



DURHAM CRICKET  
**FOUNDATION**

**REACHING  
RAISING  
OUT,  
UP**

**STRATEGY  
2025-2030**



## FOREWORD:

# A NEW ERA FOR DURHAM CRICKET FOUNDATION

We are stepping into the most exciting era in our organisation's history.

In July 2024, the Durham Cricket Board and the Durham Cricket Foundation came together under a single name – Durham Cricket Foundation. This merger represents more than a change in structure. It marks the beginning of a new, unified mission: to bridge the boundaries of cricket with the real needs of our communities.

We are now one organisation – bold in ambition, united in purpose, and rooted in the belief that cricket has the power to change lives. Whether it's a child picking up a bat for the first time in a school hall, a volunteer coaching at a local club, or an older adult finding connection through Walking Cricket – we are there. We're building futures, nurturing wellbeing, and creating belonging through the game we love.

Two guiding principles drive everything we do:

- to ensure our sport is thriving,
- and to always be guided by support for our communities.

This strategy – **Reaching Out, Raising Up** – sets out our vision for the next five years. It reflects who we are now: an organisation that believes in people, that invests in places, and that uses cricket as a force for good.

Our journey is just beginning – and we couldn't be more excited about what lies ahead.



**BOLD IN AMBITION**  
**UNITED IN PURPOSE**

**Rooted in the belief that cricket has the power to change lives.**



## Chief Executive's Welcome

I'm delighted to share our new five-year strategy – Reaching Out, Raising Up – which sets out an ambitious and united vision for the Durham Cricket Foundation. This plan will strengthen and grow our charity, ensuring that both cricket and our communities thrive together.

Over the past eight years, as Durham Cricket Board, we created a transformative pathway into the game for children aged 5 to 8 – with over 12,000 young people starting their cricket journey with us. We set our sights on making cricket accessible to everyone in our region, and that commitment has shaped everything we've done.

We're incredibly proud of the growth of the women's and girls' game, rising from just a handful of teams to 80 girls' and 52 women's teams across our clubs in 2024 – a foundation that helped secure Durham's first ever women's professional team.

Our disability cricket has expanded county-wide, and our nationally-recognised Street Cricket project in Sunderland continues to break down barriers to participation.

Alongside this, and as a charity, we've delivered our own community-led programmes: from embroidery and glass painting classes to gardening clubs and activities with the Great North Children's Hospital.

Our future direction is clear – to offer more value to more people, through the sport, our facilities and our people.

**"Our future direction is clear – to offer more value to more people, through the sport, our facilities and our people."**

**Graeme Weeks**  
Durham Cricket Foundation  
Chief Executive

This strategy reflects the strategic direction of our key partners and community leaders. Research has gone into the key areas of focus for our local authorities which has allowed us to align our activities to the needs of the community.

We've taken several months to put this strategy together in consultation with the Trustee members, our staff, ECB and research around the needs of our communities.

We remain both the local guardian of the game and a charity committed to building brighter futures through cricket.

Thank you to our brilliant team, trustees and supporters. This strategy is shaped by your insight, energy and belief in what we can achieve together.

Graeme Weeks  
Durham Cricket Foundation  
Chief Executive



## A word from our Chair:

This is a fantastic time to be involved in cricket and the opportunities in front of us are limitless. The whole of Durham Cricket intends to be at the forefront of those and it is a great privilege to be leading the Foundation on its future journey.

'Reaching Out, Raising Up' captures our ambition and intent succinctly. Our community is renowned for its **warmth**, its **generosity**, its **spirit** and its **welcome** and we want to serve it to enhance those great things through our sport. Cricket is a game for all and our initiatives reflect that by being inclusive, accessible, and connected to the people and places of our region.

We have a fantastic team of people delivering cricket opportunities in Durham and a Trustee Board that provides outstanding leadership, guidance and strategic direction. Having achieved charitable foundation status in 2024 this team is well placed to build on the platforms we have put in place – and we just can't wait to get into doing that!

Mike Smith  
Durham Cricket Foundation  
Chair

# Supporting Regional Wellbeing:

Our strategic objectives are deeply rooted in the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve. We are proud to align closely with the Health & Wellbeing priorities identified by our local authorities across Durham, Gateshead, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Hartlepool, Darlington and Stockton-on-Tees. These shared ambitions shape our work every day and ensure our programmes make a meaningful difference.

