



Urban Programmes Report

2024/25



Introduction



2024/25 was one of the most successful years for Hampshire Cricket Board's urban programmes. This first-ever Urban Impact Report showcases the breadth and depth of our work across Southampton, Portsmouth, and Basingstoke, highlighting the efforts of young people, coaches, and programme leads to make cricket accessible to underserved communities.

Through the Wicketz (Lord's Taverners), Street (Chance to Shine), and MCC Foundation hubs, we delivered 23 free-to-access, weekly cricket sessions that welcomed young people of all genders, backgrounds, faiths, and cricketing experience. In total, 518 young people accessed

free cricket in their local area, supported by a passionate and growing team of community coaches.

Our calendar featured a wide range of events, including two major festivals. The Hampshire Tri-Series and Hawks Fest were a huge success and have become flagship celebrations of accessible cricket in the county.

Now seven years into urban cricket delivery, our 2025/26 plans include sustaining successful initiatives and launching new projects in Portsmouth and Basingstoke to further expand opportunities in cricket and have a larger impact on lives in Hampshire.



Sam Moss

Urban Cricket Development Manager, Hampshire Cricket Board



Why we do what we do

Cricket has long been perceived as an elitist sport, with traditional formats often inaccessible to many due to socio-economic barriers. These challenges persist in towns and cities across the country, and Hampshire is no exception, with several areas of multiple deprivation limiting access to the game.

Southampton

As Hampshire's largest city, Southampton faces significant challenges including employment, crime, and health-related deprivation. A major barrier is the lack of safe, appropriate indoor and outdoor spaces for cricket, resulting in no junior cricket clubs within city borders. The city has therefore required a novel, community-focused approach to address both social and cricket-related issues and provide meaningful opportunities for young people.

Portsmouth

In contrast, Portsmouth boasts well established cricket clubs, with effective junior sections producing players for their adult teams. However, Portsmouth is the most densely populated city in Europe, bringing similar social issues to Southampton and in particular, high rates of anti-social behaviour (ASB). When we launched 'urban' programmes in the city, we found there was a need to diversify the established clubs and a non-traditional entry into the game was employed through a range of sessions seeking to engage underserved communities.

Basingstoke

Basingstoke also faces unique challenges for access to safe and appropriate spaces to engage in sport, physical activity and positive diversionary activities, potentially leading to recorded high rates of violent crime and ASB. Surrounding the outskirts of the town, there are a strong number of cricket clubs offering comprehensive adult, junior and gender specific cricket opportunities. Much like Portsmouth, there is a need to diversify and challenge typical traditional views of the game and therefore, an extensive non-traditional offer has been successfully launched.



Urban Playing Pathway

We've worked hard to build free-to-access playing pathways for young people aged 8–19. Southampton's Wicketz and Portsmouth/Basingstoke's Street projects form the foundation of our urban cricket pyramid. To support talented state-educated cricketers, we've introduced tailored talent programmes that offer progression opportunities from grassroots to the professional game.

Wicketz & Street

Free, inclusive and accessible weekly cricket programmes for ages 8-19

MCC Foundation Hubs

Free training, coaching and match-play programme designed to bridge the gap between talented grassroots cricketers and county age-group squads.

Hampshire Hawks Academy

A unique, targeted programme designed in partnership with Hampshire Cricket, aiming to provide cricketers from inner-city areas with a clear path to professional cricket.

State-Jets

A supplementary performance programme delivered by Hampshire Cricket for county age-group cricketers who attend non-fee-paying schools.

Lords Taverners' Wicketz

Launched in 2018, Wicketz Southampton has grown from 3 to 10 weekly sessions, including mixed-gender, girls-only and hard-ball training and match opportunities. With no junior cricket clubs within city borders, Wicketz remains the sole provider of organised junior cricket in Southampton.

Innovation is central to Wicketz, with events in unique spaces, community celebrations, and targeted competitions. Led by Danielle Ransley and her coaching team, the programme continues to thrive.



