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w: [www.youthfocusne.org.uk](http://www.youthfocusne.org.uk)  
e: [mail@youthfocusne.org.uk](mailto:mail@youthfocusne.org.uk)

@YouthFocusNE  
[facebook.com/YouthFocusNE](https://facebook.com/YouthFocusNE)

## Chair's Introduction

**Introducing the 2016 Annual Report is a great pleasure; the year was one of achievement, development, and celebration of our simply unique youth charity. Our work and remit have continued to expand as we provide an ever widening range of services and opportunities for the young people of the North East region, as well as the bodies that support them.**

The charity's very successful work on the measurement of impact across all of its numerous programmes is worthy of note, particularly at a time when all organisations are themselves being challenged to demonstrate both value for money and impact.

The charity and indeed services for young people continue to operate against a very uncertain backdrop of relentless cuts to finance, resulting in many key services being withdrawn and provision closing across the country. It is testament to Youth Focus: North East and its key funders and supporters that it has been able to drive forward in its quest to design and deliver demonstration projects of value and quality in these challenging times.

The charity's Board of Trustees continue to provide strategic oversight and support to the direction of travel of the charities work.

The Trustees pay close attention to the finances and ensure that resources are well and efficiently deployed to create real value for money. During the year, two of our Trustees stood down, we thank them for their work and contributions. We are pleased to report that one of the trustee vacancies was filled by a young person and a former participant in our programmes. The board fully support and encourage young people's involvement in the governance, delivery and development of all our work at Youth Focus: North East.

Youth Focus: North East has never faltered in its belief and respect for young people and their ideas and opinions, we know that the young people we work with will be the leaders and creators of tomorrow. Our work is vital if we want to nurture and develop the full potential of the next generation. Please join us in creating a better, more informed and tolerant future by recognising young people to be our world's greatest and most precious asset, worthy of investment by us all.

*Pete Stout*



## Chief Executive's Introduction

**Few people, during the past 12 months, could have failed to recognise the significance of the events which took place in 2016. The decision to leave the European Union, the election of Donald Trump, events in Syria, Turkey, Colombia and a host of other countries made 2016 an unforgettable year – and one of profound change. This time of change has been reflected, on a somewhat smaller scale, in our own organisation.**

In 2016, we not only held the official opening of our new offices in Gateshead, but we also took the bold decision to open a full-time office in Tees Valley. We now have three staff working from our new offices in Middlesbrough, providing support to youth organisations and young people across the Tees Valley area.

From the head office in Gateshead, we have continued to provide support to a range of programmes supporting young people in the North East. Our work on Talent Match North East, the Young Changers NE programme, Young Commissioners within the Expanding Minds, Improving Lives programme, and delivering Reducing the Skills Gap with a range of new partners has engaged hundreds of young people from across the region.

Our development work has taken the organisation in exciting new directions. We are exploring how young people can support older people living with dementia. We are developing new work with the corporate sector, founded on the concept of Shared Value. We have identified and started work at addressing youth loneliness – an emerging theme within a number of our programmes.

To underpin our current and future project work we have undertaken a range of internal developments, culminating in working towards, and then receiving, ISO9001 certification.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication, commitment, and hard work of both our staff team and our Board of Trustees. As an organisation, we embrace change, and we are looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that the future will bring.

*Leon Mexter*





# A Truly Regional Organisation



For over 25 years, Youth Focus: North East has been working across the region to improve the lives of young people. We've always been based in the north of the region, calling Gateshead home for some time, but have actively been involved in delivery and strategy south of the region through our work with Stockton Borough Council on the local offer, work with the Stockton Youth Offending Team, and the Darlington Diamond Model.

This year, we recruited two full-time members of staff – Laura and Helen – to coordinate and develop our work in Tees Valley, and the team now have new office premises in the Cadcam Business Centre in Middlesbrough.

We currently carry out a range of projects in Tees Valley, including Reducing the Skills Gap in partnership with the Youth Employment Initiative and funded by European Social Fund, Wellbeing Challenges, Young Changers NE, and Young Trainers. This year has also seen delivery on the Headstart and Side by Side programmes in the area. Keep reading for more information on each of these programmes.

