



**ncva**

Northumberland  
Community &  
Voluntary Action

In the community for the community

# Annual Report

April 2023-  
March 2024

*Influence*

**FUNDING**

*Advocacy*

**GOVERNANCE**

*Inclusion*

**VOLUNTEERING**

*Vision*

**EMPLOYMENT**

*Voice*


**NET  
WORKS**

# In the Community, for the community

Northumberland CVA, as an independent Local Infrastructure Organisation (LIO) and a proud member of our national body NAVCA, continues to stand as both a partner to public services and an advocate for Northumberland's charities and community groups. In supporting the County's voluntary and community sector, we recognise the importance of maintaining an independent voice, while also fostering effective partnerships to amplify our collective impact. Guided by NAVCA's 'Four Functions of Infrastructure'...

*Leadership and Advocacy, Partnerships and Collaboration, Volunteering, and Community Development*; NCVA is committed to strengthening local action and promoting active citizenship. We share NAVCA's vision of a thriving voluntary sector, grounded in social justice, that supports every community's potential for positive, transformative change.

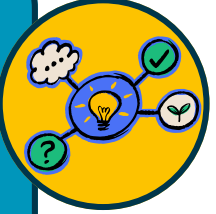
## Empowering through Volunteering



Volunteering lies at the core of our ethos, driving our mission to empower individuals and organisations alike. Through our online portal, we can link eager volunteers with opportunities, fostering a culture of giving back and community engagement.

By leveraging our extensive networks and community connections, we ensure that every volunteering interest finds its perfect match, amplifying the impact of collective goodwill.

## Community Development for Success



In the dynamic landscape of community development, success hinges on robust foundations. That's where Northumberland CVA excels, offering a suite of capacity-building support tailored to the diverse needs of our members and groups seeking our help.

From expert advice and training to governance clinics and organisational health checks, we equip voluntary groups and charities with the tools they need to thrive and adapt in an ever-evolving environment.

## Leadership, Partnerships and Collaboration



True progress is forged in partnership, and at Northumberland CVA, collaboration is our cornerstone. Through strategic alliances and community networks, we facilitate synergies that amplify impact and drive sustainable change.

Our innovative 'Sector Connector' initiative bridges the gap between the business sector and voluntary organisations, fostering mutual learning and catalysing social innovation.

## Social and Community Inclusion



Beyond our core mission, Northumberland CVA is committed to fostering inclusivity and belonging.

Our pioneering initiatives, such as: 'Digital Tea and IT' and Engage, provide vital lifelines to marginalised communities, empowering individuals to embrace the digital age and reconnect with their social fabric.

We offer pathways for those seeking to make a difference in their communities.

# Joe Jackson, Chair/ Caroline Rogan, CEO Write...

The past year has been both challenging and transformative for Northumberland CVA and the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector we support. We honour the legacy of our late Chair, Rodney James, who passed away during this reporting period. Rodney's leadership, vision, and unwavering dedication to the VCSE sector were instrumental in NCVA's growth and success. We are deeply grateful for his years of service, and his absence is felt by all who had the privilege of working with him. As we remember Rodney's many contributions, we are committed to carrying forward his vision for a thriving VCSE sector in Northumberland. Reflecting on our collective achievements, we also acknowledge the ongoing pressures shaping our work, and the resilience of our sector in continuing to overcome these challenges.

The Autumn Budget 2024 has brought a mix of opportunities and challenges for our communities. Increased investments in public services, such as the £1 billion Household Support Fund and commitments to social care and homelessness, provide vital relief. However, these measures are counterbalanced by reduced allocations for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and growing administrative complexities that strain organisations already navigating the pressures of rising operational costs and reduced donations amid the cost-of-living crisis. Despite these hurdles, the VCSE sector in Northumberland has demonstrated remarkable adaptability and innovation, ensuring support for residents in need.

At NCVA, our staff and volunteers have continued to collaborate tirelessly, ensuring our communities are safer and more resilient. Whether helping organisations access UKSPF funding, delivering holistic, person-centred projects like Solid Foundations, or leveraging partnerships to amplify the impact of the £1.5 million NIECP fund, our commitment to supporting both individuals and groups has never wavered. From addressing barriers to employment to promoting community-led initiatives, our team's dedication ensures that residents of Northumberland can access vital services and thrive in challenging times.

As we look ahead, NCVA remains steadfast in its mission to advocate for fair policies, champion sustainable funding, and empower communities. By continuing to foster collaboration and prioritise resilience, we aim to build a future where every resident has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a thriving, equitable society. We thank our members, partners, and supporters for their shared commitment to this vision and invite them to join us in shaping stronger, more connected communities.



**Joe Jackson**



**Caroline Rogan**

# FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE

At NCVA, our mission is to equip VCSE organisations with the tools they need to run effectively. Good governance is the cornerstone of our efforts. We ensure that groups have robust policies in place, and that trustees, staff, and volunteers possess the necessary skills and capabilities to perform their vital work. Access to funding and resources completes this foundation.

This year, our VCS Support Services responded to enquiries from 170 Northumberland organisations. Our support ranged from sharing model documents and policies, to providing technical guidance on setting up a charity, and signposting groups to funding opportunities or giving them feedback on their grant proposals.

Thanks to funding from Community Foundation Tyne and Wear/Northumberland, our popular 'Governance Clinics' enabled us to conduct comprehensive 'health checks' with thirty organisations and offer ongoing help in areas that needed improvement. We also carried out 'deep dives' with six charities, providing targeted support such as:

- Conducting a 'visioning' workshop with trustees to redefine their purpose and focus following the impact of COVID-19 and lockdowns.
- Developing a risk management framework to help a charity identify its priorities and allocate resources effectively.