## LOCAL HEALTH & WELLBEING PLANS INFORMING OUR DIRECTION:

- COUNTY DURHAM JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (2023-2028)
- GATESHEAD HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY
- GATESHEAD PHYSICAL ACTIVITY STRATEGY (2022-2032)
- SOUTH TYNESIDE JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (2023-2028)
- SUNDERLAND HEALTHY CITY STRATEGY
- STOCKTON-ON-TEES JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY
- HARTLEPOOL JOINT LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (2018 - 2025)
- DARLINGTON JOINT LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (2025-2029)

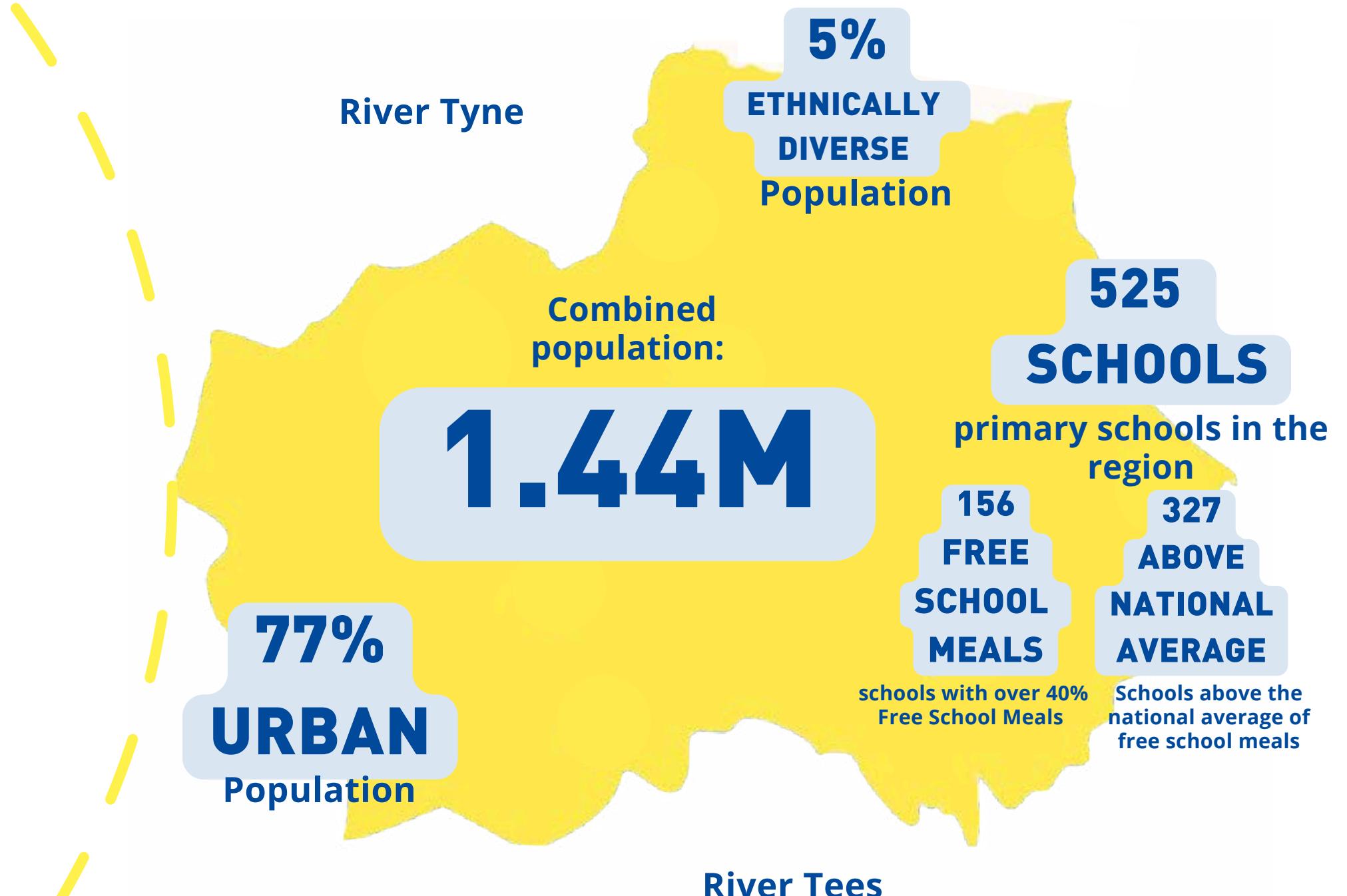
Across these areas, key health challenges are clear. Childhood obesity remains high, particularly in the North East. Too many children are missing out on the physical and mental benefits of regular activity. At the same time, youth mental health needs are increasing, and social isolation among older adults continues to rise.

