories confirm the premise behind setting up the AAA Active programme at the beginning, which was that by improving the fitness of an individual, both their quality of life and speed of recovery are simultaneously enhanced.



HITZ Student Case

Study: J-Jay



"My experience at Tigers has been difficult at times. I have been very low before; the staff have helped me talk about this, especially when talking with the doctors.

"When I split up with my Ex, I was suicidal but the talking with Ross helped me. The staff at Tigers have been well good and helped me out tonnes. I've been able to feel safe and achieve something. I'm now looking forward to trying college again!" - J-Jay

After finishing school and attempting college, J-Jay found it extremely hard to find a job, get any work experience or access another education provision. This alongside other factors negatively impacted his mental health and left him lacking confidence. Through Connexions and his parents, he was pointed in the direction of the HiTZ programme, and whilst J-Jay was sceptical, he took the opportunity to attend the course.

Throughout the duration of the course, J-Jay's confidence has massively improved, and he has excelled in the professional sports environment. J-Jay felt that he was able to relate to the people around him on the traineeship, something that he has struggled to do previously at school. Alongside completing qualifications, he completed over 40 hours work experience with the Tigers Grounds Team following in the footsteps of Mitch Bailey, an alumni of the Hitz programme and now Apprentice Groundsman at Leicester Tigers.

Leicester Tigers Education Officers Ross Bailey, Stephen Hunt and Megan Kirby said: "J-Jay is an absolute joy to be around and has impressed all members of staff around Mattioli Woods Welford Road. The difference in J-Jay from the start of Hitz to the end is amazing – he started with us lacking confidence and employability skills and is now a confident young man with skills needed to progress. It has been great to be a small part of his journey."

After expressing to the team that he had been struggling with his mental health and ADHD the Hitz team have supported J-Jay in being honest with his CAM's doctor. This is a reflection of the soft skills and safety developed in the classroom. J-Jay has flourished with the support we have been able to provide alongside some incredible work on his behalf.



Down Syndrome Rugby Launch



As a result of the never ending dedication and hard work of Education Officer Megan Kirby, and many others behind the scenes, the Leicester Tigers Foundation was thrilled to introduce a brand new Down Syndrome rugby team. This made Leicester Tigers only the second Gallagher Premiership rugby team to be associated with one.

Training takes place every other Sunday at Oaks Park training ground for the foreseeable future.

The sessions are non-contact, allowing the sessions to focus on the participants having fun and learning the core principles of rugby.

To coincide with the team's first training session, the Leicester Tigers family welcomed the group on to the Mattioli Woods Welford Road pitch at half time of the game against Sale Sharks. This provided everyone involved with memories to last a lifetime, as the team look forward to a future of improved socialisation and fitness through the medium of rugby training.

In order to assist the Foundation with funding, Leicester Tigers have partnered with Stand Out Socks to produce and retail striped socks, where 100% of the proceeds are going towards the down syndrome rugby programme. Through selling the socks, over £2000 has been raised already!

Asked about the success of the programme, Kirby said: "The Leicester Tigers Down Syndrome rugby sessions are filled with laughter, enjoyment, and joy. The atmosphere during these sessions is unparalleled, and witnessing everyone's radiant smiles is truly heartwarming. I take immense pride in the fact that the sport of rugby has the ability to unite this community, highlighting the enduring value of our beloved sport. I'm thrilled about the prospect of this being just the beginning of what promises to be a highly successful season for us."

The Down Syndrome rugby team is open to those of all ages, and if you are interested in learning more about this programme, visit the link to register your interest.

LeicesterTigers.com/community/foundation/down-syndrome-rugby



Wheelchair Rugby Treble



At half-time of the Leicester Tigers v Newcastle Falcons on Saturday, September 30 2023, the Leicester Tigers Wheelchair Rugby team were presented their trophies by Andrea Pinchen and Tom Scott, with the crowd at Mattioli Woods Welford Road showing their appreciation for such a great representation of the Tigers Family.

The Wheelchair Rugby team achieved the unthinkable this year, winning three separate tournaments, consisting of the Fours Premiership Title, WR5's Premiership, and the international Wheelchair Rugby 5's competition. The most impressive part is not the winning of these trophies, but it is the fact they managed to achieve this all while remaining completely undefeated!

The success of the team is not only a testament to the hard work the players put in on the court, but also to the incessant hard work and commitment that goes on behind the scenes by the staff at the Leicester Tigers Foundation.

Our 4's captain Jaime Stead MBE described the year by saying: "2023 has been a fantastic year to be a part of the tigers family from going on a long undefeated run in both the 4s and 5s disciplines picking up three titles on that run, we have truly made Leicester the home of wheelchair rugby again. It's also been exciting to see the growth of our members in 2023 making the tigers family even bigger.