Funding support remains at the heart of what we do. This year, we worked tirelessly to secure funding and investment for Northumberland organisations. In partnership with National Lottery Community Fund and Ballinger Charitable Trust, the 'Microgrants Fund' awarded grants to 75 community groups supporting children/ young people, and older people. Our reputation as a 'Trusted Partner' enabled us to efficiently administer these funds across the voluntary sector.

Our ever-popular Funding Fairs took us to both North and West Northumberland, where we organised and booked 320 face-to-face appointments between groups and some regional and national funding bodies. These Fairs are a testament to our commitment to providing accessible funding opportunities and fostering strong relationships within the sector.

Our expertise and skills are essential in providing this level of support. Our ability to cultivate trust and leverage our longstanding reputation ensures that we can meet the needs of the community effectively. Interpersonal skills are fundamental to our staff's ability to pass on knowledge to other charities and build strong, supportive networks.



# GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING

## A SNAPSHOT

- 1. GOVERNANCE CLINIC**  
Working in partnership with Community Foundation Tyne & Wear/ Northumberland to run Governance Health Checks to identify support needed
- 2. FUNDING FAIRS**  
Working together with 9 local and national funders to give the NCVA members and opportunity to discuss ideas directly with funders
- 3. NETWORKS, VOICE**  
Community and Engagement team networking on behalf of NCVA members to ensure their voices are heard
- 4. OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT**  
Being part of 8 large partnership events across Northumberland to engage and promote the work of Northumberland CVA
- 5. CAPACITY BUILDING**  
Promoting and supporting good governance for trustees, staff & volunteers. Offering training, support with funding bids, finding venues, linking with partners
- 6. NIECP COMMUNITIES & PLACE FUNDING SUPPORT**  
Working in partnership with Northumberland County Council and CVA Blyth Valley. Community information sharing, 1-1s to support access to funding
- 7. CLIMATE CHANGE**  
Awarded the Investors in Environment as part of the Going Green Together initiative led by Vonne
- 8. STARTING OUT**  
Professional guidance on setting up new charities and social enterprises. Sharing of template documents and supporting strategic development

## Governance and funding support



**170** GROUPS SUPPORTED



**536** HOURS OF SUPPORT

- Funding Support
- Social Enterprise
- Start up guidance
- Networking, Collaboration
- governance templates
- Strategic Development



## FUNDING FAIRS

TYNEDALE & BERWICK

**55** GROUPS



**9** top funders



**320** appointments



**53** hours of face-to-face advice directly with funders



# VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

At NCVA, we are dedicated to supporting charities and community groups in Northumberland, many of which rely on volunteers to deliver essential services. Through our online brokering service, we connect individuals with volunteering opportunities, ensuring organisations and employers can safely and effectively provide these roles. Volunteering transforms lives; whether economically inactive, unemployed, retired, or otherwise, it equips individuals with new skills, enhances mental health, builds social connections, and fosters a sense of purpose.

As part of the *North of Tyne Project*, we collaborate with North Tyneside VODA, Connected Voice, and Newcastle Volunteer Centre to establish the North East as a hub of volunteering excellence. Together, we promote a climate where volunteering flourishes, drawing on research to prioritise local needs and creating resources such as free online training and good practice guides for organisations.

Our **Supported Volunteering** Project ensures volunteering is accessible to everyone. Many in Northumberland face barriers such as communication challenges, social anxiety, and transport issues. In collaboration with a partnership of Local Infrastructure Organisations across Northumberland and the North of Tyne, we have continued to deliver this project, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Volunteering & Social Action led by the North East Combined Authority. The project provides tailored one-to-one support, often pairing individuals with Volunteer Buddies who guide them in their roles, building confidence, stability, and overall well-being.

The **Simply Connect** platform is vital in showcasing diverse volunteering opportunities. Our Volunteer Coordinator has worked with organisations to upload and promote roles while offering tailored support such as:

- Organisational Health Checks: Identifying gaps and creating action plans to enhance services for volunteers and organisations alike.
- Training and Support: Developing resources to ensure best practices and sustainable volunteer engagement.

Through partnerships with businesses and the VCSE sector, NCVA drives innovation and collaboration, enriching communities and enabling volunteering to thrive. **Sector Connector**, our flagship initiative, fosters meaningful collaboration between businesses and voluntary organisations in Northumberland, creating mutual benefits through shared skills and resources. We connect businesses eager to make a positive impact with charities and community groups in need of support, offering in-kind assistance from local experts to strengthen voluntary and community organisations.

For businesses, Sector Connector helps deliver Corporate Social Responsibility strategies and facilitates engagement with Northumberland communities, aligning with the Social Responsibility strand of the Good Work Pledge for the North of Tyne. For voluntary and community organisations, it provides access to free or reduced-cost training, skills, and professional advice while creating opportunities to recruit new volunteers and trustees. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected Northumberland—one partnership at a time.



# SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING

*In 5 months...*

**20**

VOLUNTEERS SIGNED UP

**255**

HOURS OF ENGAGEMENT



Volunteering at Koast Radio

*“You did help, if it was not for you, I would not be at the radio station - you remind me to coordinate things between me and Koast radio, you make me feel welcome - I appreciate your support”*



Funded by UK Government

NE North East Combined Authority

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POWERED BY LEVELLING UP

SECTOR CONNECTOR  
Helping businesses make a difference in their local communities



# VC CONNECT 2023-2024

*On VC Connect, the total number of live voluntary organisations was...*

**1054**



ncva Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action in the community for the community

# NORTHUMBERLAND 50+ DIGITAL AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

The **Engage Project**, launched by NCVA and funded through the Community Foundation on behalf of the Kellett Fund, focuses on improving the quality of life for Northumberland residents aged 50 and over. The project's core aim is to combat social isolation, promote community engagement, and enhance mental and physical well-being by providing access to a variety of creative, physical, and educational activities.