Each local authority names physical activity as a core tool to address these issues, and Durham Cricket Foundation is uniquely positioned to respond. As a sports charity with deep community roots, we use cricket for good, improving physical and mental wellbeing.

In Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees, strategies place particular focus on tackling health inequalities—an approach that echoes our commitment to inclusion and equal access. Our focus on community empowerment and grassroots engagement reflects shared priorities, as does our belief in partnership working to achieve lasting impact.

## ALIGNING WITH ECB'S INSPIRING GENERATIONS STRATEGY

Our work is also fully aligned with the ECB's Inspiring Generations Game-Wide Strategy – a bold vision to make cricket the most inclusive team sport in the country. We are proud to be part of a national movement to make cricket more accessible, more representative, and more impactful.



The governance of cricket in England allocates us all areas between the Tyne and the Tees. Colleagues at Northumberland Cricket Board and Yorkshire Cricket Board are responsible for serving communities to our north and south respectively.



## MONDAY:

Walking Cricket  
Primary Schools Cricket  
Secondary Leaders Training  
SEND Schools Cricket  
Crafty Needles Session  
Club Development Meetings  
U15 Boys' Cricket  
U13 Girls' Hardball Cricket

# A week of ours looks like this:

**101**  
**CLUBS**

recreational clubs in the county

## TUESDAY

Crafts sessions - Karbon Homes  
Inclusive Family Cricket Session  
Volunteer Coordinator Event  
Disability Cricket Community Hub  
Wicketz Hubs  
Primary Schools Cricket  
SEND Schools Cricket  
U18 Boys' Cricket  
U15 Girls' Hardball Cricket

## WEDNESDAY

Great North Children's Hospital  
Junior Skills Observations  
Wicketz Hub  
Walking Cricket  
Primary Schools Cricket  
SEND Schools Cricket  
U13 Boys' Cricket

## SATURDAY

Senior Men's Cricket  
1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Teams

**OVER**  
**530**  
Junior Cricket Teams

## THURSDAY

ESOL Programme  
Street Cricket  
Embroidery Class  
Great North Children's Hospital  
All Stars Cricket Festival  
SEND Schools Cricket  
Primary Schools Cricket  
Disability Hub  
Club Men's Senior 3rd Team Cricket  
U11 Girls' Hardball Cricket

## FRIDAY

Glass Painting Class  
Walking Cricket  
SEND Schools Cricket  
Primary Schools Cricket  
Embroidery Class  
Street Cricket  
Disability Cricket Hub  
Wicketz Hub  
Women's Hardball Cricket  
Women's Softball Cricket

## SUNDAY

U11 Junior Cricket  
U9 Junior Cricket  
Club Men's Senior 3rd Team Cricket  
Women's Festivals  
Junior Festivals

# OUR MISSION ➤➤➤



WE EXIST TO BRIDGE THE POWER OF SPORT WITH THE REAL NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY, INVESTING IN PEOPLE'S FUTURES, AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES THAT GO BEYOND THE SPORT.



