

# YOUTH FOCUS: NORTH EAST

improving the lives of young people

Extra Extra!

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**Youth  
focus:**  
North East

# Annual Report 2021

## LOOKING FORWARD TO A BRIGHT FUTURE



“We want young people’s needs to be at the heart of everything the Alliance does.”

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“I’ve really enjoyed it! It’s something that I wouldn’t normally come and see”

Page 6

“I never saw myself as a leader but I suppose that’s what I am now!”

Page 7

“I wanted to get in touch to say how much I personally have enjoyed the course, ... I feel very grateful to have received funding for this.”

Page 4

“This group of young people want to be able to offer more and for longer as they and their community come out of Covid restrictions”

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## Pete Stout OBE Chair of Trustees

No one could ever accuse Youth Focus North East of taking the easy or predictable route in our charity's quest to meet both the needs and aspirations of young people. 2021 has proved to be a challenging yet probably, in many respects, our most productive year to date.

Like so many organisations we have been battling the headwinds of the COVID Pandemic. The charity made minimum use of the furlough scheme and was quick to resume direct contact work with young people and their communities. Kevin Franks our CEO, ably supported by the Senior Management Team along with the guidance and overview of the Board of Trustees, made a plethora of sound decisions to keep the charity moving forward. Our charity never faltered in striving to achieve its strategic objectives and operational plans. The degree of commitment and passion exhibited by our staff team, volunteers and young people has been a joy to witness,

particularly when set against such a daunting and uncertain backdrop. Numerous specifically targeted initiatives were undertaken for the benefit of others and delivered in the most trying of circumstances and pressures.

Our funders were simply magnificent during 2021, both in allowing us to continue with our vital work and providing substantial additional funding so that we could extend the capacity, breadth and reach of our services. The hallmark of the year has centred on partnership working and drawing the sector together through collaborative bids and joint endeavours; much of this groundwork that has now been undertaken will bear fruit in 2022.

Expansion has meant that we have had to appoint a number of new staff members to our team. It is pleasing to report that the new staff have brought additional energy, ideas and experience to the charity. Our next round of appointments

is now underway ready for the launch of new initiatives in the early months of 2022. We will however all be sad to see Steve Watson step down from his job as Youth Strategy Manager. Steve has made a huge contribution and will be greatly missed by us all. We wish him well.

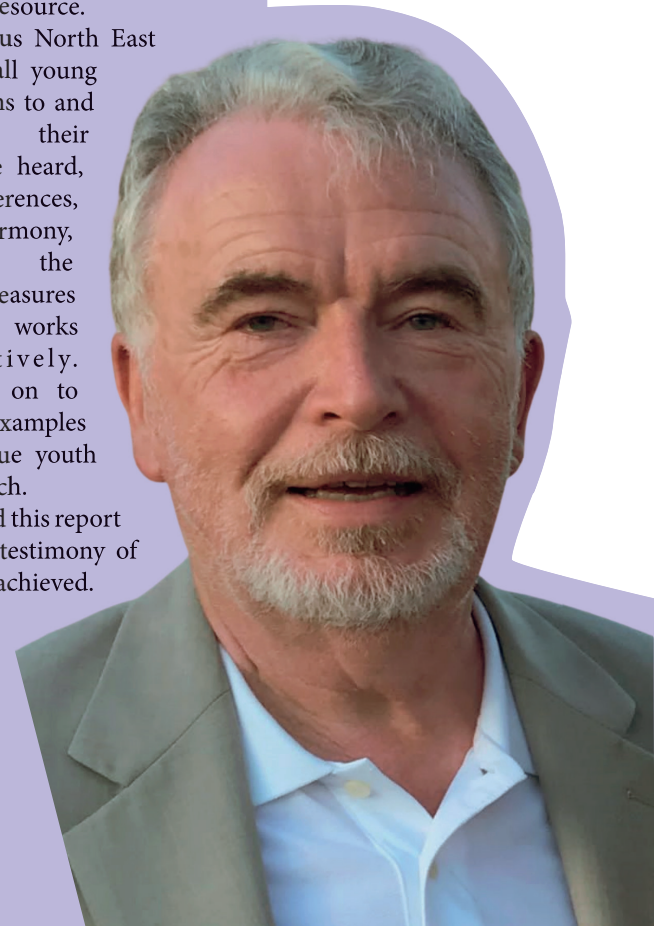
During the summer we also relocated our Gateshead Office to St Chad's Community Project in Bensham, Gateshead. The move will allow us to build more outreach work and links to the community which is a hallmark of our work.