2024-25 Achievements



251 Unique participants



309 Free Community sessions



11 themed life-skill workshops



10 Weekly Sessions



14 Cricket based events



5 Young Leaders

Wicketz Celebration Event – Case Study

Over the past few years, we have hosted a celebratory event over the holy month of Ramadan, bringing together local communities in Southampton. In 2025, over 150 members of the community gathered at St Mary's Leisure Centre to celebrate all of the brilliant work we do on the Wicketz programme.

The event begins with activities for juniors, before a selection of traditional dishes are shared as a fast-breaking meal together and those

who observe Ramadan can use prayer spaces for worship. Once meals are shared with friends, family and the community, activities begin once again for older players and adults.

This truly is an integral event for using cricket to bring people together and strengthen the relationship with have with diverse communities in Southampton.



Hamza – Case Study

Hamza joined Wicketz in 2019 after moving to Southampton from Pakistan. Then in Year 8, he struggled to settle into school and the community, often expressing frustration through conflict during sessions.

Attending up to three sessions a week, Hamza gradually became more self-aware and began showing interest in volunteering and supporting others. His leadership potential emerged through local and national Wicketz events, where he helped guide younger participants.

In spring 2023, Hamza completed a bespoke ECB Foundation Course through Southampton Wicketz, developing his coaching skills. Since then, he's become a key figure in the programme by coaching regularly, promoting Wicketz locally, and returning to national festivals as a coach.

Hamza is now set to further his development by enrolling in the ECB Core Coach course in November 2025.



“Wicketz didn’t just offer an opportunity to play cricket, it provided a safe, supportive, and engaging environment that offered lots of opportunities.

The support I received from Wicketz and the Hampshire Cricket Board has inspired a strong commitment to giving back to my community. This is why coaching is so important to me. I want to give back to Wicketz by inspiring young people with my journey from participant to coach and my aim is to keep them engaged with positive activities and off the streets.

I now see my future heading the way that I always wanted. My dream job is to work for Hampshire Cricket Board and provide important cricket opportunities”.

Hamza



Women's soft-ball in Southampton

In 2025, we launched a new women's cricket offer in central Southampton. Following a successful January event, sessions have grown steadily, offering fun, fitness, and friendship in familiar venues, delivered by an all-female coaching team.

Sessions are free-to-access, removing perceived barriers for women in the centre of the city to access sport and physical activity on their doorstep. Engagement is continuing to grow, with higher attendances, more female coaches and stronger relationships between peers and the wider community.



Chance to Shine Street

Since expanding into Portsmouth and Basingstoke, our Street programme has become well-established, offering seven weekly sessions year-round. These include under-12 soft-ball, under-16 tape-ball, and girls-only sessions.

2024-25 achievements - Portsmouth



155 Unique participants



4 Weekly Sessions



111 Free Community sessions



3 Young Leaders

2024-25 achievements - Basingstoke



111 Unique participants



3 Weekly Sessions



105 Free Community sessions



2 Young Leaders



Thanks to our partnership with VIVID Homes, we've measured the social value of these projects using anonymised postcode data and wellbeing scores—providing strong evidence of the positive impact of regular engagement.

**2024-25
Social value
estimation:
£621,612**



Girls Street Clubs - Case Study

This year has seen exceptional engagement across both girls-only Street sessions.

In Portsmouth, attendance began to rise in October 2024, growing from 10 regular participants to over 30 attending consistently in the lead-up to the festive period. Over the course of the year, a total of 62 girls were engaged through these sessions.

In Basingstoke, we launched a new girls-only session in October 2024. By spring, over 20 girls had participated, with more than

15 attending regularly. By the end of the academic year, the total number of girls engaged reached 28, with some sessions exceeding 20 attendees.

Together, these two programmes have engaged 90 girls, a figure significantly above the national average for equivalent Street sessions. These clubs have been a standout success in our delivery year, showcasing the growing interest and impact of girls' cricket in urban communities.

Glow in the Dark Cricket in Portsmouth – Case Study

Following the success of our glow in the dark event in Southampton for the Wicketz programme, we brought the experience to Portsmouth during the February half-term.

Partnering with Pompey in the Community, the event attracted 65 young people, offering a unique and exciting way to engage with cricket in a vibrant, inclusive setting.