AT THE  
ROOTS  
OF THE GAME

FOR THE  
HEART  
OF THE COMMUNITY





OUR VALUES:

**ACCOUNTABILITY**

**INSPIRATIONAL**

**FAIR**

**FREEDOM TO TRY**

**INTEGRITY, TRUST, HONESTY**

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Part A: Developing our Programmes			Part B: Developing our Charity		
1. DEVELOP DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMES	2. SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS GAME	3. GROW OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS	4. STRONGER TOGETHER – OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY PARTNERS	5. EVOLVING OUR FINANCIAL MODEL	6. GROWING A VERSATILE AND EXPERT TEAM
1.1 Strengthen the cricket offer for women and girls  1.2 Deepen engagement with South Asian communities  1.3 Expanding disability cricket	2.1 Step up support for local clubs  2.2 Greater harnessing of volunteer power.  2.3 Developing Non-Traditional Settings	3.1 Expand our work in schools  3.2 Build on Our Health and Wellbeing Work  3.3 Innovate new streams of work	4.1 Playing an 'ambassadorial' role in the community  4.2 Build on existing and develop new partnerships  4.3 Increasing awareness of DCF as an exemplar foundation	5.1 Develop our relationships with grant-making trusts and foundations  5.2 Secure new contracts and commissioned work  5.3 Develop new innovative funding streams and sponsorships	6.1 Frontline delivery roles  6.2 Specialist enabling roles  6.3 Leadership and governance

## Part A: Delivery of Programmes

- 1. DEVELOP DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMES**
- 2. SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS GAME**
- 3. GROW OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS**



# 1. DEVELOP DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE PROGRAMMES

We will commit resource and energy to providing a welcoming, safe and widely-available range of cricket-based and community-based initiatives that prove we are a sport for everyone.

## Priority 1.1 Strengthen the Cricket Offer for Women and Girls

The development of women's and girls' cricket remains vitally important. Our full Women's & Girls' Strategy was recently published and focuses on addressing the fragile state of girls' club cricket through dedicated club volunteer workforce and infrastructure. This consists of four key areas:

- Continue to grow women's and girls' participation:  
Expand national programmes, bring cricket to underprivileged communities, and use innovative partnerships to reach new audiences.
- Strong girls' teams in thriving clubs:  
Build lasting women's and girls' teams, retain players in club structures, and develop a dedicated workforce to support growth.
- Structured and regular competition opportunities for women and girls:  
Strengthen leagues, establish dedicated match nights, support the transition to hardball cricket, and ensure inclusive competition.
- Position cricket as a tool for social change off the field:  
Use cricket to engage communities through targeted programmes and expand partnerships to drive social impact.



## Priority 1.2 Deepen Engagement with South Asian Communities

Cricket holds a unique cultural significance within South Asian communities and we will harness that strength to create powerful, community-led programmes that break down barriers, inspire pride, and drive social connection and opportunity.

In the years ahead, we will expand our reach and impact, co-creating programmes with South Asian community groups, places of worship, local leaders and families. We will ensure our activities are welcoming, culturally relevant, and aligned with the needs and aspirations of these communities – creating more opportunities to play, lead and belong through cricket.

## Priority 1.3 Expanding Disability Cricket

As we approach 25 years of delivering cricket for people with disabilities, our commitment to this work is stronger than ever. We aim to provide high-quality, meaningful cricket experiences for individuals of all ages and abilities, supporting physical, mental and social wellbeing through inclusive participation. This will go hand-in-hand with expanding the visibility of disability cricket in the county.

We will continue to deliver county-wide cricket in SEND schools, expand alternative formats such as Table Cricket, and provide free, accessible weekly participation hubs. We will grow competitive opportunities through inclusive leagues and develop a skilled, inclusive workforce of coaches and volunteers to support long-term participation and progression.

## 2. SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS GAME

We will utilise our skills, knowledge and resources to nurture a strong and sustainable cricket club network extending all around the region.

### Priority 2.1 Step up Support for Local Clubs

With over 100 cricket clubs in our area, each at different stages of growth and development, our approach will be rooted in listening, partnership, and targeted support.

In a challenging economic climate, many clubs are under pressure to maintain facilities, grow membership and stay resilient. Our Development Officers will provide tailored guidance aligned with the ECB's priorities, helping clubs access funding, adopt digital tools, and strengthen governance and safeguarding practices. We will also encourage diverse leadership and support the creation of inclusive environments within club structures.

Our ambition is to ensure clubs have the support, tools and resources as they are at the heart of the game.



### Priority 2.2 Greater Harnessing of Volunteer Power

Volunteers are the backbone of our clubs and community programmes. To build a thriving, sustainable game, we will recruit, train and support more volunteers in vital roles such as coaches, umpires, scorers and young helpers.