Through a partnership with Northumberland County of Sanctuary, art and creativity sessions provide a welcoming space for participants to express themselves. These sessions, designed to build confidence and reduce anxiety, offer a positive outlet for self-expression through painting, drawing, and crafting. Additionally, the *smartphone photography course*, led by volunteer Richard Alderton, allows participants to explore their local community through photography. This project culminates in exhibitions at local venues and promotes inclusivity by inviting refugees and asylum seekers to share their stories through art. Community integration and heritage exploration are also key elements of the project. In collaboration with our local historian, participants have learned about Northumberland's rich history, which helps both locals and displaced individuals connect with the area's cultural heritage.

The Engage Project also promotes social cohesion through innovative media projects. The launch of *'Refugee Radio'*, a weekly show that uses music to break cultural and linguistic barriers, and the creation of an inclusion-themed film highlight the power of media and the arts in uniting diverse communities. These initiatives are central to the project's goal of using creative expression to promote belonging and integration.

The **Tea & IT Project** is part of NCVA's broader digital inclusion programme, which aims to equip older adults in Northumberland with the digital skills necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The project is especially important given the growing reliance on technology for accessing essential services, staying connected with loved ones, and engaging with the wider community. Funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund led by Northumberland Inclusive Economy Community Partnership.

The Tea & IT sessions providing tailored support in basic computer skills, internet browsing, and digital safety. These sessions are designed to help participants engage with technology and navigate the digital world with confidence. To ensure accessibility, community-based learning takes place across Northumberland, including venues in Ashington, Stakeford and Haltwhistle, which is particularly beneficial for rural participants. One of the highlights of the program is the Digital Party, an interactive event where participants can engage with fun activities like VR headsets and AI tools whilst learning about digital safety in an enjoyable and hands-on way. Additionally, Volunteer Digital Champions play a crucial role by offering one-on-one support to participants, helping them overcome technological barriers and build confidence in using digital tools.

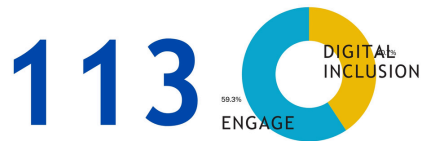
Both the **Engage** and **Tea & IT** Projects have contributed significantly to building stronger, more connected communities. They have reduced isolation, promoted independence, and created opportunities for growth and inclusion across Northumberland. These initiatives continue to empower individuals, fostering a more inclusive and digitally connected community for all.



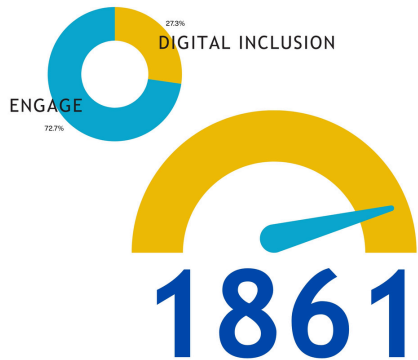
**NORTHUMBERLAND**  
**50+**  
2023-2024



**PARTICIPANTS**



**ENGAGEMENT HOURS**



**Northumberland**  
**50 plus projects**  
2023-2024

Digital Inclusion



Photography CLUB



Tree Planting

BOXING for health Wellbeing WORKSHOPS

buddies Linking providers

STEERING GROUP



# EMPLOYMENT

## Supporting Individuals - Transforming Communities

As a key project partner, NCVA is dedicated to delivering transformative support for individuals facing complex challenges and multiple barriers. Our experienced and qualified Key Workers provide person-centred, needs-led assistance, tailored to economically inactive individuals. By addressing financial and social obstacles, we ensure participants can access the help they need, cultivating progress towards positive outcomes.

Key Workers operate flexibly across Northumberland, delivering one-to-one support directly in local communities. This hands-on approach builds strong rapport with participants, offering intensive, wrap-around care that stabilises their foundations and empowers them to achieve lasting improvements in their circumstances. Since 1995, NCVA has championed volunteering and voluntary organisations while improving employment prospects for people in Northumberland. Our award-winning programmes have supported over 6,000 individuals, helping them build skills, navigate new technologies, and engage effectively with the labour market.

Drawing on nearly three decades of expertise, NCVA provides holistic, client-centred services that prioritise well-being, self-esteem, and confidence. We also specialise in volunteering opportunities, digital inclusion, and initiatives to overcome social isolation and promote community identity. These efforts contribute to the enduring development of individuals, empowering them to navigate their personal and professional journeys with resilience.

## Solid Foundations - A Partnership for Change

Funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and led by the North East Combined Authority, the Solid Foundations project unites six VCSE organisations across Northumberland in a shared mission to support out-of-work residents. This collaborative initiative helps individuals overcome barriers, develop essential life skills, and achieve meaningful progress, reflecting the strength of partnership in creating lasting community impact.

With its proven track record in employability services, NCVA plays a key role in delivering tailored, one-to-one support that is client-centred and transformative. Our Key Workers act as dedicated points of contact, crafting personalised action plans to address each participant's unique challenges and aspirations. By meeting immediate needs—such as access to food, financial aid, and health services—and cultivating long-term development, NCVA empowers participants to build confidence, acquire skills, and engage meaningfully in their communities.

Through collaboration with a diverse network of partners (For example, mental health providers, addiction recovery programs, and housing services) NCVA ensures there is an integrated, holistic support system. This partnership-driven approach not only reduces barriers to employment and social inclusion but also enhances participants' overall well-being, enabling sustained progress in education, volunteering, and employment opportunities. Together, the Solid Foundations project and its partners create stronger, more resilient communities across Northumberland.

## KEY WORKERS

SOLID FOUNDATION 23/24

### REFERRALS

# 297

Referrals between July 2023 and April 2024 to our three KEY WORKERS



### 100%

### ACTIVATION



of referrals had an assessment and support with their journey regardless whether or not they met the project criteria

### PROJECT WORK

# 155

registered on to the programme and received on average six months of support dependent on individuals needs



### PROGRESSION

# 250

progression referrals to partner organisations to ensure smooth transition for further support

### WHAT THEY SAID...

'So much more confidence'

'Couldn't have done it without you!'