If you are interested in working with us in the Tees Valley area, you can contact the team below:

Laura Bush, Programmes Officer  
[laurab@youthfocusne.org.uk](mailto:laurab@youthfocusne.org.uk)  
or 0776 382 6674

Helen Kennedy, Youth Support Worker  
[helen@youthfocusne.org.uk](mailto:helen@youthfocusne.org.uk)  
or 0756 317 2674



## Youth Focus: North East in Numbers



3 Senior Management  
4 Development Officers  
2 Sessional Support Staff  
2 Administration Support  
1 Programmes Officer  
1 Youth Involvement Worker  
1 Youth Support Worker  
9 Trustees



50 > partners



24 funders

**Direct  
beneficiaries**

1,075

**Indirect  
beneficiaries**

5,916

**Young  
volunteers**

68

**Organisations  
in our network**

511

# Strategic Work



Youth Focus: North East is currently supporting FaulknerBrowns, a well established regional firm of architects, to develop their work on social value. This work is helping our organisation to develop a new approach to working with the private sector, using Shared Value as the underpinning theory of change. Our internal development work is focused on establishing a new database, which is now used across the organisation and undertaking the work needed to acquire ISO9001 registration. In January 2017, we were successful in achieving ISO9001 status.

## Regional Impact Network

### Organisational Development

A key element of our organisational development in 2016 was successfully gaining support from the Local Sustainability Fund. The funding has supported three key areas of development – our training offer, our corporate offer and internal organisational development. Our training offer now includes a range of opportunities for both professionals and young people, including the use of young trainers to support the delivery of the training offer. Our corporate offer has created exciting new opportunities to work with the private sector.

Following on from our previous work on evidence and impact within the youth sector with the National Youth Work Evidence Group, we were delighted to be approached by the Centre for Youth Impact to lead on a Regional Impact Network for the North East. The Regional Impact Network supports youth sector organisations in the region to better work together to understand and increase the impact of their work. The inaugural meeting of the Regional Impact Network for the North East took place on Wednesday 30 November at our offices in Gateshead.

## Strategic Work

The meeting was well attended with an overall view from members that there is a desire to both claim a place for youth work within the impact agenda and to continue to meet and explore how best to come together to increase meaningful evaluation and impact measurement, which helps explain the nature of effective work with young people. In 2017 we will be facilitating a number of meetings and events across the region to create space to share and learn from each other, provide peer support and challenge, and share knowledge and resources.

### **Supporting our Network**

During 2016, Youth Focus: North East has provided a range of support to the youth sector in the North East. We have provided individual support to organisations and sectoral support to initiatives at a local level. In 2016, we established the new North East Youth Network; the Network has provided a meeting place for colleagues from across the voluntary and statutory sector. In September, the Network drafted and presented a consultation paper to contribute to the discussions in central government regarding the future direction of youth services and a new youth policy paper, which is due in the spring of 2017. Youth Focus: North East is a member of the Network of Leaders for Social Change,

coordinated by Newcastle University and bringing together organisations from across the voluntary sector, higher education, public services, and the private sector. Youth Focus: North East has contributed to both the finance and better governance subgroups. We are also part of the regional advisory group for the National Citizen Service, and a member of Newcastle's Progression Forum, supporting successful post-16 transitions for young people.

For a number of years, we have been a member of the North East Child Poverty Commission and we continue to be an active contributor to the work of the group.

### **Big Potential**

The Big Lottery Fund Big Potential programme aims to raise awareness of the social investment market and support voluntary and social enterprises who want to prepare themselves for social investment or winning contracts. A successful application in 2016 is enabling us to access specialist one to one support to determine what will be appropriate for our needs. We will be focussing our work on developing our Young People's Co-Production Incubator Service, bringing together all the distinct strands of our work into a complete package with co-production and co-design with young people at its heart.



# Strategic Work

## Evidencing Youth Work Event

As part of our on-going support to the sector on the evidence and impact agenda, we worked in partnership with the Centre for Youth Impact to bring a national event to the region in April 2016. Held at the Centre for Life in Newcastle, the 'What Next for Evidence and Impact' event attracted 86 delegates, travelling from across the country to discuss the future of impact measurement and evidence evaluation. We were thrilled to have such a wide range of viewpoints covering perspectives from across the sector and many of our delegates enjoyed the opportunity to hear a breadth of views:

*I got to listen to a lot of the different perspectives and definitions of evidence and impact. I mostly liked the assurance about ethics, honesty, and transparency and the stance of looking at how to 'respect' the young people we work with as researchers/evaluators.*

## Network of Regional Youth Work Units

The Network of Regional Youth Work Units continues to be an essential part of our work at Youth Focus: North East. The Network brings together organisations across the country who hold the role

of providing regional support for youth work and the youth sector. The Network provides an excellent opportunity for regional issues to be raised at a national level and throughout 2016, the network has held meetings and consulted with central government departments and other national organisations. In 2016, the Network blog had over 4000 views, contributing to the national debates about the current and future direction of youth work.

Early in 2016, the Network presented a proposal for the establishment of a National Youth Trust, which was shared with national partners. We hope to develop this proposal in 2017.

The most unfortunate news for the Network this year was the closure of the Regional Youth Work Unit in the South West. This closure represents a significant loss to youth work and the youth sector in the South West as well as nationally. Our colleague, Gill Miller, the head of the Unit in the South West, is continuing to offer what support she can to the sector in her region, and the Network will continue to support both Gill, youth work and youth services across the country.