We will place a particular focus on volunteers who can support the continued growth of women's and girls' (WAG) cricket - see priority 1.1.

### Priority 2.3 Developing Non-Traditional Settings

Notwithstanding the strategic importance of the local club network, we also know that many people first develop their love for cricket outside of this context. We will therefore seek to build bridges between non-traditional cricket settings and the club network, as well as encouraging the various informal teams and leagues to gain the additional benefits of adopting more of a club-type structure.

## 3. GROW OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

**We will maximise our excellent reach around the region recognising that there are many untapped opportunities to do more.**

**We will ensure our programmes are shaped by the real needs, voices and aspirations of local people.**

**We plan to develop new work utilising the power of sport and the strength of the DCF brand to make a difference to a range of social and health-related issues.**



### Priority 3.1 Expand our work in schools

We are here to inspire a generation to play and be active. As the regional delivery partner for Chance to Shine, we are committed to introducing thousands of children to the game every year, often providing their first-ever experience of cricket.

Our focus is not just on participation but on using cricket to build confidence, teamwork, resilience and wellbeing among young people. In the years ahead, we will deepen the impact of our schools programme.

### Priority 3.2 Build on Our Health and Wellbeing Work

Sport is proven to make a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing. Our cricket-based interventions will always play a part here, but we can and will get involved in other initiatives too.

We will continue to grow our contribution to health and wellbeing across the region, growing our project with the Great North Children's Hospital, and bringing our arts and crafts sessions to more people.

Our work has already helped to reduce social isolation, particularly among older adults, through inclusive programmes like Walking Cricket and gardening clubs. We want to do more.

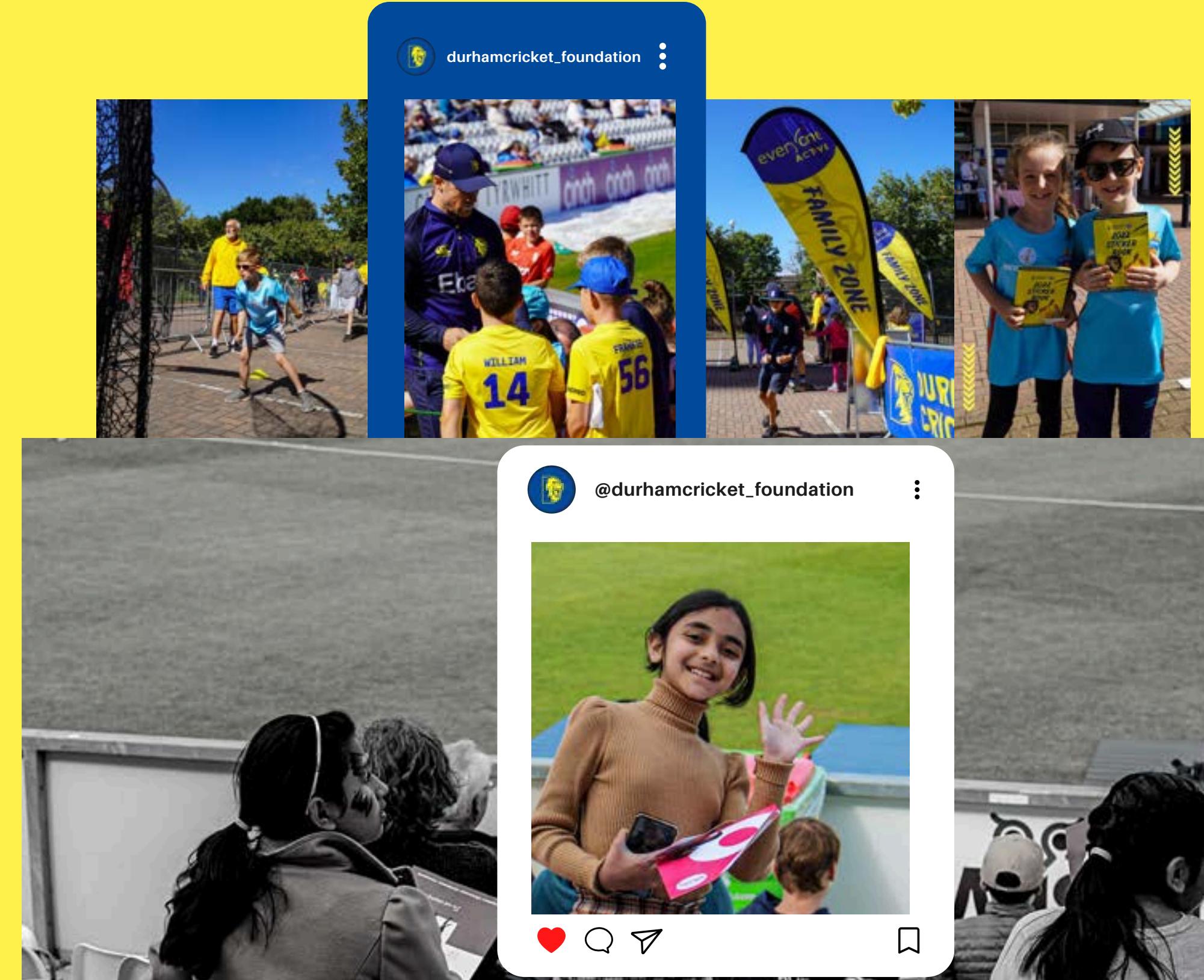
We will explore new areas of impact, including dementia-friendly initiatives that use cricket and creativity to spark connection and memory, and initiatives around key NHS focus areas.