'I can't believe I've come this far!'

'Thank YOU'



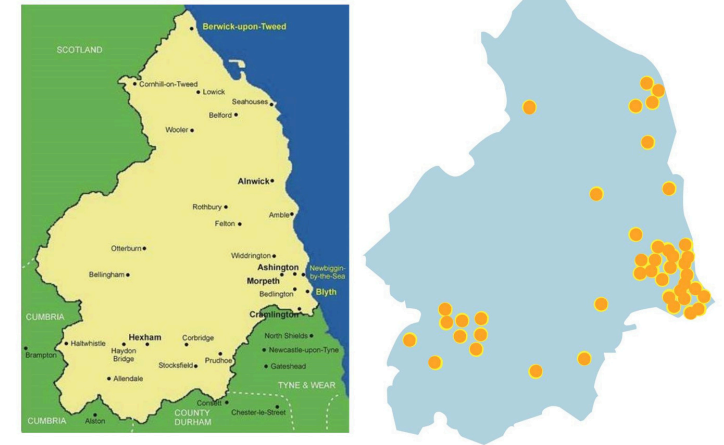
*"My advice to anyone who finds themselves in the position that I was in is not to give up, stay strong try to keep your head up. There is positive help there with brilliant caring people and if you are willing, you can achieve your goals."*

*"I am forever thankful to Northumberland CVA and everyone else who has gone over and above to help me along a rocky road, but I now see light ahead again."*



**Solid Foundations**  
Create the future you want

### Geographical spread of beneficiaries



### Supporting Blyth Rotary Club's Xmas hamper packing December 2023



# NETWORKS, ADVOCACY AND VOICE

In September 2023, NCVA hosted its second annual health conference, responding to growing demand after the previous year's success. With 68 delegates from the community and voluntary sector, Northumberland County Council, and the NHS, the event offered a vital opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing.

Keynote speaker Levi Buckley, Executive Area Director of the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), explored partnership working with the VCSE sector. Northumberland County Council presented their innovative Communities Together approach, highlighting the importance of public health and community collaboration. Workshops led by NCVA encouraged dynamic participation:

- Speed Networking helped delegates forge connections and share information.
- A SWOT Analysis identified critical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats across the sector, including funding challenges, staff well-being, and partnerships.
- The '15% Solutions' model inspired participants to identify small, actionable changes to drive progress.

The conference set a new direction for future events, emphasising showcasing the VCSE sector, its challenges, and opportunities for inspiration and collaboration with decision-makers. Additionally, the need for Deaf Interpreters in Health and Social Care was raised. This issue was taken to the NCC VCS Liaison Committee.

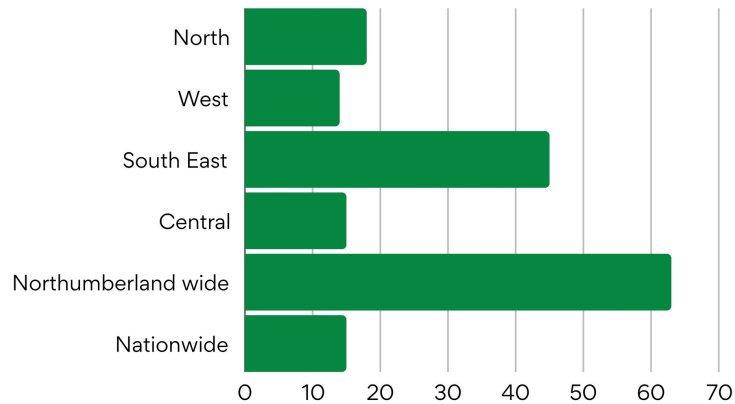
NCVA's networks are essential to supporting Northumberland's community and voluntary sector, encouraging collaboration, and amplifying voices:

- Northumberland Employability Network: A partnership with Northumberland County Council focused on improving skills and job prospects while addressing intersecting issues like housing, mental health, and transport. The network empowers organisations to share knowledge and build connections. Six focus groups were created to concentrate on particular issues and gaps in provision.
- VCFSE Health and Wellbeing Network: Bringing together community and statutory groups to exchange information, best practices, and innovative ideas that strengthen health and well-being services.
- South East Northumberland Network: Focused on addressing shared challenges like transport and social deprivation in the County's most densely populated areas, providing opportunities for collaboration and shared solutions.
- Northumberland VCSE Voice: Providing a secure platform for members to voice opinions, set agendas, and collaboratively resolve issues while leveraging collective expertise and lived experiences.
- Food Network: Enhancing food provision by reducing waste, improving distribution, and creating efficient referral pathways in collaboration with partners.



## Health & Wellbeing Membership April 2024

(Northumberland geographical coverage)



## SWOT Analysis

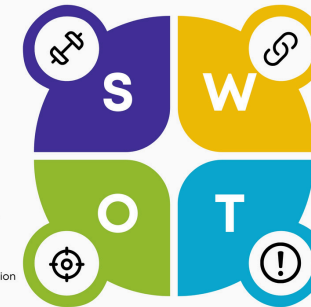
Feedback from the Health & Wellbeing conference  
September 2023

### Strengths

- Peoples knowledge & expertise
- Clear ethos and passion, lived experience
- Diversity of sector
- Appetite for change
- Countywide reach

### Opportunities

- Real partnership working
- Increase & diversity of volunteers
- Drive & embrace change
- Increased ABCD
- Increase offer through collaboration
- Increased positive collaboration



### Weaknesses

- Core funding
- Staff capacity
- Sustainability
- Statutory perception of Charities
- Acronyms

### Threats

- Duplication of services across sector
- External factors / change in policies
- Perception of diverse communities
- Mental health crisis
- Staff burnout
- Funding & sustainability



## Delivery and engagement

- Network members increased from 40 to 225
- 7 network meetings, both online and in person, including 6 LMI updates, 16 presentations, 5 discussion topics. Attendance = 320
- 3 online Training Provider Showcase events. Attendance = 166
- Online meetings recorded; link shared in Minutes for absent members to view
- Introduced goggle mail group for all members to share information and collaborate. 641 items shared including provision, job vacancies, courses, volunteering opportunities, workshops and events
- MS Teams platform created to collate shared information
- Directory of employability provision shared
- Focus Groups introduced at in person meetings

# ENGAGEMENT, MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS

## Tea & IT

Need help to get online?  
Don't have a machine?