# Development Work

## Youth Loneliness

Building on our previously successful 'Truth About Youth' programme, we were approached by the main partner and funder, the Co-operative Foundation, to explore how they could build a learning network of organisations that can help tackle youth loneliness. Subsequent discussions have led to securing investment in order that we can deliver a pilot project in 2017. The project will work directly with young people to explore their experiences of loneliness and then to identify and propose positive actions to tackle this issue. We will then work with the young people to develop ways of sharing their ideas with other groups, developing a mutually supportive grassroots community.

## Street Law - Newcastle University

We continue to support Newcastle University Law School's Street Law project. In October and November of this year, we trained a further 17 undergraduate students from Newcastle University Law School to deliver discussion and awareness sessions to groups of children and young people in the region. Once trained, they deliver interactive sessions on legal issues such as police powers, access to legal advice, rights at school, street drinking, and transitions to adulthood.

## Work with National Deaf Children's Society

In March 2016 we facilitated an event with young people who had taken part in local National Deaf Children's Society activities to evaluate the success of the programme. The young people, who had attended activities with South of Tyne and Wearside Deaf Children's Society, were given the opportunity to have their say on what they enjoyed and what they thought could be improved, as well as looking at the future of the group and what they would like to see. Outcomes achieved by the group included: changed opinions of what deaf children can achieve, improvement in communication skills, increased confidence, and developing independence.



# Development Work

## **My Mind Matters**

In 2016, Youth Focus: North East and our young trainers reviewed and updated our My Mind Matters mental health awareness workshop. We have added case studies to share young people's stories, incorporated regional statistics, revised the branding and logo, and are now piloting the project via mini workshops with professional agencies, universities, and colleges. Our aim for 2017 is to offer My Mind Matters to more organisations such as schools, youth sector organisations, fostering and caring agencies, and any other bodies interested in mental health awareness.

## **Stockton SEN Local Offer**

Youth Focus: North East completed work in Stockton with young people with special educational needs during 2016. We looked at the development of a website for young people designed by young people and explored different ways that young people could come together and discuss the things that mattered to them, and then have a dialogue with decision-makers about the key issues.

We have been asked to carry out some further work in Stockton during 2017 to develop and then support delivery of an implementation plan for the involvement

of young people with special educational needs in order to inform and influence the services and support they receive and/or access.

## **Generation NE**

In July 2016, we met with Gillian Hewitson of Newcastle Futures and Mark Stamper of Generation NE, who connect local businesses to the next generation of employees, to explore how to collectively develop an initiative to support young people within the Generation NE programme. An issue that was highlighted, both locally and at a national level, is that of the 'attitudes and behaviours' of some young people, particularly in relation to their ability to sustain attendance on programmes, training, or employment.

A proposal was created to allow young people to develop the skills needed to empower themselves to ensure that they reduce their chances of derailing a sustained and positive work life. These skills will be delivered through a workshop that looks at motivation, resilience, taking feedback, developing realistic career plans, accountability strategies, and independence. These workshops will be refined and delivered throughout 2017.

# Talent Match North East



**Since 2012, Youth Focus: North East has been a partner in the development of the Big Lottery Fund's Talent Match programme in the North East.**

Talent Match North East is an innovative programme that targets 18-24-year-olds who are furthest from the jobs market. It has been specifically designed to provide support to individuals who have not been in education, employment, training, or any other form of support for 12 months or more and who have specific intrinsic or extrinsic barriers to progression.

The programme brings together the voices of young people, employers, education providers, and VCS organisations to create new, localised opportunities for young people. Young people are at the heart of the programme; through their involvement in the design and delivery of provision, it is believed that young people can create their own solutions to unemployment.

Youth Focus: North East have been commissioned to ensure young people are meaningfully involved throughout all aspects of the Talent Match North East programme.

We facilitate two youth-led groups, the Young Person's Steering Group and Talent Match Champions, who represent young people in influencing and promoting the programme's opportunities.

In 2016, Youth Focus: North East supported young people to take their participation further and engage in a number of new activities. The Young Person's Steering Group co-produced and delivered a Young Evaluators' programme to explore the quality of services offered across Talent Match North East.





## Talent Match North East

Our Young Evaluators composed an interactive workshop which was then delivered to 66 of their peers engaged in provision with 11 different partner organisations. The Young Evaluators analysed the data across a residential weekend, with results compiled into a detailed report and shared with all of the Talent Match North East partners.

The Young Evaluators were asked to present their experience at the National Talent Match Conference in front of representatives from all 21 Talent Match partners and Big Lottery Fund staff.