"I can't wait to see what 2024 brings, hopefully it brings my 200th cap for tigers. It's also a Paralympic year which is massive for wheelchair rugby, hopefully I can take the success I have had with the Tigers in 2023 and replicate it with GB at the Paralympic Games."

Supported by the Leicester Tigers Foundation, the Matt Hampson Foundation and club partners Hafele and Jaffa, the Leicester Tigers Wheelchair Rugby Team will continue to compete in the highest leagues and most competitive European competitions possible.



CEO Sleepout



In February 2023, the Leicester Tigers Foundation staged a 'sleepout', in an effort to bring attention and raise awareness to the ongoing issue of homelessness across the UK. The event also helped to bring together business leaders so that they can practically discuss how they can improve their efforts towards counteracting this problem. This year, the Foundation invited over 35 local CEOs, business leaders, and ex-player Rory Underwood MBE, to spend the night sleeping rough around Mattioli Woods Welford Road to have a true representation of how the homeless population lives.

The event was held in conjunction with CEO Sleepout, a national charity that inspires business leaders to make a stand against homelessness across the UK. This partnering charity has raised an astounding £3 million from over 4800 participants, allowing them to drastically change the course of countless lives in a positive way.

The event took place on April 6, 2023 and raised £35,000 to be divided by the CEO Sleepout Group, the Leicester Tigers Foundation, and the Homeless Charter of Leicester, ensuring an effective distribution of funds supporting homelessness.

To help educate the CEO's who took part, we hosted Rio, Bhavna, Jenna, and Enton, as guest speakers, who all shared their experiences of homelessness with bravery and provided a sense of hope for all who are struggling.

After enjoying so much success the first time around, the Leicester Tigers Foundation will be partnering up with CEO Sleepout once again in 2024, as we plan on challenging our local CEO's to another night under the stars at Mattioli Woods Welford Road.

The proposed date for this event is April 11, 2024 and to take part click the link below:

ceosleepout.co.uk/leicester



Powerhouse Games



For the second year running, the Leicester Tigers Foundation hosted a number of Leicestershire schools to compete on the famous Mattioli Woods Welford Road pitch in a variety of different inclusive activities.

With Power2Inspire partnering with the Foundation, it was up to founder John Willis to lead the event that was attended by 6 different Leicestershire schools, 4 Leicester Tigers Women's team players, and 2 Senior Leicester Tigers Academy Men's players. This included Foundation ambassador Ofure Ugiagbe, who took a leading role in motivating and inspiring the participants to give it their all while maintaining their high spirits when in competition with each other.

This event was designed to encourage people from different backgrounds to work together to learn new skills and have fun. The hope is that the younger generation grows up to embrace inclusivity, not only in sports, but in their general day-to-day life, making all things accessible and reducing discrimination in all negative forms.

Leicester Tigers Foundation CEO Sam Swift called it a "special day, seeing a collection of participants from a broad range of diversities, collectively enjoying sport and wellbeing in unison, demonstrating how we must remain deferential to the essence of inclusivity and togetherness."

This resonated with the heart of the event, which encapsulated both joy and unity through sport.

This day would not have been possible without support from club partner Mattioli Woods, helping the participants to have the most fulfilling Powerhouse Games possible.



Leicester 10K



The Leicester Tigers Foundation was geared up for an exciting challenge at the Leicester 10K on January 29, 2023. The event was organised by Jane Tomlinson's Run For All, the UK's largest not-for-profit events company, and was a highlight in the region's sporting calendar.

We were delighted to see a large number of Tigers Fans raising money for the Foundation as they tackled physical battles to generate donations towards our cause.

Due to the success achieved in the 2023 Leicester 10K, the Foundation is delighted to continue the initiative in 2024 with Jane Tomlinson's Run for All, and encourage more of our supporters to take on the challenge.

Treve Whitford, Head of Marketing Operations at Run For All, emphasised the significance of supporting local causes: "Providing fundraising opportunities for charities is the primary objective of every Run For All event, ensuring that the money being raised by the event stays local and supports the causes that need them most."

Participants are encouraged to fundraise for their chosen charity or one of the event's partner charities, which include the Jane Tomlinson Appeal, Tigers Foundation, LAMP (Leicestershire Action for Mental Health Project), and Leicester City in the Community. Run For All aims to increase community and charity engagement while working to remove barriers to participation, ensuring more people in the region can enjoy the benefits of an active lifestyle.

The Leicester 10K is supported by Leicester City Council, BBC Radio Leicester, High 5, Shokz, Up & Running, Coopah Running, Arla Protein, and Marathon Photos. Entries for the 2024 Leicester 10K are now open, and participants can sign up and check the route at runforall.com.

