



**CASHBACK
2025/26**



CASE STUDY

Glenrothes RFC

**Pupil E: Building Confidence & Belonging
through Community Rugby**

GLENROTHES RFC

Pupil E: Building Confidence & Belonging through Community Rugby

Pupil E first became involved in rugby after attending a summer camp delivered through the Community CashBack Rugby programme at Glenrothes RFC. Initially unsure about participating and lacking confidence within team sport environments, she agreed to give rugby a try — a decision that gradually opened the door to new friendships, stronger self-belief and a much more positive relationship with sport.

As an autistic young person preparing for the transition into high school, Pupil E had often found social situations and group environments difficult to navigate. Before engaging with the programme, confidence around sport and wider peer interaction remained a significant barrier.

However, through the welcoming and supportive environment created at Glenrothes RFC, she quickly began developing confidence both within rugby and within the wider social aspects of club life.

What initially began as attending a summer camp soon developed into regular involvement in training sessions and matches. Staff and family members reflected positively on the way rugby increasingly became a source of routine, enjoyment and positive connection during an important period of transition in her life.

One of the strongest aspects of her development was the growing sense of belonging she experienced within the girls' team environment. Over time, Pupil E became not only a regular participant, but someone who actively encouraged other girls to become involved in the club as well.

Her mother reflected:

“We’ve all noticed a massive difference in E’s overall confidence and attitude towards sports... she is improving her fitness and getting better at working as a team.” Parent

As her confidence developed, staff and family also noticed a growing willingness to challenge herself in situations she may previously have avoided. During one particularly difficult match, Pupil E injured her ankle but chose to continue contributing positively to the team, later scoring a try during the game.

Reflecting on the moment, her mother explained:

“Before, E would have absolutely taken herself off the pitch and walked away. But she stuck it out, played well, and even scored a try.” Parent

Importantly, family members consistently described the impact of the programme in terms that extended well beyond rugby performance itself. Alongside improvements in fitness and participation, rugby helped support Pupil E's confidence during the transition into high school while also helping her build meaningful friendships and stronger social connections.

One parent reflected:

“E is autistic and has really struggled with the transition to high school... her team have given her friendships that are flourishing.” Parent

The role of coaches and the wider club environment also emerged strongly throughout her journey. Consistent encouragement and reassurance from staff helped build confidence gradually over time, particularly during moments where self-belief remained fragile.

Her mother explained:

“I can’t thank all the coaches enough for taking her under their wing and giving her the reassurance that she is more capable than she believes.” Parent

Reflection and Learning

Pupil E's experience highlights the importance of welcoming, inclusive and supportive community environments within youth sport. While rugby provided the initial opportunity for engagement, the strongest impact emerged through the relationships, encouragement and sense of belonging developed around regular participation over time.

Her journey also reflects the wider value of community rugby environments that allow young people to build confidence gradually, develop meaningful peer connections and experience positive team settings where they feel accepted and supported as individuals.