### Priority 3.3 Innovate new streams of work

Our research into the needs of the communities we serve has revealed a range of issues that we are well-placed to address with new streams of work - either working independently or by forging new partnerships. We plan to set aside research and development time to formulate clearer plans about when and where to get involved.

## Part B: Developing our Charity

- 4. STRONGER TOGETHER – OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY PARTNERS**
- 5. EVOLVING OUR FINANCIAL MODEL**
- 6. GROWING A VERSATILE AND EXPERT TEAM**



## 4. STRONGER TOGETHER -- OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH KEY PARTNERS

We will continue to build on the good relationship we have with a range of partners seeking to foster relationships through which all parties can play to their strengths and maximise the opportunities for shared success.

### Priority 4.1 Playing an 'Ambassadorial' Role in the Community

Our Foundation has high visibility in a wide range of important community contexts such as schools. As a proud part of the Durham Cricket family we recognise that the next five years will present us with exciting opportunities to further develop our distinctive brand personality in the communities that we serve.

### Priority 4.2 Build on Existing and Develop New Partnerships

Going forward it will be important for us to collaborate with other organisations in key themes such health and wellbeing. We will seek to develop new and enhanced relationship with local authorities, public bodies such as the NHS and Police, as well as with other voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations.

### Priority 4.3 Increasing Awareness of DCF as an Exemplar Foundation

We recognise that the region has many excellent and longstanding charities and that finding our unique position within this wider landscape is very important. We will therefore strengthen our communications function in order to further boost our profile amongst key audiences such as the business community.



Our partnership with YAV Sunderland created a successful Street Cricket project in the city and developed the workforce to be able to deliver this. In that process Shahzana Aslam became the first South Asian Female Cricket Coach - and a role model for the community. Since, she has moved to a full time cricket role with our Foundation - a dream of hers.



# Objective 5 EVOLVING OUR FINANCIAL MODEL

We will create a solid and sustainable budget with income from a wider range of sources, including grants, donations and earned-income through new contracts and commissioned work. We will work to be substantially less reliant on ECB funding by 2030.



## Priority 5.1 Develop our Relationships with Grant-Making Trusts and Foundations

The outcomes we achieve as a foundation will appeal to a range of grant-making trusts and foundations. We therefore need to research the wider funder landscape thoroughly and to begin building relationships, and making new grant applications.

## Priority 5.2 Secure New Contracts and Commissioned Work

Stable revenues from contracts will become a greater slice of our overall income model in the years ahead. Therefore we will take the necessary steps to strengthen our ability to reliably deliver programmes on behalf of Public Sector bodies such as North East Combined Authority, NHS, Local Authorities and Housing Associations. We also see the potential to work in partnership with other sports foundations and similar voluntary sector organisations to pool expertise and cover wider areas.