Let's come together to make a positive impact on the Leicester community and support the Leicester Tigers Foundation's important initiatives.



Inside Sport



One of our most successful programmes, Inside Sport, has allowed us to reach a variety of students to provide an alternative education provision for an entire school day. During these days we take groups on stadium tours, educate them on topical issues, and coach them through some inclusive sports.

Having overseen the provisions of over 25 different school groups this calendar year, we have taken our involvement in the education of Leicestershire pupils and beyond to a new level. As a result, these students have benefited from a greater understanding of contextual information about topics varying from mental health, business in sport, and the importance of history and tradition, all whilst achieving enrichment and enjoyment

The learning environments we create are both interactive and inclusive so that the students that take part find this experience enjoyable, interesting, and educational. This commitment to interactivity extends beyond traditional teaching methods, encouraging students to participate, ask questions, and explore concepts in ways that resonate with their unique learning styles.

Senior Inclusion Officer, Sam Johnston, stated: "I believe Leicester Tigers Inside Sport is an innovative way of getting educational establishments in to the stadium learning about the history of the club and how that can help them in education. The Leicester Tigers Foundation designs bespoke subjects and activities to best cater for the students and school's needs. Using rugby and sport as the vehicle for learning, with our three key pillars at the centre, which include health, education/employment and inclusivity, we try to ensure students get the best opportunity to enjoy themselves at the stadium and learn."

The Leicester Tigers Foundation will continue this programme to provide Leicestershire school children with education in areas they otherwise may not have learnt in depth, in addition to easing the burden for local schools.



HAF Camps



2023 saw the Foundation host multiple Holiday, Activities, and Food (HAF) camps, during breaks in the academic year. This is a multi-sport camp for primary school children, who receive free school meals.

The aim of this programme is to encourage healthy eating and a substantial level of physical activity, amongst those that most commonly struggle to moderate. The hope is that participants will take their experiences at the HAF camp and take it home and teach their peers and family about this alternative lifestyle that proves to be so beneficial.

Our Foundation team have hosted ~300 children, fostering a fun and safe environment for the children to express themselves and learn about effective ways for them to distribute their energy. These programmes have been designed to improve the student's understanding of a healthy lifestyle and engage them in more physical activity outside of a learning environment.

During the HAF camp, we provide the children with healthy food, as a substitute for the free school meals they receive during term time. This allows them to sustain their energy and focus throughout the four hour daily sessions.

We recently held our winter HAF camp, commencing January 2 2024, building on the experiences of the previous camp.

The Foundation are continuously looking to improve our delivery of this programme, so that the effects reach more children across Leicester and introduce a fun, alternative environment during breaks in the academic year.



Ed Mowe - Champion Award



HITZ is Premiership Rugby's flagship education and employability programme which for 15 years has supported young people to make positive change in their lives. Working with more than 22,000 14 to 24-year-olds across England every year, the programme uses rugby's core values to develop invaluable personal, life and employability skills that help young people get back into education, training, apprenticeships and/or employment.

Shortlisted for the HITZ Champion Award is Leicester Tigers Head Groundsman Ed Mowe, who dedicates his time, wisdom, and kindness to nurturing learners on the HITZ programme. Hearing the news of Mowe's nomination, CEO of the Leicester Tigers Foundation, Sam Swift commented: "We couldn't deliver the HITZ programme without the support of people like Ed, to set young people up for life and create a positive impact in our whole community."

Community & CSR Director at Premiership Rugby, Wayne Morris, said "Congratulations to all those shortlisted in this season's HITZ awards. Over the last 15 years, the success rate of the programme speaks for itself, HITZ has helped over 80% of the learners move on positively. The HITZ Awards are an annual celebration of just how much rugby can change lives and the difference HITZ makes."

Mowe had been shortlisted for the Champion Award, which recognises an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty to support HITZ participants in overcoming difficult personal barriers to success.

Ed provides outstanding support for HITZ learners, both past and present. Through his role as Head Groundsman at Leicester Tigers, he utilises his experience of high-pressure environments at elite sport stadiums to inspire learners and goes the extra mile to create a safe space for work experience opportunities.

Described as a 'hero' amongst his peers on the HITZ programme, Ed has helped a past HITZ student to build their confidence up to study as an apprentice groundsman. This student has since been offered full time employment at Leicester Tigers and thanks to Ed, feels that they deserve to be part of this community. His contribution ensures learners get the most out of the programme to help change their lives for the better.



A Thankyou to Our Benefactors



Ian & Clare Mattioli Charitable Trust
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