



Media release

For immediate release.

09 December 2016

Achievements of North East youngsters celebrated at annual awards night

Inspirational young people from across the North East were celebrated for their positive work in the community at an awards ceremony in Gateshead last night.

The PoSBO (Positive Social Behaviour Order) Awards, now in their seventh year, celebrate and recognise the hard work and outstanding achievements made by North East youngsters.

The awards, which took place at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead on Thursday 8 December, are hosted annually by Youth Focus: North East, a charity that works across the region to improve the lives of young people.

The awards aim to challenge and change negative perceptions and stereotypes of young people, with the event entirely organised by a group of young volunteers, formerly involved in the Truth about Youth programme.

The GameCon project in Hartlepool picked up the prestigious **Best Youth Project Award**. The group, all students at Hartlepool College, ran a three-day, town-wide games convention in to raise money for a local youth charity in Hartlepool. The students used video games both past and present as a medium to engage traditionally hard to reach male students.

21-year-old Paul Cozens, from Northumberland, won the **Young Volunteer Award (sponsored by Gateshead Rotary Club)** for his work with Silx Teen Bar.

Other awards handed out on the night included:

- **Intergenerational Award** – Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project from Durham
- **Positive Action Award** – Youthwise from Newcastle upon Tyne
- **Young Carer Award** – Robert Oughton from Gateshead
- **Young Employee Award** – Lindsay Maudling working in Newcastle and across the region
- **Digital Youth Award** – Toilets, Tabs and Tantrums from North Tyneside
- **The Jodie Wilkinson Inspirational Award** – Tom Charlton from Gateshead

Over 130 guests attended the awards ceremony, which featured performances from singer Georgia Addison, Magician Robert Reed, and musical ensemble Off The Beat.

Seven years of PoSBOs

- HALF CENTURY: 50 PoSBOs have been awarded since the PoSBOs 2010
- TON UP: Just over 1,000 guests have attended PoSBO awards ceremonies
- CO-OPERATIVE: Funded for the first five years through the Co-operative Foundation's Truth About Youth programme
- ROOM WITH A VIEW: The PoSBOs have taken place at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead the last three years, previously held at the Centre for Life, Newcastle

Jamie Mercer from Youth Focus: North East who led the young people's PoSBO planning group says: "It has been an absolute honour and a privilege to work with the PoSBO Steering Group this year. Historically, young people get a lot of negative publicity so it's fantastic to be able to recognise, celebrate, and reward the hard work of young people who are striving to make our region a better place, not just for themselves but for everyone who calls the North East home."

Rachel Blair, 22, from the PoSBO Steering Group says: "Another year of the PoSBOs is over and we would like to thank everyone who attended the night. A big thanks to the Key, Rotary Club of Newcastle upon Tyne West, and Northern TUC for sponsoring and presenting awards on the night. Thanks to BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art for a fantastic venue. Finally, congratulations to all of our winners and shortlisted nominees."

Established over 25 years ago, Youth Focus: North East is an award-winning charity that delivers a number of regional programmes encompassing youth employment, mental and physical health, wellbeing, politics, education and the arts, and intergenerational work.

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Media enquiries:

Contact Jamie Mercer, Regional Development Officer, on tel: 0191 477 9966 or email: jamie@youthfocusne.org.uk

If Jamie is not available, direct enquiries to Caroline Garrity, Office Manager, on tel: 0191 477 9966 or email: caroline@youthfocusne.org.uk

Youth Focus: North East, Suite 6, New Century House, West Street, Gateshead, NE8 1HR
Find us at: [Twitter.com/YouthFocusNE](https://twitter.com/YouthFocusNE) or facebook.com/YouthFocusNE.

Notes to editors:

About Youth Focus: North East

Established in 1989, Youth Focus: North East (formerly Regional Youth Work Unit – North East) is a regional hub connecting young people and the organisations and professionals who support them.

Progressive and dynamic, our award-winning organisation is rooted in the values of youth work. We support a network of over 1,500 organisations and individuals concerned with improving the lives of young people. Supporting the development of quality services – we want young people to have the best from the organisations they access and the professionals who work with them.

We see the potential, not the problems, in young people. We develop responses and demonstration projects that attempt to address big issues in young people's lives. We also create space for young people to explore different issues and ideas; working alongside them to formulate responses.

Youth Focus: North East amplifies the voice of young people so they can be heard and we open up doors to new opportunities for both young people and professionals across the North East.