## Priority 5.3 Develop New Innovative Funding Streams and Sponsorships

We aim to create compelling sponsorship offers that reflects the unique value of the Durham Cricket Foundation. By showcasing our reach into schools, the cricket network, communities, and priority areas across the region, we can offer businesses a meaningful way to support grassroots sport, health, and social impact.

Alongside this, we are actively developing a range of innovative funding streams that will create new ways for supporters, partners and the wider public to invest in our work. These include events and ideas that are new to the Foundation yet rich in potential.

# Objective 6: GROWING A VERSATILE AND EXPERT TEAM

We are proud of our team and will ensure everyone has the opportunity to develop their potential. We also recognise that achieving our priorities will require the recruitment and training of colleagues to lead and support in key areas.

## Priority 6.1 Frontline Delivery Roles

A recent period of more rapid growth has meant that many of our team members remain relatively new in their career journey at Durham Cricket Foundation. We will therefore ensure that development and advancement opportunities are available so that our talented colleagues can progress as far as their passion takes them.

As the charity continues to grow and diversify its work, we expect to create new frontline delivery roles and develop additional capacities to meet emerging needs.

## Priority 6.2 Specialist Enabling Roles

As our reach and impact continues to grow there is a requirement on us to ensure we have specialists on the team in key areas such as inclusion, impact management, fundraising and safeguarding. Staff serving in all such areas will benefit from continuous professional development.

As opportunities arise to expand our programmes, new specialist skills will be brought in to support future new areas too.

## Priority 6.3 Leadership and Governance

Our leadership team and board of trustees are in the best shape they've ever been but that doesn't mean there's not more work to do. Role-related development will continue at pace as we strive to achieve the ECB Gold standard accreditation.





# DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

**Each of the objectives described will be fulfilled by achieving the various priorities associated with them.**

Operational delivery (action) plans for each of the six objectives will be drawn up by the relevant members of our senior management team.

These plans will unpack each of the priorities in terms of specific actions, deadlines, financial implications and performance measures (KPIs).

We will also ensure that all our service delivery priorities are aligned to an outcomes framework in order to measure and communicate our overall impact.

In this way the strategic plan can be reviewed and updated annually as part of our operational business planning cycle to assess the progress being made toward the fulfilment of the objectives.

# OUR VALUES



We are **INSPIRATIONAL**



We are a **FAMILY**



You have **FREEDOM to TRY**



We act with **INTEGRITY,  
TRUST & HONESTY**



We are **ACCOUNTABLE**

# We are INSPIRATIONAL

**to everyone we come in contact with**

We are here to inspire. Everywhere and everyone. Whether that's on a winter night in the indoor hall or on a summer's day at a cricket game. We are inspirational to everyone we meet, whether that's someone we speak to in passing or someone we work with on a regular basis. Our enthusiasm for the game, our work and our impact is contagious and it carries over - to the players we work with, to parents, to clubs and volunteers.

# You have FREEDOM to TRY

**It's better to fail than not try.**

You are supported to think outside the box. Whether you succeed or not. Never be afraid to try new things and be innovative. We operate with a mantra of support and encouragement and we truly believe that it's better to fail than not try. You are allowed to colour in outside the box. Our best successes come from bold ideas which we put to practice. You are working in a supportive team and whichever way it goes, we will always encourage you to have a go and walk a new path. Our charity needs ideas and innovation. Don't be afraid to get creative.

# ACCOUNTABILITY

**We take responsibility**

We ask all team members to take responsibility for their own programmes. We take individual ownership to contribute to the team purpose.

# We are a FAMILY

**Our game is our community and our team is like family to us**

Just like in cricket, we back each other up. On and off the field. Professionally and personally.

Our office is supportive and inclusive. We hear each other out and cheer each other on. Everyone has a place and a role on our team and we work together. We celebrate each other's successes at high times and support each other through the low times. We create a safe environment where everyone is respected and welcomed. Because our team is our home away from home.

# We act with INTEGRITY, TRUST & HONESTY

**These underpin everything we do.**

We trust each other to act with integrity, honesty and transparency in our roles. We benefit from flexibility and freedom because we employ integrity, trust and honesty every day.



DURHAM CRICKET  
**FOUNDATION**

**CONTACT US**

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