The Talent Match Champions also took a new direction in 2016. Having engaged and signposted over 140 young people to Talent Match North East provision, the programme reached capacity. The Talent Match Champions turned their attentions to engaging employers and raising awareness of the challenges young people face finding employment.

Hosted at Kingston Park Stadium, Newcastle, the Champions organised and helped deliver an event for local employers and young people to come together to challenge myths and remove any stigma between the two groups. The event welcomed over 130 guests and used a mixture of videos, presentations and live workshops to facilitate discussions throughout the day.

Youth Focus: North East provided a series of workshops to support Talent Match North East partners to develop their youth participation practices and ensure young people are involved in helping to shape and steer their provision.

We are using the experience of all our staff team to assist partners in overcoming challenges, thinking creatively, and implementing youth participation practices which leave a positive legacy beyond the funding.

We're looking forward to seeing these opportunities for young people flourish in 2017.



*I have gained a lot of experience such as confidence building, working as a team and communicating. I have made new friends and in doing so it has allowed me to speak more openly and not isolate myself within a group. I can honestly say I am part of a group that can give me encouragement and make me feel comfortable.*

Jordan Stirling, 24

# Reducing the Skills Gap

**Reducing the Skills Gap (RTSG)** is Youth Focus: North East's soft skills personal development training programme which focuses on issues around youth employment. The programme aligns with our ethos of co-production and was created by youth organisations, employers and young people in 2012. Since its creation, we have developed a number of partnerships, enabling the programme to reach a range of diverse groups of young people across the North East.

## **Gateshead Young Carers**

In 2014, Youth Focus: North East embarked on a partnership with Crossroads Young Carers to deliver the RTSG programme with young carers in Gateshead to support their transitions into education, employment, or training. This partnership work would also create new, bespoke modules to the programme which would meet the needs of young carers following youth-led research into barriers young carers faced when trying to gain and maintain education, employment or training.

This project concluded in 2016 and saw 24 young people undertaking the programme, of which 11 re-engaged back into a form of education, employment, or training.



## **Virgin Money Community Fund**

Through funding acquired from the Virgin Money Community Fund, we were able to deliver RTSG to a group of 15 young people from Tyne and Wear. This programme of work focussed on supporting young people who were not in education, employment or training, and led to us engaging learners who actually faced multiple barriers to entering further progression routes. However, despite these challenges, the programme proved to be a success with five entering back into education, employment, or training with many finding that the programme met their needs.

# Reducing the Skills Gap

*I really enjoyed the course as the sessions were interactive, you never had to just answer questions by writing down your answers; you could do posters or videos.*

*Since doing the course I have had three jobs and I believe the course helped me identify what employers want from their employees and I adapted these skills when having my interviews.*

## **St Aidan's College of Durham University and Newcastle University Business School**

Within today's society, we are seeing an ever increasing need for all young people to be supported to develop their employability skills and understanding of the world of work. With this in mind, we have developed partnerships with St Aidan's College of Durham University and Newcastle University Business School to deliver an RTSG pilot with students from both establishments from 2016-2017. The pilot will firstly measure whether RTSG meets the needs of students and supports them to develop their employability skills. Students will then receive training to

become Young Trainers of the programme and deliver it within disadvantaged local communities and groups.

## **Ladders**

Ladders is a three-year creative enterprise programme for young people aged 18-24 which prepares young people for a career within the creative and digital industries, hosted by Generator, the UK's leading music development agency.

Through our previous partnership work with Generator on their Ladders programme in 2014, RTSG has been commissioned to once again support the programme and provide employability support to young people enrolled in the programme throughout Newcastle, Sunderland, and Stockton on Tees.



# Wellbeing Challenges

**Youth Focus: North East** has delivered a series of Wellbeing Challenges across the region. These very local projects have been possible due to funding from **Sunderland City Council, The Wellesley Trust, Gateshead Council and Safe in Tees Valley.**

At the heart of Youth Focus: North East's Wellbeing Challenges are groups of young people who want to make a positive difference within their communities.

Wellbeing Challenge Days offer local people the opportunity to plan and develop an initiative, event, activity or campaign in their local area inspired by one of the NHS 5-A-Day for Wellbeing themes - stay connected, keep active, give something back, keep learning and be mindful of your own wellbeing.

Youth Focus: North East worked with young people with special educational needs at Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project (CVYP) on a film project to capture the fun and activities at their annual summer fayre. The Wellbeing Challenge helped them to learn how to use a variety of audio and visual recording equipment, how to storyboard and plan a short film, to connect with others through the medium of film gaining skills in the use of new technology and as a result improved their confidence.



One idea for the film is to use it to promote awareness of Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project and the special educational needs group.