As we know young people are currently living through an extremely stressful and uncertain time with so many opportunities denied them with options no longer available, as they transition towards adulthood. In September 2021, the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner published a report called *Voices from the Frontline - the Future of Youth Services*. Then in November the National Youth Agency published its *Initial Summary of Findings from the National Youth Sector Census*. Both reports paint a bleak, disturbing and yet accurate picture

of the demise of hope, opportunity and belief in our nation's young people who should in fact be regarded as the UK's most precious and unique resource.

Youth Focus North East believes in all young people, listens to and encourages their voices to be heard, respects differences, works in harmony, challenges the status quo, measures impact and works collaboratively. Please read on to see some examples of our unique youth work approach.

I commend this report to you as a testimony of what can be achieved.



## Kevin Franks Chief Executive Officer

The past year has been one of significant change and success for Youth Focus North East. In the last 12 months we have moved our Gateshead office to be better placed in the heart of the community and grow our provision. We have welcomed new staff members across the team. We have increased our annual income by over 30 percent and most gratifyingly, we have secured additional investment into the region's youth sector to employ 14 young people and support 11 partners via the Youth Endowment Fund – Peer Action Collective. This investment is a genuine example of our

ambitions with the North East Youth Alliance to support a culture shift across the sector through improved capacity, collaboration and co-ordination.

2021 saw us develop and launch our new Strategic Plan for the next two years. It is clear COVID-19 will have a major impact on the world and how people live their lives for an

extended period. Young people will, as a group, be faced with a plethora of changes and uncertainties, affecting many of the issues that directly or indirectly impact on their lives. It is against this reality that our Trustees and staff team urgently conducted a review of the charity on how best to mitigate the risks and successfully manage the ongoing functions and work of the organisation. Rather than focus on a longer term Strategic Plan

we felt it was much more practical and realistic to concentrate on the next 18 – 24 months. Our strategy has been shaped against this new reality and we are confident it will enable us to build on and sustain our success.

As anyone who works in our sector knows, change is constant. To manage change we have to become comfortable with it and embrace the challenges it brings. As 2021 comes to an end we are

again entering another phase of change. Our Youth Strategy Manager, Steve Watson, has left us to pursue new career challenges. We are excited to enter a new phase of recruitment to our team. A team I want to thank for all their dedication, commitment, motivation and humour over the past year and one I look forward to working with during 2022 and beyond.



# STAFF

**Chief Executive**  
Kevin Franks

**Youth Strategy Managers**  
Laura Bush  
Steve Watson

**Operations Manager**  
Caroline Garrity

**Programme Managers**  
Heather Insull  
Rebecca Harrop

**Lead Youth Workers**  
Emma Abbott  
Simone Banks  
Helen Kennedy  
Lisa Peacock

**Youth Support Worker**  
Tilly Stephenson

**Trainee Youth Worker**  
Cara Moore

**Sessional Youth Workers**  
Zoe Jackson  
Caitlin Connor  
Lucy Hopkinson  
Caitlin Stephenson  
Laura Bennett  
Tyler Wilson  
Daniel Trewin  
Bethany Risker  
Gabriel Rubinstein  
Emma Turnbull  
Jodie-Leigh Foster  
Sue Todd  
Amelia Bradley  
Nicola Rowling

**Administration Officers**  
Barry Flux  
Denise Bennett

**Communications Support**  
Judith Bennett

# Board of Trustees

**Pete Stout**  
**Marc Mason**  
**Mark Bagnall**  
**Thomas Adams**  
**Norma Tullock**

**Emily Vasey**  
**David Hesselberth**  
**Hannah Blair**  
**Jill Golightly**  
**Karen Marshall**



## ABOUT US

Founded in 1989, Youth Focus North East is a regional charity, with bases in Gateshead and in Middlesbrough, working with local communities across the twelve local authority areas that make up the North East region. Our overall mission is to improve the lives of young people, with work rooted in the values of good quality youth work, to help young people to have the best start in life.

