



**CASHBACK  
2024/25**



# CASE STUDY

**Northfield Academy**  
**S1a From Disengagement to Community Role Model**

# WESTER HAILES HIGH SCHOOL

## S1a From Disengagement to Community Role Model

### Young Person's Background

**How did they come to be referred to the project?**

**What were some of the challenges or barriers they faced before engaging with the programme?**

S1a has shown a keen interest in sport since his arrival at Northfield but lacked the confidence and skill that his friends displayed, and therefore, he was often on the outside and using negative behaviours in class to engage with his peers leaving him at risk of becoming disengaged with education. Growing up in Northfield there is a lack of funding in the local area and so extra-curricular activities like rugby, were limited. During taster sessions with our Rugby coach, it was clear that S1a admired the teamwork and physicality of rugby.

Struggling with disengagement in school, S1a was identified by his Crew teacher and Rugby Coach as someone who would benefit from structured physical activity, positive mentorship and a positive male role model. He was then referred to the CashBack programme initiative with the hope that rugby's emphasis on discipline, teamwork and physical fitness could provide S1a with a constructive outlet for his energy and build his self-esteem.

Before joining the team S1a faced challenges like low confidence and tried to 'fit in' using negative strategies for attention often resulting in exclusions from class and missing vital educational input. S1a struggled to find a sense of belonging in the local community and had no clubs or outside interests - leaving him vulnerable to negative influences. Rugby was identified as a way to address these challenges, offering an opportunity to develop social skills, build resilience and encourage a sense of achievement.

Through the CashBack programme, S1a was introduced to rugby training sessions during school time, providing a supportive environment where he could build confidence, stay active and form positive friendships with peers and mentors. This programme offers a pathway for S1a to channel his potential and make meaningful progress in school and positive links to the community.

### Key Moments in the CashBack Activity

**What were some of the most important moments for the young person during their involvement?**

**How did they engage with the programme, and were there any significant challenges they had to overcome?**

**Were there any turning points or moments of realisation for them?**

**How did the young person's attitude or approach change during the activity?**

During his time, so far, in the CashBack programme, S1a experienced significant personal growth, overcoming challenges that had previously held him back. Upon his arrival at Northfield, he initially was hesitant to engage in learning and struggled with authority figures. However, as he immersed himself in the rugby sessions and the mentorship provided by Paul, he began to develop a stronger sense of discipline and responsibility.

A key turning point for S1a is his growing respect for his peers and staff. Through rugby S1a is learning about the importance of teamwork and accountability, which has translated to improved behaviour in school. His teachers have noticed an improvement in behaviour and engagement. He is trying harder to be more respectful, actively listen and engage in positive learning. This is evident in the reduction of referrals and demerits, as well as a significant decrease in negative conversation with home.

A significant milestone in S1a's journey is his involvement in club rugby, facilitated by Paul and the programme. This provides him with a sense of belonging and positive outlet outside of school. S1a is incredibly proud of being part of the Aberdeenshire Rugby Club and actively seeks me out to chat about how his training is progressing and discuss the club games he takes part in. He is currently delighted about being chosen to compete in a club game in Shetland. As he has built relationships within the club, his confidence has grown, and he has become more receptive to constructive feedback. Previously, S1a would become agitated when confronted about his choices, but over time, he is learning to manage his emotions and anger more effectively.

S1a is beginning to transform his approach to school and his social interactions. His behaviour has improved, and we see a funny, more confident, resilient young person developing, not only as a rugby player, but as a young person equipped with skills to build a positive future.

## Impact of CashBack Activity

How has the young person's life changed as a result of participating in the programme?

What new skills or insights did they gain?

What positive outcomes have they achieved or are progressing towards, such as education, employment, or personal development?

Are there any quotes or feedback from the young person, staff, or other stakeholders that demonstrate the impact?

How did their engagement in the programme contribute to their sense of belonging or purpose?

S1a participation in the CashBack programme has had a positive effect on his personal development, emotional well-being and future aspirations. Through engaging in rugby, he has found a positive outlet that not only enhances his skills but also improves his overall outlook on school and home life.

One of the most significant changes for S1a has been his ability to manage his anger and make more responsible decisions. As he explains.

"It calms me down and helps me make new friends and its good teamwork" S1a

S1a has shown great improvement in how he deals with conflicts with peers and adults.

Beyond skill development, the programme has given S1a a sense of belonging and purpose. He highlights the importance of having something to look forward to, both inside and outside of school, saying,

"It helps me feel like I belong and gives me positive friendships." S1a

This engagement has reduced the risk of negative influences, keeping him focused on positive relationships and away from trouble. Ultimately, the CashBack programme has provided S1a with the tools and confidence to navigate challenges, build a positive future, and contribute meaningfully to his community and team.

S1a's mum commented: 'S1a was heading in a difficult direction but the support from Crew and his coach, Paul, made a huge difference. He is now more focused, with a much better attitude at home. He takes his fitness seriously, eats well and has surrounded himself with a positive group of friends who support and encourage each other. Instead of getting caught up in negative influences in the community, S1a now sees a positive future for himself and is actively working towards it. I was also incredibly proud when S1a was awarded the Coaches layer of the Year at his Club, Aberdeenshire Rugby Club. I am incredibly proud of S1a's achievements. I know S1a doesn't always get it right, but he is now taking responsibility for his actions and has matured significantly.'