The day was thoughtfully structured into three sessions for girls and boys, ensuring every group had a tailored and memorable experience, strengthening our engagement in the city.



MCCF Hub

The MCC Foundation (MCCF) hubs in Hampshire provide talented, state-educated cricketers with vital winter coaching to address the lack of cricket in many state secondary schools. While some schools offer more opportunities than others, many young people, especially from lower socio-economic backgrounds, must rely on external programmes, which are often limited or inaccessible.

In 2024–25, we proudly expanded the Southampton hub to include two age-group squads for both girls and boys for the first time. In Basingstoke, we progressed from one to two girls' squads, reflecting growing demand and success.

This was our most successful year to date, with high squad numbers, extended winter and summer programmes, and strong performances in competitive cricket. Notably, both U16 girls and boys squads in Southampton reached the quarter-finals of the national MCCF hub competition, showcasing the depth of talent emerging from our urban pathways.

Building on an incredible year, we're excited to announce that plans are underway to launch a county-wide MCC Foundation Hub programme in 2026. This initiative will provide more accessible, locally targeted opportunities for boys and girls across Southampton, Portsmouth, and Basingstoke, strengthening our commitment to inclusive cricket development and expanding the reach of our talent pathways.



116 Unique participants



6 Squads

3 Young Leaders



90 hours training and coaching



8 National Competition days



Anna has really enjoyed another year with the Basingstoke MCCF Hub. She has made some great friends, and has really enjoyed training with other girls who she has then played against in games and met at events.

She is also very grateful to the coaches who she really enjoys working with.

We are very grateful as it is great to see her progressing and becoming more confident, and this is very noticeable as she has moved up to not only play U16 but also for the women's team at Basingstoke Cricket Club

Jon Williams (Parent) Quote



Hampshire Urban Fixture Programme



Through additional funding from the Hampshire Cricket Foundation, we introduced a match-play programme for state-educated players, addressing the lack of accessible fixtures for those unable to join local clubs.

The Urban Fixture Programme delivered 17 additional matches between MCCF Hubs, Hawks Academy squads, and Wicketz teams leading to enhancing talent identification and building relationships across communities.

These fixtures provided valuable contact time, helping players develop independence, teamwork, and leadership, while having a positive impact on families involved.



116 Unique participants



111 Free Community sessions



8 National competition days

Hampshire Tri-Series

After two successful years of the Southampton Tri-Series featuring three U16 boys squads, 2025 saw the event expand county-wide, involving nine squads from state-school pathways across Hampshire.

In partnership with the Hampshire Cricket Foundation, Lord's Taverners, and the MCC Foundation, the Hampshire Tri-Series brought together hard-ball cricketers from MCCF Hubs, Southampton Wicketz, and Hawks Academies, including both boys and girls.

The event provided a friendly yet competitive platform for over 100 talented state-educated players to showcase their skills. It also fostered interaction between families from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, strengthening community ties through cricket.

This expansion has deepened the connection between urban programmes and county pathways, reinforcing how recreational cricket can link to professional opportunities.



Hawks Fest

The third edition of Hawks Fest celebrated how we make cricket accessible in Hampshire, engaging 141 players from urban programmes run in partnership with Lord's Taverners, Chance to Shine, and the MCC Foundation.

The festival featured four tailored competitions including senior and development hard-ball, tape-ball, and soft-ball, catering to players aged 7–20 from varied backgrounds.

Off-pitch, trusted partners like Sport in Mind, Solent Mind, and Pompey in the Community delivered workshops and activities focused on mental health, wellbeing, and fun. Programme partner Chase Cricket also shared insights into equipment and bat-making.

A shared lunch of pizza, traditional curries, and refreshments, generously provided by community members, created a moment of unity and celebration.



Hampshire professional players Kyle Abbott, Keith Barker and Daisy Mullen were in attendance to enjoy the action and add to the inspirational feel of the day.



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LORD'S TAVERNERS
Empowering young people through cricket



CHANCE TO SHINE
Inspiring young people through cricket



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