Collaborating with a range of partners across the region, Youth Focus North East provides high quality programmes to young people covering a range of themes, including employability, social action, improved mental health, heritage and culture, youth isolation and loneliness, wellbeing and intergenerational work.

Working together with young people, programmes are developed that seek to tackle some of the big issues in young people's lives. Young people are placed at the heart of seeking solutions. Supporting the meaningful

involvement of young people is one of the fundamental principles of Youth Focus North East, with a variety of approaches - among them a programme youth board, advisory boards for internal and external pieces of work, steering groups of young people for each project, training programmes for young people so they can evaluate the services they receive and improve the support available to them.

In partnership with NE Youth, we secured funding from the National Lottery to develop the North East Youth Alliance (NEYA). Now in its second year, the NEYA was created to support the development and sustainability of the people and the organisations working to improve the lives of young people across the region.

With more than thirty years' experience and impact in working with young people, Youth Focus North East looks forward to the future.

## CONTACT US

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Ormesby Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS3 7AR

**PHONE:** 0731 178 7719

## Online Update

Coming into a new era of youth work we decided our website should reflect the changing times. The site has been given new life and refreshed to give the generations of young people easier access to our facilities, and to create a better and more open relationship with the public. We included bios to our staff page; allowing better insight into who we are as a charity and as people; removing a wall of anonymity.

An accessibility tab has also been affixed to all pages, which allows those with disabilities to read the site with more ease than previously. It has the capability to enlarge the text and change the colour to aid those who might struggle without high contrast text.

Overall, we hope the new and improved website will help young people connect with us and make their first step into youth work, improving themselves and helping us improve ourselves.



**Scan this QR code to visit our website!**  
<https://youthfocusne.org.uk/>

## "... Made me feel more confident in doing my job"

Youth Focus North East has been delivering the ABC Level 2 Award in Youth Work Principles, as part of the Government funded Youth Work Bursary programme. The National Youth Agency Youth Worker Bursary Fund is a national initiative to open up career pathways in youth work.

The purpose of the Youth Worker Bursary Fund is to provide financial assistance to those undertaking approved qualifications in Youth Work, by providing funded places to individuals who would otherwise experience financial difficulties in accessing Youth Worker qualifications. The course is open to Youth Work practitioners, over 16 years of age, who are working in a paid or voluntary capacity with young people between the ages of 11 to 25 years and delivering on a regular basis in a youth work setting. The course is recognised by the National Youth Agency and qualifies learners as an assistant youth support worker.

So far we have delivered three cohorts in total, with 21 learners in 2020 and another 22 learners in 2021. Learners have developed their skills, knowledge and experience

in Youth Work. All have worked extremely hard each week on Zoom and outside of the taught sessions to achieve ABC Level 2 Award in Youth Work Principles, and we're proud of them all.

The courses were delivered by our trained Youth Workers, Laura and Zoe with administration support from Denise.

Learners' feedback.

*"Is very informative and educational and I get a lot from it. Especially when we go into the breakout rooms. We are learning from each other. It is a really good course"*

*"I wanted to get in touch to say how much I personally have enjoyed the course, and I'm really glad that we were able to take part in the course online. I feel very grateful to have received funding for this."*

*"I just wanted to say thank you so much for the opportunity to do this course. I have really enjoyed it and learned so much. It has given me the opportunity to do something I love and has changed my life in such a positive way."*



## Painting a better picture

Arts Council England's Youth Advisory Board consists of eighteen young people from across the North of England. Together the young people work with Arts Council England staff to ensure the voices of children and young people are at the heart of what Arts Council England do.

When Arts Council England developed their strategy *Let's Create*, they spoke to hundreds of children and young people to understand their creative lives and how they could better support them. Their opinions made such an impact that they decided to create a Youth Advisory Board. To ensure

that they can continue to listen to children and young people, and for their ideas to help shape the future of the organisation. The Youth Advisory Board commenced their post in September 2021 and will run through to July 2022 following a recruitment process where over one hundred young people applied to be members.