Get to grips with basic IT skills and learn to use the internet with CONFIDENCE

- Introduction to computers, internet and emails
- Social Media
- Price comparison websites and online shopping
- Latest online tools and technologies
- Staying safe online
- 6 month loan of a Samsung Galaxy tablet

1-1 sessions for beginners and those who want to brush up on their digital skills

Starting February 6th, from 10am, Room 5, Haltwhistle Library

Express your interest now

Call Rob Gillie on 01670 858 688  
or email [rob.gillie@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:rob.gillie@northumberlandcva.org.uk)  
Haltwhistle Partnership on 01434 321242  
or email [admin@haltwhistle.org](mailto:admin@haltwhistle.org)





Northumberland CVA  
Charity Number: 119404  
Registered Company No: 6900151  
Registered in England



Haltwhistle Partnership Ltd in association with Northumberland CVA  
Registered Company Number: 03324145 Charity Number: 1062486

## ENGAGE Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action



### ENGAGE Activity Boxing


## knit & natter




NCVA Northumberland Community and Voluntary Action  
107 & 109 Station Rd., Ashington NE63 8RS  
01670 858688

Starting Thursday 18th January  
1pm-3pm

 **ncva** | Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action  
In the community for the community



## Voluntary Sector Voice and Advocacy



@NorthumberlandCVA  
NCVA Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action

## VOLUNTEER!



### 2024 - New Year, New Me

Embrace the fresh start in the New Year by discovering the joy of volunteering - where every act of kindness not only transforms others' lives but also shapes the new you

 **ncva** Contact us at - 01670 858688

## SECTOR CONNECTOR

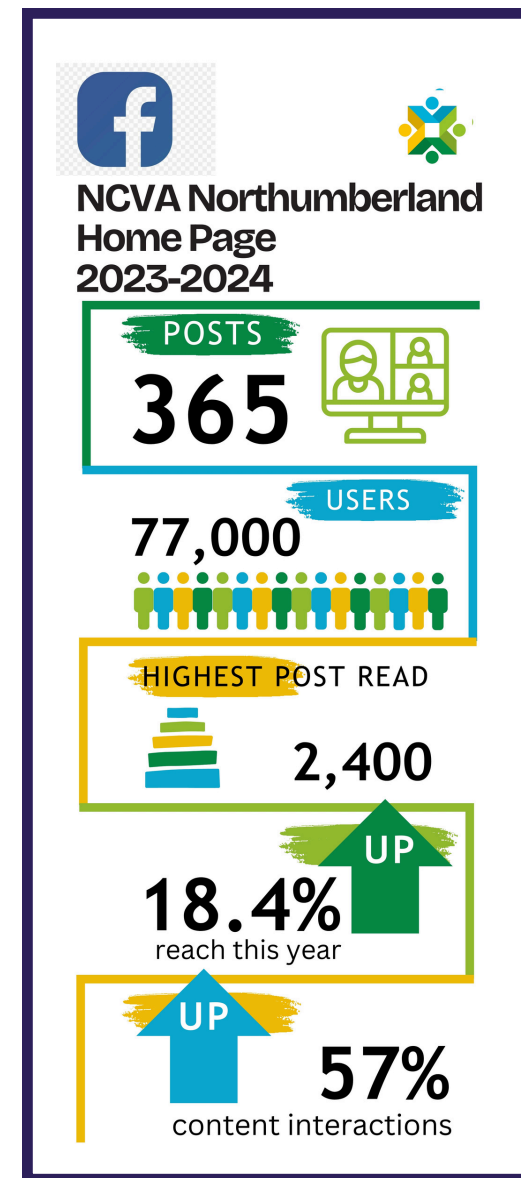
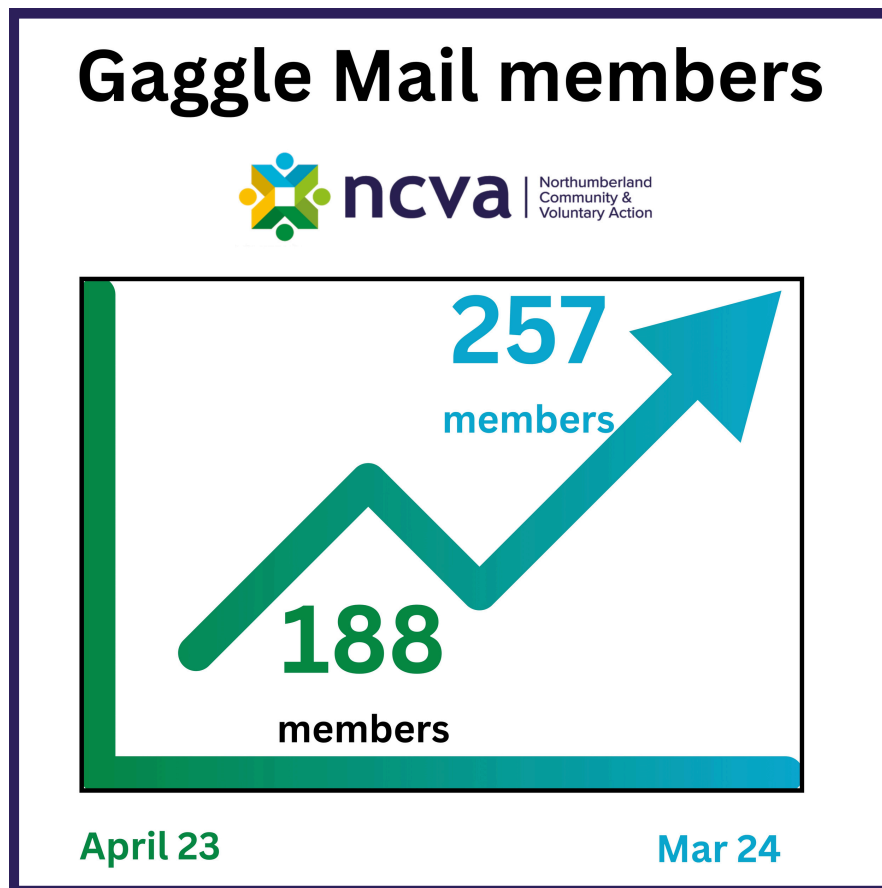
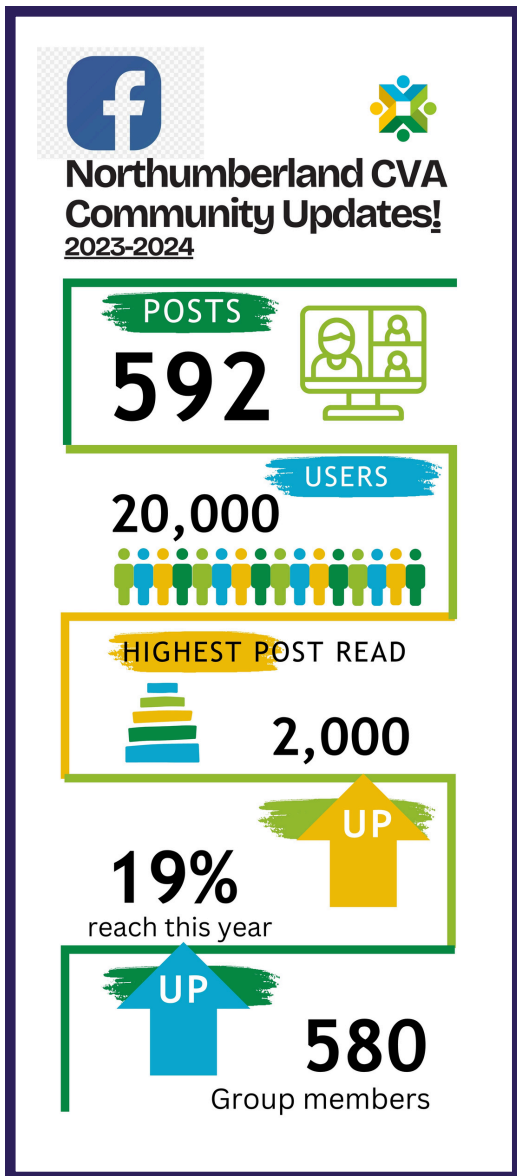
Helping businesses make a difference in their local communities