*Great project and the group loved every minute.*  
Rob Hall, Executive Manager, CVYP

*I just like helping people.*  
Mary, Young Volunteer, CVYP



## Wellbeing Challenges

We worked with young people from Wallsend Boys' Club and older people from Age UK North Tyneside to form an intergenerational group to plan and deliver an event to promote wellbeing and the benefits of being active. The work culminated in a family fun day in Richardson Dees Park, Wallsend attended by over 900 people.

*Working in a team with much younger people was a new experience. I was impressed with how professional they were.*

**Ray, Volunteer, Age UK North Tyneside**

*There's a stigma around young people – the project has proved the stereotypes are wrong.*

**Young Person, Wallsend Boys Club**

Students in Heaton Manor School's behavioural support programme delivered a community event for residents from a number of local care homes. An intergenerational quiz was the catalyst for conversations between young and old about their lives and interests. The students put on a buffet and entertainment, including musical performances. Relationships between the school and local care homes have developed from the event. As a result of this work there has been noticeable improvement in the behaviour

of the students with consequences and critical incidents decreasing significantly.

*That is the difference a project like this makes to a young person in a school, to their self-belief and their behaviour. This project is building relationships between children and older people that will last and be built on.*

**Rosie Hutchinson, Lead Teacher  
Behavioural Support Programme,  
Heaton Manor School**

Using Youth Focus: North East's impact measurement tools for our Wellbeing Challenges; 70% of participants improved their confidence, 72% improved their communication skills, 71% improved their teamwork skills, 77% improved their decision-making abilities, 70% improved their planning skills, and 75% improved their knowledge of good emotional wellbeing.



## Young Changers NE



**We can all agree that 2016 was really a year of action, and the same can be said for My Manifesto, now known as Young Changers NE. My Manifesto was originally set up to engage young people in politics by putting politics in plain English which involved workshops and events exploring politics in creative pursuits such as through writing and drama. These workshops continued into the New Year where young people were able to share their views and experiences of politics.**

The initial phase focused on the 2015 general election. We then saw a shift in attention towards the upcoming EU Referendum and the project gained a new purpose for April – July.

My Referendum launched an online voting tool that allowed users to log in with Facebook and say how they would vote. As new information or conversations occurred, users could then change their mind and their vote on the online voting tool.

Alongside this digital vote, My Referendum delivered workshops around the region encouraging impartial debate on EU laws, ranking the political importance of issues, and a quiz on what the EU does and doesn't do. My Referendum also held pizza and politics evenings in Gateshead and Middlesbrough with guest speakers giving their point of view about the EU Referendum and young people given the chance to ask questions. This work culminated in live hustings events held simultaneously in Gateshead and Stockton and broadcast live over Facebook to hundreds of viewers online – a first for Youth Focus: North East. At these events, a panel of cross-party remain and leave campaigners had time to present their arguments on specific issues before taking questions from the audience.

Overall, My Referendum engaged with over 1,000 young people aged 16-25 from the North East and found that 63% of participants would vote to remain; our findings closely matching national statistics for 18-30-year-olds for the EU Referendum.

## Young Changers NE

During our last year of working with young people on politics, we discovered that a lot of young people were completely disengaged from politics and often didn't believe that politics had anything to do with them or did not affect them in any way. We wanted young people to be able to relate to politics and to move away from the idea that politics was something that happened to them passively and decided by politicians in London. We wanted to encourage young people to actively stake their claim in local matters and to be able to challenge problems that they saw around them.

After lengthy consideration, Young Changers NE emerged as a means for young people to identify local issues and develop responses that they could achieve, with support from staff and volunteers. From July to November, Young Changers NE delivered initial engagement workshops to around 500 young people and supported three groups to make a positive change in their local communities. The projects have raised awareness of children's heart units, mental health stigma, and animal rights and autism.

Young Changers NE also discovered that young people often didn't have the support to engage in politics. In November we held a conversation for organisations working

with young people to look at how the sector currently engaged young people in politics and how it could be improved. All of the organisations in the room recognised that this was an important area for development and future meetings are planned to identify effective ways of working together. As part of our Young Changers NE programme, we have commissioned a politics student from Newcastle University who is working on a report investigating the current state of political education and engagement in the region and the report will put forward some key recommendations.

The next year will see more local groups taking positive action in their communities and exploring how digital technologies could encourage young people to be more involved in local politics.



# Newcastle Gateshead Young Commissioners

Young people, as members of our Young Commissioners' project, continue to work to improve mental health services and support in Newcastle and Gateshead. The work is part of Expanding Minds, Improving Lives where the young people involved in the project are working with commissioners of mental health services from Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group, Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council.

The Young Commissioners have been involved in a wide-range of activity during 2016. In February, a number of them gave a presentation to an audience of mental health professionals, G.P.s, school nurses and children's services' staff at the launch of the Expanding Minds, Improving Lives project.