The Youth Advisory Board members lead on the projects and policies they'd like to work on and also have the opportunity to engage in a range of activities and tasks that directly connect to Arts Council England's policy and programme development. This includes opportunities such as:

- Taking part in consultation work by listening to other



young people and hearing their views

- Advising staff in the organisation and stakeholders on key policy areas
- Making recommendations by speaking at National Council meetings and presenting thoughts on key policy areas
- The opportunity to engage in arts and culture across the North whilst developing their skills, knowledge and network

## Live Life Go Further

Youth Focus North East are delighted to be the North East partner, with the Royal Society for Blind Children (RSBC), on the Live Life Go Further project. Through this project we have created a safe space for visually impaired young people to feel less isolated, feel more confident and able to make decisions, and improve their wellbeing and aspirations. We have delivered capacity building training to a range of organisations and practitioners to increase their capacity and understanding of the needs of visually impaired young people.

The highly interactive workshop provides information and guidance around how small changes can make services more inclusive for people with a vision impairment.



# Community Fun Day

Thanks to Co-Op Foundation a group of young people from Thorntree were able to host a Community Fun Day on Saturday 7th August, and it was well attended by the local community.

The young people planned and delivered a number of activities that people could get involved in including : Hook a Duck, tombola and cake sale. A number of local organisations came to support and ran some activities.

- MVDA made healthy wraps.
- Recovery Connections

provided hot drinks.

- Kidz Kabin did a pottery workshop.
- Community Ventures did Pokemon themed origami .

Money raised on the day was split between Youth Focus North East and Community ventures to continue the work they do across East Middlesbrough

Special thanks to Tees Valley Together, M&S Cleveland Retail Park, Currys PC World @ Cleveland Retail Park, and members of the community who donated prizes towards the raffle and tombola. Well done to Evie, Lacey, Kennedy and Lacey for all your hard work.



## Positively Brilliant Work

Funded by the Co-op Foundation, the Positively Pally programme originally supported local young people in improving the design and use of a community space in the Pallister Park area of Middlesbrough. The programme has received extremely positive feedback from community members and from local partners.

Through Positively Pally young people have delivered a range of social action projects that benefit not only themselves and their peers, but also the local community. They take the lead in the planning and delivery of every stage of the projects they undertake and have delivered projects ranging from local heritage photography to food hampers to an Eco Shop.

Youth Focus North East are currently expanding this work across East Middlesbrough into areas that face similar issues to Pallister Park, such as lack of youth provision, low income households

and high levels of deprivation.

An example of our work is on June 4th we held a session at Pallister Park Centre with young people aged 10-16. We had; Canvas making, printing, sports, icecream sundaes, ping pong, playing on the PS4, hama beads and we made our own lasagne. In addition, we played "guess the sugar intake" to help educate the young people on sugar consumption.

We also had an intervention on "Respect and Sexualisation" including works written by our youth worker Tilly, namedly "People are humans and not objects, they have feelings too." This session was one of the first after COVID and it was great to see everyone, all the young people were amazing and we were glad to get into the swing of things again. Further similar sessions have ran weekly since, with similar great attendance and activities.

## Musinc benefiting local community

Youth Focus North East have worked in partnership with Musinc, who provide access to music making for young people in the Tees Valley.

By organising sessions at venues attended by young people, the aim is to provide opportunities to take part in musical activity, promoting that music projects are adaptable to young people's individual and common interests.

By increasing participation in community spaces, connections are made, and within a safe environment new skills can be developed, as well as providing an opportunity to signpost information about other essential services. Within this project young people are provided with the opportunity to design, create and deliver their own social action project using music for the benefit of their local communities.



Some of the projects have included creating a mindfulness music track for people to use in times of suffering with their wellbeing, some have created a Christmas Jingle CD for their community to enjoy over lockdown, and most recently a local primary school have hosted a Mini Festival for their school peers to enjoy, including external local musicians performing along with the Y6 males presenting the pieces of music they had created through their social action project.

## North East Region

Youth  
focus:  
North East

Free Space is a project run in collaboration with SAGE Gateshead.

It is a neutral space free of expectations, a space for young people aged 16 – 25 to meet up to listen or discuss different types of music, have conversations about musical and creative interests, share ideas and thoughts around these topics without a need for it to go somewhere.

*“Free minded time is an amazing free spirited session”*  
Isreal, 20

## “Free minded time in an amazing free spirited

The Free Space sessions have also given opportunities for young people to meet and familiarise themselves with different people from the music, creative and cultural sector in the region (and nationally), attend different performances, and most importantly have fun!