# TRAINING NEWS!



 **ncva** | Northumberland Community & Voluntary Action

# ENGAGEMENT, MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS



# WIDER SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NORTHUMBERLAND VCSE

## **Our Support in Action**

NCVA provides expert advice on charity registration, funding applications, social enterprise start-ups, and governance frameworks. Notable examples include assisting with Awards for All Lottery applications, connecting organisations for collaborative projects, and offering strategic planning sessions for trustees. Our practical services, such as payroll and administrative support, help organisations focus on their core missions, while the free jobs board enhances workforce capacity.

## **Building Skills and Resources**

NCVA supports organisations in upskilling teams and strengthening governance. The Governance Clinic, funded by the Community Foundation, delivered health checks for 30 organisations, identifying key areas such as safeguarding, financial controls, and policy updates. Tailored strategic support was provided to six charities, helping them achieve their visions and sustainability goals. Our training programmes, including the 'Elements Training' portal and 'Flick Learning' portal to address capacity challenges, while practical services such as payroll, administrative support, and a free jobs board allow organisations to focus on their core missions.

## **Advocacy, Partnerships, and Engagement**

NCVA advocates for the VCSE sector at local, regional, and national levels, participating in networks such as the VCSE Leadership Board and Northumberland Inclusive Economy Partnerships. We promote collaboration by attending and hosting community events, including the Town and Parish Council Conference and VONNE/ Northern Powergrid Community Roundtable.

## **Supporting the Northumberland VCSE with Funding**

Additionally, NCVA supported the Northumberland Inclusive Economy and Community Partnership (NIECP) in awarding £1.5 million in funding to the Northumberland VCSE sector. We helped raise awareness of the funding opportunities, supported organisations in accessing the funds, and provided assistance with expressions of interest and full application submissions.

## **Sustainability and Innovation**

NCVA is committed to sustainability, earning "Investors in Environment" accreditation as part of the Going Green Together initiative. We also supported the Climate Change agenda by attending VONNE's 'Big Green Week' conference in Sunderland and integrating environmental action into our practices.