In March, the group were part of the decision-making process to award contracts for the provision of counselling services in Newcastle and Gateshead.



The Young Commissioners were also given full responsibility to decide which bidder was awarded the contract to deliver mental health training to lead staff in primary and secondary schools in both local authority areas.

The Young Commissioners met with school nurses during November. This provided an opportunity for the group to find out more about their role; to share their experiences, both good and bad; and to answer some questions from the school nurses.

Meeting regularly with commissioners of mental health services, the Young Commissioners have been able to share their views, provide a level of challenge to proposals and to inform the process for the developing model, which is looking to transform mental health services and support. It is a credit to the work of the young people that the contract for this project has been extended until March 2018.



*As a group, we help influence the commissioning of services and what's been fantastic about the project is that we get to talk to people on both sides of the system. Those who design mental health services and those who experience mental health services, which means it's all really balanced.*

Sarah Barber, 19



## Dem Youth

**Dem Youth is a project funded by the European Social Research Council and delivered in partnership between Newcastle University, Open Lab and Youth Focus: North East.**

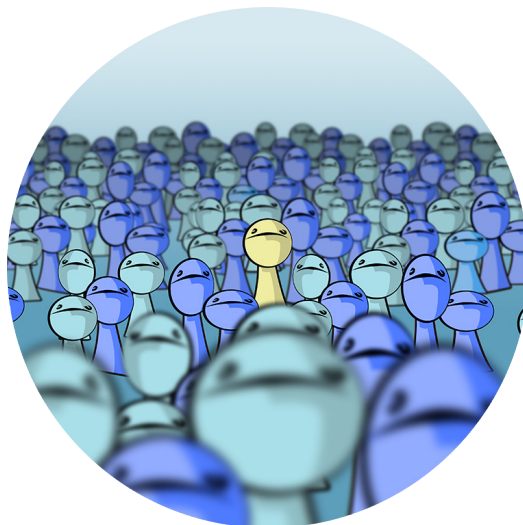
Dementia is the umbrella term for a number of signs and symptoms, caused by a variety of different conditions, including Alzheimer's Disease. Up to 850,000 people in the UK have dementia. Most people with dementia are aged over 65, but it can affect people significantly younger. Dementia affects the person in a number of ways, but most noticeably through memory loss, changes in behaviour, confusion, and difficulty communicating.

The project aims to allow young people to research and develop a digital tool to encourage better communication between young people and older friends or relatives who have Alzheimer's or dementia.

The app, Ticket to Talk, allows users to create profiles of themselves and their friend or relative and add information to it in the form of photos, notes, music, videos, and more. These help to create a virtual personality and can act as conversation starters or topics to talk about when communicating with a friend or relative. Further refinement sessions were held over the summer and the team presented

their work at the ESRC Working Together: Bringing About Change event in November. The app is currently in a Beta state and undergoing testing on Apple iOS devices, and there is an Android version in development as well. The app will launch publicly in 2017 and we will be doing some longer evaluations of its use.

The project is a collaboration between Newcastle University School of Education, Communication and Language sciences, Open Lab and Youth Focus: North East. The work on Ticket to Talk has been funded by both ESRC IAA and also supported by EPSRC Digital Economy funding.



# The PoSBOs 2016



**Inspirational young people from across the North East were celebrated for their positive work in the community at an awards ceremony in Gateshead on Friday 8 December 2016.**

The seventh annual PoSBO's (Positive Social Behaviour Order) recognised the hard work and outstanding achievements made by young people in the North East.

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.

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 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
- **Positive Action Award**  
(sponsored by the Key) Youthwise
- **Young Carer Award**  
Robert Oughton
- **Young Employee Award**  
(sponsored by Northern TUC) Lindsay Maudling
- **Digital Youth Award**  
Toilets, Tabs and Tantrums
- **The Jodie Wilkinson Inspirational Award**  
Tom Charlton

# The PoSBOs 2016



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:

- 50 PoSBOs have been awarded since the first awards ceremony in 2010.
- Over 1,000 guests have attended PoSBO awards ceremonies.



*This is our seventh PoSBOs now and every year it amazes us how much fantastic work is being done by young people. Planning the award night is still a lot of fun and we hope everyone enjoys the PoSBOs as much as we do.*

Rachel Blair, 22



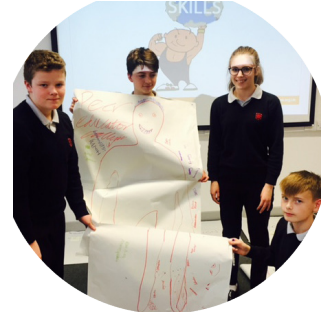
## Young Career Advocates

**The Young Career Advocates programme is one of Youth Focus: North East's newly developed programmes and focuses on supporting schools to develop their Careers, Education, Information, Advice, and Guidance (CEIAG) provision and is funded by the Gatsby Foundation.**

In 2013, the Gatsby Foundation commissioned Sir John Holman from University of York to set out what career guidance in England would be like if it was judged as being good by international standards. This research led to Sir John making 10 recommendations on how to improve the career guidance system, which led to the creation of eight benchmarks for schools to try to achieve.