For those who have had an interest in pursuing or exploring ideas further, there have been creative networking opportunities made available to them and support offered to link them to further programmes of

support.  
*“I’ve really enjoyed it! It’s something that I wouldn’t normally come and see. I love how old school it is and I’d definitely come and see something like this again - I’ve never actually seen someone play the harmonica live before”* Sarah, 24

*“I’ve found them [the Free Space sessions] very fun and a great way to network with other artists”* Keddy, 18

Through this confidence,



Pop n Drop is a model we use at Youth Focus North East, this was set up in response to young people identifying they wanted access to support and guidance, but did not want to attend the youth centre. We use gazebos as our youth space and pitch up in green spaces around local communities where we work.

Thanks to our funding from Sport England and Street Games we are able to offer a safe space for young people aged 10 to 18 to develop friendships and life skills in an informal educational manner. We deliver themed sessions around the personal challenges young people face, including; deprivation, mental health, employability, risk taking behaviour and improving their physical activity.

Young people attend these sessions on a weekly basis with staff engaging with 50 young people on average every week. Even through

## “We can’t wait for the youth club to come back next week”

times of various lockdowns staff have worked hard to provide activity packs filled with crafts, sports challenges and food activities to keep them occupied. Alongside these activities staff offered online sessions for young people to be able to connect virtually with their peers and carry out some of the activities which were offered to them within their packs.

Many young people have commented ‘we can’t wait for the youth club to come back next week’ and they even end up bringing a few friends along too.

# session"

aspirations, trust and friendships have been developed. Young people have also been able to identify different types of barriers whether these are existing or things they could face and have developed, discussed and put into practice ways of overcoming these now and for in the future.

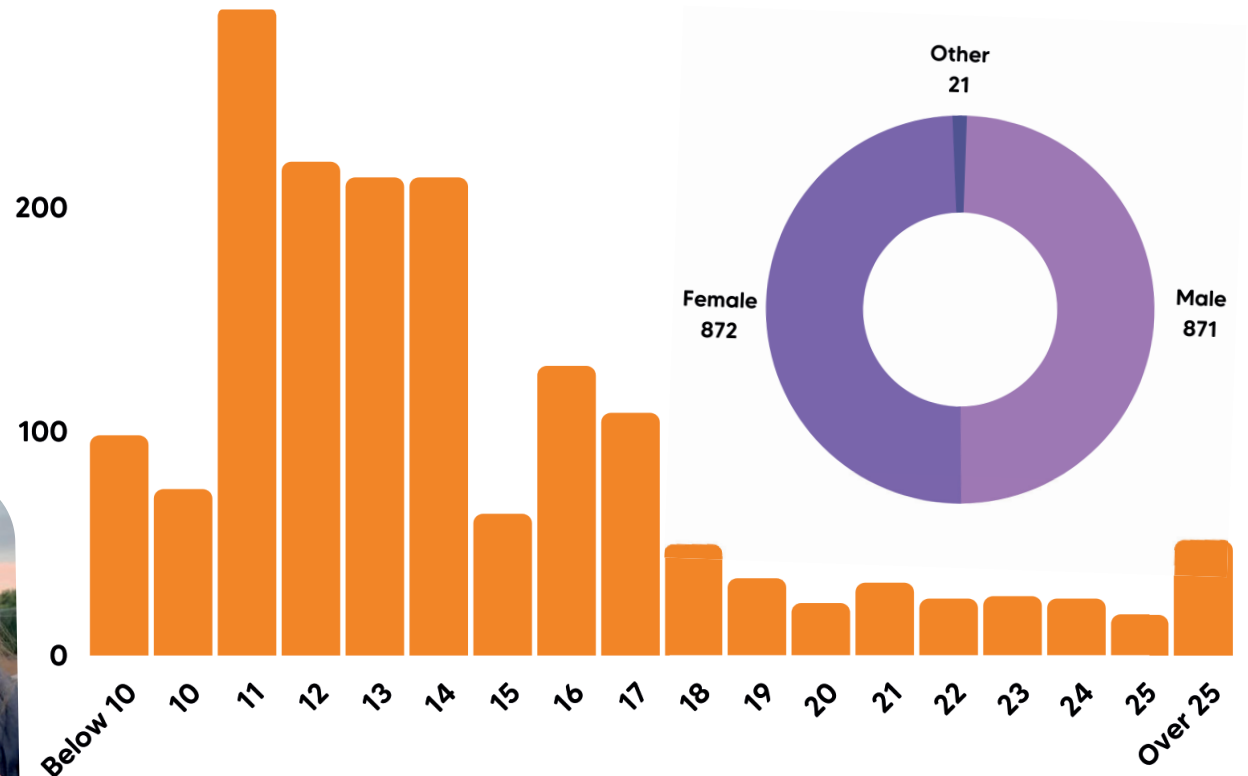
It has also been a wonderful exploration and development opportunity for organisations to improve their understanding of how to meet young people's musical and creative needs.