# WIDER SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NORTHUMBERLAND VCSE

## Direct financial support for our NCVA members

2023-2024

### PAYROLL SERVICES

**7** CLIENTS

TOTAL HOURS **84**

### ACCOUNTANCY

**11** CHARITY ORGANISATIONS

**1,628** TOTAL HOURS

*“Everyone is warm and friendly and compassionate about the clients we see at your office, this makes it much easier to for our clients to continue engaging.”*

*“NCVA have been brilliant and manage our wages, HMRC and staff pensions. We couldn’t do it without you.”*

## MEETING ROOMS

2023-2024



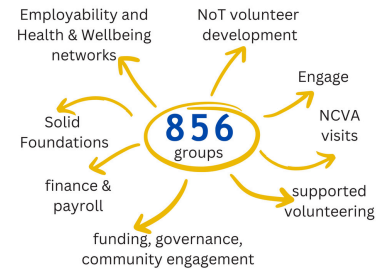
**8** ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTED

**= 133** TOTAL HOURS



## Global Numbers of Engagement with Northumberland CVA

2023-2024



**2337** INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE ENGAGED

*“Thank you for sharing the course information, we had little interest from potential clients and few links with the local community, now we have booked your community space, have a waiting list and are linked in with everyone we need to be.”*

*“Great space, welcoming staff, best space we have booked for this course!”*

## CONFERENCE ROOM

2023-2024



**166** HOURS CHARGED

**477** CHARITY HOURS

**= 643**

TOTAL BOOKED HOURS





# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

NCVA will continue to provide impactful projects such as Engage, Tea & IT, and Supported Volunteering. These initiatives reduce social isolation, cultivate community integration, and create meaningful opportunities for residents. Our employability services, which combine expertise with empathy, will remain a cornerstone of our work, helping individuals overcome barriers to work and develop life-changing skills. Key Workers will continue to play a pivotal role in the Solid Foundations partnership, providing tailored, holistic support to those facing challenges. Additionally, our Support to Volunteer Coordinator will enhance opportunities through volunteer and buddy training, health checks, and connecting individuals with potential employers via the Volunteering and Social Action Coalition.

Practical support for our members will remain at the heart of what we do. From governance, strategy, and capacity-building guidance to financial and payroll services, printing, and access to warm, welcoming spaces, NCVA is here to help organisations run effectively and sustainably. We will continue to assist local communities in accessing funding through collaborations with groups such as Nadara Sisters and the North Steads Community Wind Farm. We are also dedicated to providing exhibit and display space for our members and ensuring enquiries are directed to the appropriate services through our extensive networks and platforms.

Our future efforts will include exploring innovative ways to engage and communicate with our members. By strengthening the flow of critical information and resources, we aim to help organisations operate legally and effectively while recognising the limited time and capacity of VCSE leaders. Through our Simply Connect Northumberland platform, we will continue to enable individuals to discover self-help groups, advice services, support organisations, and opportunities for leisure and social activities. This valuable database connects people with hundreds of local community organisations, enhancing participation and inclusion across Northumberland.

Collaborations will remain central to amplifying our collective impact. Partnerships with Integrated Care Systems, local authorities, the LA7 Local Infrastructure Organisations, the North East Combined Authority, the VCSE Leadership Board, and other local, regional, and national organisations will be critical in delivering shared goals. These alliances ensure that NCVA continues to represent and amplify the voices of our members while championing the importance of the VCSE sector in strategic planning and delivery.

Looking forward, we remain committed to supporting residents and communities across Northumberland. We will advocate for fair funding practices, multi-year agreements, and strategic policies that recognise the immense contribution of VCSE organisations. By continuing to adapt and innovate, NCVA will not only sustain its services but enhance its role as a trusted and effective infrastructure organisation.

Together, with the dedication of our team and the strength of our partnerships, we will continue to build safer, more resilient communities and a brighter future for Northumberland.

# CASE STUDY: David's Journey, as told by Tony MacDonald

David was referred to NCVA at the beginning of December 2023 via a social prescribing team and through the Solid Foundations project. A highly skilled and qualified professional, David had spent years managing dental clinics and laboratories in both the UK and Canada, focusing on business development within dentistry. However, upon returning to the UK, David found himself unemployed, without a sense of purpose, and struggling with declining mental health and wellbeing. As his Key Worker, I introduced myself during an initial phone call to acknowledge his referral. I explained that participation in the project was entirely voluntary and that sessions would proceed at his pace. To ensure David felt at ease, I suggested he select a local café for our first meeting—a location where he could feel comfortable and relaxed while discussing his situation.

## **Initial Meeting and Assessment**

During our initial meeting, it became clear that David was an intelligent and highly employable individual with a wealth of skills. However, the loss of his job had left him feeling directionless and uncertain about his future. I listened carefully as David shared his story. I gently suggested that he might be focusing more on what he didn't want in life rather than what he did want. We discussed how shifting his perspective could help him achieve more positive outcomes. David was receptive to this idea, and together we developed an action plan that included referrals to counselling services and one-to-one coaching sessions with me.

## **Progress and Support**

David engaged wholeheartedly with his counselling, and his mood and overall presentation began to improve. During our own one-to-one sessions we explored the tools and techniques he had used before and considered how he could apply these strategies to his current situation. David was an eager learner who worked diligently to address the root causes of his challenges. I introduced him to various techniques, such as reframing problems, considering others' perspectives, and assessing what control, if any, he had over a given situation. We also focused on articulating his vision for an ideal life. By writing down his aspirations and tapping into the power of his subconscious mind, David began to build a clear and positive roadmap for his future.

## **Achievements**

With continued support, David has made remarkable progress. He has completed his counselling, improved his wellbeing, and is now exploring business opportunities. He is cultivating supportive relationships with those around him. David's story highlights the transformative impact that the right support in the right environment can have.