To test the eight benchmarks, Gatsby funded the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to run a pilot of this approach and our Young Career Advocates programme is part of this.

Our Young Career Advocates programme is being delivered within Kenton School and King Edwards VI, Morpeth throughout 2016-2017. The programme is supporting 20 young people to become Young Career Advocates who are gaining new skills and knowledge, which will enable them to provide CEIAG through a peer to peer educational approach. This approach will enable Young Career Advocates to research, interpret and then relay careers information on the sectors within the North East where there are current skills shortages and high demand for labour. Through placing young people at the heart of the process, the Young Career Advocates programme will create new and different CEIAG tools which will be designed and delivered by young people. These tools will enable young people to make more informed choices about their future career paths and support young people to plug the skills and labour shortages which currently exist in certain sectors in the North East.





## Tees Valley Projects

**For our work in the south of the region, 2016 was an exciting year. We now have a dedicated team based in Tees Valley with our own office space in Middlesbrough to enable us to create and develop more of our work in the area.**

We kicked off the year by delivering the Mind 'Side by Side' Peer Support programme, NatWest Skills and Opportunities Fund, and HeadStart Middlesbrough in partnership with Safe in Tees Valley and now have completed our outcomes for these programmes.

### **Mind 'Side by Side' Peer Support programme**

The Mind 'Side by Side' Peer Support programme was in partnership with Safe in Tees Valley, Time 4 You, and Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company to train a group of participants in becoming peer supporters in the area of mental health. We recruited six supporters who completed awareness training in mental health to enable them to support their peers. The topics of the training were decided by the wider group of young people as we believed they were best suited to know the crucial topics on mental health that other young people may face.

The topics covered were; depression, anxiety, panic attacks, self-harm, obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, eating problems, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorders and suicidal feelings. Peer supporters also completed our Young Trainers course, equipping them with the skills to deliver sessions with young people. The training covered body language, confidentiality, listening, how to support others, and skills, knowledge and attributes of people who support others of a similar age.

The peer supporters co-produced and co-delivered their own workshop to their peers in the summer to promote positive mental health and positive coping strategies. The workshop was a success, with further mini activities being delivered in the Durham Tees Valley Community Rehabilitation Company hub in Hartlepool to get the message out to more of their participants.



# Tees Valley Projects



## HeadStart Middlesbrough

We also, in partnership with Safe in Tees Valley, delivered part of the youth participation delivery of HeadStart Middlesbrough. This programme was a great opportunity for young people of Middlesbrough to have their voices heard on the key issue of mental health of young people in the town. We supported the HeadStart Youth Board to work alongside the adult team to implement HeadStart Middlesbrough to ensure young people were at the heart of decisions about mental health services for young people. We also delivered Wellbeing Challenge Days across three schools in Middlesbrough. Students from local schools planned and delivered activities to increase young people's awareness of mental health, in particular at transitional times of school life.

## NatWest Skills and Opportunities Fund

We worked with Safe in Tees Valley to deliver Reducing the Skills Gap (RTSG) through the NatWest Skills and Opportunities Fund. RTSG is a soft skills personal development programme designed to improve the skills and attitudes of young people towards employment. The course was aimed at young people aged 14 to 24 years old who live in the Tees Valley area and are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

## Stillington

During 2016, we also developed our links with Tees Valley Rural Community Council and delivered a wellbeing challenge in the village of Stillington. The Rural Community Council was awarded a small pot of funding from Stillington Parish to work with the local community and we developed an intergenerational wellbeing challenge where young people co-produced a Christmas themed event for older people who are lonely and/or isolated. Together, we are applying to the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund to enable us to offer more wellbeing challenges to rural communities. 2016 ended with the news that we were successful in our Reaching Communities stage one application.

# Tees Valley Projects

## Youth Employment Initiative

As part of England 2014 to 2020 European Structural and Investment Fund, we started to deliver on the European Social Fund Youth Employment Initiative. Safe in Tees Valley are the lead in a consortium with Youth Focus: North East, Corner House Youth Project, Belle Vue Centre, Endeavour and Kidz Konneckt. Funding was received by Hartlepool Borough Council to deliver interventions to young people aged 16 to 29 who were NEET and living in the Tees Valley area.

Youth Focus: North East is offering Reducing the Skills Gap. The programme addresses six key skills; communication, teamwork, commitment, professionalism, time management and confidence. Young people will also undertake a pre and post interviews with human resource specialists, which will highlight any improvement of their soft skills development.