"I never saw myself as a leader but I suppose that's what I am now! and it's worth it for the kids"

"This course has helped me to understand the theory and practice of youth work and how my experience in education can be shaped to further what I hope to be a long term career in youth work"

## AGES AND GENDERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WE'VE REACHED



"Everyone thinks we are bums that don't want to work, but we do work and have families and care for parents. We try our best to manage our homes and we do it with help from each other, this is our Community"



"It is not about a creche it's our Safe Space and having fun with the kids"

"I love it here 'cause we get to do fun things with my Mum"



### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Current financial year		Unrestricted funds general 2021	Unrestricted funds designated 2021	Restricted funds 2021	Total 2021	Total 2020
Notes	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>						
Donations and legacies	2	24,833	-	-	24,833	-
Charitable activities	3	49,256	-	518,679	567,935	657,718
Other trading activities	4	112	-	-	112	260
Investments	5	2,678	-	-	2,678	3,308
<b>Total income</b>		<b>76,879</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>518,679</b>	<b>595,558</b>	<b>661,286</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>						
Charitable activities	6	59,995	-	494,106	554,101	637,450
<b>Net incoming resources before transfers</b>		<b>16,884</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>24,573</b>	<b>41,457</b>	<b>23,836</b>
Gross transfers between funds		2,576	3,819	(6,395)	-	-
<b>Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds</b>		<b>19,460</b>	<b>3,819</b>	<b>18,178</b>	<b>41,457</b>	<b>23,836</b>
Fund balances at 1 April 2020		146,554	56,563	172,275	375,392	351,556
<b>Fund balances at 31 March 2021</b>		<b>166,014</b>	<b>60,382</b>	<b>190,453</b>	<b>416,849</b>	<b>375,392</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.



## Making North Ormesby a Nicer Place to Live

Big Local is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and managed by Local Trust, working to build on the skills and experiences of others to provide expert advice and support for local residents. It's a long term, user-led programme, designed to ensure residents can focus on the things that make a lasting difference to their communities.

Youth Focus North East, in partnership with Safer

Communities, are proud and pleased to have been awarded the contract to deliver the North Ormesby Big Local Youth Provision. North Ormesby is a ward area situated in Middlesbrough.

Our provision is continuing to grow with new young people attending each week. Alongside this we have a number of young people who are regularly attending our sessions which is great to see.

Our sessions are full of a range of activities which contain a number of different themes such as sport, arts and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths). Some of the young people who attend have also been vocal about wanting to make a difference to their local area.

They have recently taken part in a Community Art for Void Properties project. Working with Middlesbrough Council locality team for North Ormesby it was identified early on that there are a number of Void Properties within the area. The young people also commented on this stating that the houses make the area 'look scruffy' and 'not a nice place to live'. With this in mind we supported a group of young people who wanted to set up a competition to create their own artwork to go on these properties. Eight entries were given which have now been made into a digital copy of the original artwork and we are now in the process of having these boards mounted on some of these empty houses for all the community to enjoy.

## Young Inspectors

Funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Young Inspectors programme is aimed at enabling young people to participate in making national policy.

Youth Focus North East, Youth Focus North West and Yorkshire and Humber Regional Youth Work Unit are working in partnership to deliver the Young Inspectors programme.

Young workers have recruited, trained, and are supporting young people in the role of Young Inspectors in order to give them a voice in the commissioning, monitoring and evaluation of national programmes affecting young people. Young Inspectors were invited by one of the organisations inspected to share their experience on the inspection process as an inspector.

