



**CASHBACK
2025/26**



CASE STUDY



Developing Player Programme (DPP)

DEVELOPING PLAYER PROGRAMME (DPP)

Programme Overview

The Developing Player Programme (DPP) was established to support the delivery of CashBack for Communities outcomes while contributing to the sustainable growth of rugby within CashBack Schools and local communities. The programme combines accredited education with structured sporting engagement, supporting young people, particularly those at risk of disengagement to achieve positive outcomes in education, wellbeing and employability.

The educational element of the programme was developed collaboratively with Borders College and Scottish Rugby Development, ensuring strong alignment with national education standards and the rugby development pathway.

Partnership Delivery Model

The DPP is delivered through a strong, multi-agency partnership model involving:

- Borders College
- Edinburgh College
- New College Lanarkshire
- Fife College
- Lanarkshire College
- Dundee & Angus College
- Scottish Rugby CashBack Rugby Development Officers
- Scottish Rugby Partnerships Officers

This collaborative approach ensures consistent quality, flexibility of delivery, and wraparound support for young people across school, college and community settings.

Programme Growth and Reach

Following the successful launch of SCQF Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications, the programme experienced strong uptake, with schools recognising the value of accredited learning combined with sport. After two years of sustained success, Scottish Rugby expanded DPP across the national Rugby Development Network.

- Up to 30 communities engaged
- Approximately 750 young people enrolled
- Six college partners delivering nationally

This expansion demonstrates both the scalability of the programme and its ability to adapt to system change while continuing to deliver meaningful outcomes for young people.

Delivering CashBack for Communities Outcomes

Outcome 1: Young people are diverted from antisocial and criminal behaviour

The DPP provides structured, purposeful activity during the school week, reducing unstructured time and helping to re-engage young people who are at risk of disengagement from education and associated risk-taking behaviours.

A clear example can be seen at Auchmuty High School, where an S2 pupil at significant risk of complete disengagement from education has remained connected to school almost exclusively through the DPP. Participation in the programme supported the young person to re-enter the school environment, providing a positive alternative pathway and reducing the risk of further disengagement.

Outcome 2: Young people improve learning, employability and access positive destinations

The DPP delivers SCQF Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications, directly increasing attainment and supporting progression into positive post-school destinations.

- Phase 5: 46 young people achieved an SCQF Level 4 or 5 qualification
- Phase 6: 340 young people achieved an SCQF Level 4 or 5 qualification

These qualifications enhance employability skills, improve attendance, and provide young people with tangible achievements that support future education, training or employment pathways.

Outcome 3: Young people's health, mental health and wellbeing improve

The programme places a strong emphasis on physical activity, routine, confidence building and positive relationships. Regular engagement in rugby, combined with supportive learning environments, contributes to improved mental wellbeing, self-esteem and resilience.

As highlighted by delivery partners, the DPP supports young people to feel a sense of belonging, re-engage with their school community, and experience success in an environment where they feel valued and supported.

Outcome 4: Young people contribute positively to their communities

Through leadership opportunities, volunteering and progression routes into community rugby, young people are supported to give back to their local communities.

At Auchmuty High School, participation in the DPP enabled a young person not only to remain on the school site, but to support an after-school rugby coach representing a significant step in rebuilding positive community connection, responsibility and contribution.

Outcome 5: Young people build their personal skills, resilience, and benefit from strengthened support networks

The DPP develops key life skills including communication, teamwork, self-management and resilience. The partnership model ensures young people benefit from strengthened support networks spanning schools, colleges, rugby clubs and development staff.

As noted by Dundee & Angus College, the programme plays a critical role in reducing risk-taking behaviours while strengthening the networks around young people, helping them to make positive choices and achieve their potential.

Stakeholder Evidence of Impact

“As a proud delivery partner, we have seen how well the programme is continually received in high schools, creating a strong pathway that supports young people to build confidence, make positive choices and progress towards positive outcomes in an area constantly evolving.” Gillian Hughes – Academic Leader Sport & Education – New College Lanarkshire

“The Developing Player Programme at Auchmuty High School has proven to be a highly effective and inclusive addition to our curriculum, particularly in supporting young people who are at risk of disengaging from school... Crucially, participation in DPP has helped him enter the school environment initially, which then enabled him to remain on site to support an after-rugby coach, a significant step in rebuilding his connection with the school community.”

“The School of Rugby and the Developing Player Programme represent a powerful engagement tool... They play a critical role in keeping vulnerable young people connected to education.” Catherine Stokes, Rugby Development Officer – Glenrothes Rugby Club

“Through this partnership, we support young people to build their personal skills and resilience, strengthening the networks around them and reducing risk-taking behaviours... improving young people’s health, mental health and overall wellbeing.” Dr Sarah Ramminger, Dundee & Angus College.

What Schools Valued Most About DPP

Across the phase, schools increasingly viewed DPP as more than an accredited rugby qualification. Staff regularly reflected that some young people engaged differently when learning felt practical, relational and connected to real responsibility.

In several environments, pupils who struggled within more traditional classroom settings responded positively to learning that involved coaching younger pupils, leading warm-ups, officiating fixtures and working within team environments. Rather than separating learning from experience, DPP allowed young people to apply communication, leadership and organisational skills within meaningful settings.

Schools also highlighted the value of DPP in creating visible progression opportunities for young people who may previously have struggled to see themselves succeeding within education. Achieving qualifications remained important, but staff often reflected just as strongly on improvements in confidence, attendance, communication and wider engagement with school life.

The partnership approach underpinning DPP was also viewed as a significant strength. The involvement of colleges, Development Officers and school staff created broader support networks around young people while helping schools offer flexible pathways suited to different learning styles and personal circumstances.

Several schools noted that the strongest outcomes often emerged when DPP was fully integrated within wider School of Rugby and pastoral support structures, allowing young people to experience continuity between education, sport and wider school engagement.

Summary of Impact

The Developing Player Programme is a proven, scalable intervention that successfully delivers against all five CashBack for Communities outcomes. By combining accredited education, structured sport and strong partnership working, the programme supports young people, particularly those most at risk to remain engaged, achieve qualifications, improve wellbeing and progress towards positive destinations.