Alongside this, we are offering participants the chance of a tailored one-to-one Life Coaching programme. This is suitable for young people who are trying to overcome multiple barriers.

With our dedicated and qualified team, we will work together on addressing those barriers and look at creating a specific,

measurable, achievable, realistic and timescaled plan.

This format is a person-centred programme which aims to assist the young person to understand their goals and address their personal challenges and together move forward into an area of interest within education, employment, and training. Both formats offer a young person support and guidance and allow them to improve confidence and self-esteem so the participants can start to feel more responsible and in control of their futures.

In 2016 we have engaged and supported 58 young people and six are currently sustaining either education or employment.

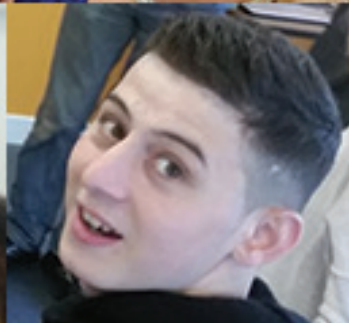
We are also supporting young people in sourcing specialised training to gain employment in specific sectors.



“YOUTH FOCUS: NORTH EAST  
HAS GIVEN ME **COURAGE** AND  
**UNDERSTANDING**  
**IN LIFE** ...  
AND REALLY BOOSTED MY  
**CONFIDENCE**”

- Jordan Stirling, 24







## Finances

### Statement of Financial Activities for year ending 31 March 2016

	Notes	General Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2016 £	Total Funds 2015 £
<b>Income from:</b>						
Charitable activities	3	13,637	2,000	320,983	320,983	393,459
Investments		4,852	-	4,852	4,852	3,741
Other		1,405	-	1,405	1,405	8,310
<b>Total</b>		<b>143,894</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>327,240</b>	<b>327,240</b>	<b>405,510</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Charitable activities	4	192,584	4,246	178,504	375,604	416,750
<b>Total</b>		<b>192,584</b>	<b>4,246</b>	<b>178,504</b>	<b>375,604</b>	<b>416,750</b>
<b>Net income (expenditure)</b>		<b>(48,960)</b>	<b>(2,246)</b>	<b>2,842</b>	<b>(48,364)</b>	<b>(11,240)</b>
Transfers between funds	16	119,066	(118,104)	(962)	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>70,106</b>	<b>(120,350)</b>	<b>1,880</b>	<b>(48,364)</b>	<b>(11,240)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>						
Total funds brought forward		15,870	200,692	53,931	270,493	281,733
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>85,976</b>	<b>80,342</b>	<b>55,811</b>	<b>222,129</b>	<b>270,493</b>

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.  
The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised during the year.

# Trustees, Staff and Funders 2016

*Thank you to our trustees, staff, and funders for all of their contributions to our work throughout 2016.*

## Trustees

Beth Farhat  
Emily Vasey  
Marc Mason  
Kevin Morris  
Pete Stout  
Mark Bagnall  
Rhiannon Bearn  
Tom Adams  
Norma Tullock  
Malcolm Craven (Resigned November 2016)  
Chris Smith (Resigned November 2016)

## Staff

Leon Mexter - Chief Executive  
Kevin Franks - Programmes Director  
Caroline Garrity - Office Manager  
Neil Burke - Regional Development Officer  
Jamie Mercer - Regional Development Officer  
Steve Watson - Regional Development Officer  
Alex Black - Regional Development Officer  
Laura Bush - Programmes Officer  
Simone Banks - Youth Involvement Worker  
Helen Kennedy - Youth Support Worker  
Mark Jones - Administration Officer  
Iona Jeffries - Comms & Admin Apprentice  
Tom Brown - Sessional Support Staff  
Chelsea Fulcher - Sessional Support Staff

## Funders

Ballinger Charitable Trust  
Centre for Youth Impact  
Co-operative Foundation  
Darlington & Durham NHS  
Durham University  
Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council  
ESIF (Youth Employment Initiative)  
Economic and Social Research Council  
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
Gatsby Foundation,  
Generator (Ladders)  
Heritage Lottery Fund

Local Sustainability Fund  
Newcastle Gateshead CCG  
Newcastle University  
Northern TUC  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation,  
Rotary Club of Newcastle upon Tyne West  
Safe in Tees Valley  
Stockton Borough Council  
Sunderland City Council  
Virgin Money Foundation  
Wellesley Trust Fund  
Wise Group

# Youth focus: North East

improving  
the lives of  
young people

Youth Focus: North East is a registered company (no. 4838559) and charity (no. 1101799) whose registered office is at Youth Focus: North East, Suite 6, New Century House, West Street, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1HR