Youth Focus North East is also supporting a network of organisations either currently delivering their own Young Inspectors programmes or interested in developing a scheme of their own. This network is providing training and peer support.

## Young People as Change Makers

The Youth Endowment Fund Peer Action Collective (PAC) is a national Peer Research project looking into youth violence. The PAC is a groundbreaking network of young people, who are designing and conducting research about young people's experiences of violence. They'll then be supported to turn what they've learned into action. From campaigning to improve local mental health services, setting up a youth centre or supporting young

people into employment – the PAC will create opportunities for young people to make their community a safer, fairer place.

Youth Focus North East are the lead delivery partner for the North East and we have partnered with 13 other organisations to deliver the project.

- NE Youth
- The Key
- Linx
- Safer Communities
- Actes

- Bright Futures
- SILX teen bar
- Northumbria Coalition Against Crime
- Children North East
- Mortal Fools
- Northumberland Pride
- Jack Drum Arts
- Auckland Youth and Community Centre

We have recruited 14 Peer Researchers to the project. All of our Peer Researchers come from different backgrounds, with differing experiences of youth violence. They bring unique qualities to the project which will complement each other as they work both individually and as a team.

The Peer Researchers have undertaken their initial

training and are currently working on their pilot research projects including:

- Violence against young girls and women - researching both the male and female views and how these differ.
- Violence against the refugee community.
- The influence of social media on youth violence.
- The influence of drugs and alcohol on youth violence.
- Issues of not reporting crimes to the police - why young people feel they cannot talk to police and what can be done about this.
- Anti-social behaviour and its causes, escalations and possible deterrents.

Following the findings of the research, relevant and effective social action projects will be developed. The aim is to engage 150 young people as changemakers. These changemakers will develop social action plans based on the Peer Researcher findings. This is key as it ensures that this research has a purpose and the ideas proposed by young people during the process are listened to and acted upon. PAC isn't just about research – it's about making change!







## Children in Need - First Time Investment

Positive Pathways delivers youth activities for young people living in the deprived area of East Middlesbrough. This project provides new and fun experiences through open access and 1-1's to explore opportunities, raise their aspirations, be positively challenged and be supported to be the decision makers of their own pathway.

This is a community project based in the Pallister Park Centre with and for young people of East Middlesbrough. Youth Focus North East offers a safe and fun space for young people aged 10 to 18 to develop friendships and life skills in an informal educational

manner. We deliver themed interventions around the personal challenges young people face, including; deprivation, employability, risk taking behaviour and improving their mental wellbeing and physical activity.

We offer workshops and activities as part of the informal education element of our work.

We have previously delivered activities on the issues of racism, bullying, money management and we invite guests to showcase different cultures and experiences to increase the young people's own knowledge, raise their aspirations to reach their full potential, allowing them to better themselves for their future.



## Championing the Whole Community

Young Boro Champions is a group of young people from East Middlesbrough, who have previously delivered short social action projects through the funded Co-Op Foundation project, Open Spaces, and have developed this project idea.

This group of young people want to be able to offer longer activities as they and their community come out of COVID restrictions to really imprint impact into the local community.

This funding enables young people to explore ideas and the challenges facing their community, raise their aspirations, be supported to be the decision

makers, manage a larger budget, take the next step in their social action journey and encourage more young people to be involved, especially those who have not heard of social action or think it is not for them.

The young people who are part of the core group have explored key themes they wish to deliver as part of this project. They feel that the environment is an important issue and they want to improve their local area. They have also identified key themes that have negatively impacted the local community during Covid, these are a reduction in mental and physical wellbeing, reduction in connections with young and old

and an increase in loneliness.

For their first project, the young people decided to support the whole community.

As a group they decided that they would like 30 individuals or families to receive a present from Santa in his grotto. They did this because they recognise that no matter your age you may be isolated and lonely during Christmas time, they realised you don't have to be 'homeless' to be poor and even if you work it doesn't mean you have a lot of money. They want to do this to make an individual's day brighter and let them know others are thinking of them.

## Tackling Youth Loneliness

### LISTEN AND THINK

Pick one of these podcast episodes or those of your own and listen to it, perhaps make notes, draw or just think about what they are saying.