***“It is crucial that NCVA and other voluntary organisations continue to receive the funding necessary to sustain their invaluable work.”***

# CASE STUDY: Ian's Story and the impact of ENGAGE

*"Immediately after meeting Jules Fox, back in early February I felt extremely encouraged, and reassured that the Engage 50+ programme would be ideal for me. Although I've continually worked since 1989, I have experienced significant barriers connected to finding therapeutic social activities.*

*Jules supported me to attend Yoga, which is significantly boosted my confidence and kick-started thoughts that I could really grow and look to helping others.*

*Jules and I have also enjoyed two badminton sessions at [not sure] leisure centres. By now, I was so grateful to be involved in so many new and exciting activities.*

*Jules invited me to join a photography group. I loved meeting the new participants. We enjoyed a lovely walk through the woods, a stroll around Morpeth, with stop offs for photographs of the River Wansbeck, Emily Davison's statue, and a fantastic visit to an antiques emporium, where Richard, our resident expert extraordinaire camera expert, brought a beautiful Edwardian wooden camera; to add to his superb collection. All our photographs were studied and enhanced to their best resolution, by Richard, and then this formed part of a stunning exhibition at NCVA offices. This gave us all so much to talk about and was life affirming, and we all felt part of something so special.*

*We all had a tremendous visit to the Baltic Museum in Newcastle, where we witnessed a photography exhibition prior to public release. We also watched the Millennium Bridge open and close, and were thrilled to see all the beautiful paintings at The Hancock/ Great North Museum.*

*Jules continually worked to provide me and our group with wonderful opportunities to experience new and exciting situations. We were lucky to visit Newbiggin Arts Centre and share our collection of art with the local artists in attendance. Our tour of Newbiggin RNLi Station was brilliant.*

*Since meeting Jules, my confidence has grown significantly, and I have started volunteering in faith groups. The NHS, Alnwick Playhouse Theatre, and I have completed training and gained qualifications to become an 'Engage Buddy'. I am sincerely grateful to Jules, she has inspired me"*





# THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS...

- Community Foundation Tyne and Wear & Northumberland
- Guy Readman Endowment Fund
- North of Tyne Combined Authority
- Northumberland County Council
- The Ballinger Charitable Trust
- The Good Things Foundation
- Sir James Knott Trust
- The Kellett Fund
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund
- Vodafone Foundation



# NCVA TRUSTEES AND STAFF TEAM

Joe Jackson – Chair of Trustees

Colin Nevin – Vice Chair of Trustees

Sue Ashmore – Trustee Secretary

Mary Hindmarsh – Trustee Treasurer

John Howarth - Trustee

## Our staff team

Chief Executive

- Caroline Rogan

NCVA Finance

- Helen Griffiths – Finance Officer

NCVA Community Action Team

- Julie Cordon – Volunteer Development Manager
- Martin Conway – Community Engagement Officer
- Poppy Coles – Supported Volunteering Project Coordinator
- Julie Fox – Engage Project Coordinator
- Lyn Horton – Community Engagement Officer
- Zoe Watmore - Digital Inclusion Officer

NCVA Community Employability Team

- Angela Irving – Key Worker
- Dave Gravell – Key Worker
- Tony MacDonald – Key Worker

NCVA Health & Wellbeing Team

- Gillian Reed – Solution Focused Hypnotherapist
- Jane Davison – Clean & Safe Environment

NCVA Volunteering Team

- Nathan Miller – Communications
- Richard Alderson – Community Photographer
- Carol Moore – Reception
- Josephine Waters – Reception
- Lee Avery- Volunteer Social Media
- Louis Gaultier- Volunteer Social Media

***“...Our role is to work with economically inactive clients/ patients, trying to help them move forward particularly around employment and training. When speaking to these people we often look at the help and support provided by the Key Workers at NCVA who are part of the Solid Foundations project....the majority of people referred to ourselves have some form of mental health issue. We have received fantastic feedback from people accessing the support and as a result we ‘champion’ this service regularly in our conversations with the client but also with our own partner organisations too. We have also created great working links with the ‘Key Workers’ and we are all working together for the benefit of the person who has been referred in. Long may this continue.”***

Jason Brown, Patient Advisory Support Adviser  
Department for Work and Pensions, Work and Health Services Directorate

***“Thank you so much for putting the client forward for this... it’s the most positive thing that’s come up for a while.”***

Referral agency to Solid Foundations

***“Gardens are my calm place, and I feel peaceful when I come here and feed the birds”***

Volunteer

***“Just to reflect, I’d like you to know I found our initial meeting really helpful to identify gaps in my knowledge and I’d really recommend this process to other organisations.***

***The tone, content and format were helpful, constructive and easy to follow.”***

Participant, organisational ‘health check’

***“I first met Poppy when she visited Andrew’s church community to showcase their activities. We arranged an interview and talked about volunteering. Poppy helped me meet other people. So I chose volunteering to benefit myself and the community which makes me happy.”***

Rikar, Volunteer Walk Leader

***“Thank you to all of your organisation for yesterday’s funding fair.***

***I really enjoyed it and found it very helpful.”***

Participant at Funding Fair

***“I’m actually an art psychotherapist by profession- though almost completely retired now- so know how important creative expression is for mental well being. And I think for our asylum seekers, who have left so much of themselves at home, to be able to have their creative potential recognised and celebrated is a really valuable validation of their identity. Thank you both so much.”***

Northumberland County of Sanctuary

***“Just so you know I was praising you today as you have done more for me in the last couple of days that anyone has in the seven months of being here so thank you so much and I really appreciate it.”***

Participant, Solid Foundations

# 5 Reasons to join Northumberland CVA

**We exist to enable the voluntary and community sector in Northumberland to develop and succeed.**

**We work to grow the voice, influence and reach of the VCSE  
'Born in the 1980s, thriving in the 2020s!'**

## Advice

Get access to advice and expertise for your charity, community group or club

## Information

Northumberland CVA can keep you up to date on all the latest voluntary sector news

## Voice

Become part of a larger independent group to amplify the views of the voluntary sector

## Networks

Link up with other like minded groups and organisations to share ideas and work together

## People

Supporting your trustees, staff and volunteers to be the best they can

Northumberland Community  
& Voluntary Action  
107 & 109 Station Road  
Ashington, Northumberland. NE63 8RS  
E: [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk)  
T: 01670 858 688  
Facebook:  
@NCVA Northumberland Community  
& Voluntary Action  
Registered Charity Number: 1119404  
Company Number: 5980151