### HOW DID IT MAKE YOU FEEL?

### DID YOU RELATE TO ANYTHING THAT WAS SAID IN THE PODCAST?

### HOW HAS IT CHANGED YOUR WAY OF THINKING?

### WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE LEARNT THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW BEFORE?

### REACH OUT

NOT ALL TYPES OF LONELINESS CAN BE FIXED INTERNALLY. SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO REACH OUT FOR HELP, WHETHER THAT BE THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU OR PROFESSIONAL HELP. IF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH DETERIORATES, YOUR GP OR LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPORT YOU.

YOU ARE NEVER ALONE. WE AT YNP WILL ALWAYS DO OUR BEST TO SUPPORT YOU.



The Tackling Youth Loneliness website has been designed to bring together a set of dedicated resources, useful research and information to support organisations and professionals to develop their understanding of youth loneliness and isolation, as well as exploring ways to help young people begin to tackle it.

These resources are free to download and will hopefully aid you in your efforts to reduce loneliness and isolation.

<https://tacklingyouthloneliness.org.uk/>



lonely  
**NOT**  
**ALONE**



## NORTH EAST YOUTH ALLIANCE

### Collaborating to improve the region

The North East Youth Alliance (NEYA), funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, was formed in 2020 and its aim is simple:

to improve services for young people through collaboration.

The NEYA is a collaboration between Youth Focus North East and NE Youth, to enable the youth sector in our region to collaborate for the benefit of the young people we all support. The funding is over five years, with a focus on:

**Youth Voice** : young people's needs are to be at the heart of everything the alliance does, and the NEYA will ensure that young people are able to contribute in a range of ways which are both relevant and interesting to them but also, importantly, meaningful. One such way was the development of a Youth Voice Group.

**Thematic Hubs**: aimed at tackling the challenges in the sector we all face. There is a focus on supporting organisations to come together in order to identify and respond effectively to those challenges. The first thematic hub has a focus on workforce development, bringing

capacity to the youth work sector to improve professional development in very practical ways.

**Place Based Hubs** : the first two years of the project have seen both Youth Focus North East and NE Youth working in distinct geographical areas: Birtley in the north of the region and South Durham in the south, with work concentrated on supporting local organisations to both sustain and grow a youth offer which matches the aspirations and needs of local young people. Years 3 - 5 will see a widening of number of areas using the learning developed over the first two years.



## North East Youth Alliance Workforce

We launched the North East Youth Alliance Workforce Development Brochure in February 2021, providing the most comprehensive training offer the youth sector in the North East has ever seen.

The offer represents more than £120,000 worth of investment into the sector and is, in itself, an example of what can be achieved when organisations come together and collaborate. The majority of the courses are free and those that have a charge are heavily subsidised which helps to ensure accessibility. This is in contrast to the vast majority of the training currently on offer to the sector - it is often expensive and/or during more normal times requires travel to London and other areas of the country making it prohibitive to many organisations. This workforce development offer is very much of the region, for the region.

A common thread running through our training offer, regardless of who it is aimed at, is an aspiration that collaboration between participants will be enhanced. We have embedded collaboration in different ways such as:

Courses specifically focused on collaboration within the context of the North East Youth Alliance

and youth sector of the region e.g. system change through collaboration and collective and collaborative leadership.

Dedicated opportunities to share practice and to collectively problem solve e.g. via Solution Focused Peer Support Sessions. Participants are also asked to share their contact details with each other to encourage the collaboration to continue after the structured sessions have ended. We are also exploring how we begin to build on those connections established through these sorts of sessions, which will provide another route to help people take a different way of thinking back into their organisations.

Specific collaborative activities embedded within distinct strands of our offer - our Clore Discover Programme will have a deliberate collaborative focus and will see participants working together and collaborating whilst developing

their leadership skills.

We have held a number of themed online discussions around workforce development, which is one of the main strands of the Alliance work. We wanted to involve people from across the youth sector to inform our workforce development plan - which means we can focus our support where it is most needed, ensure that what we deliver is relevant and useful, and also get a real buy-in from people across the sector to support each other as we develop our work.

We have more than 300 individuals already signed up to the North East Youth Alliance newsletter, which provides another means of keeping people updated, publicising opportunities and sharing ways people can get involved. We know this will continue to grow.



## Our National Partners

### Regional Impact Network

Led by Youth Focus North East, The Regional Impact Network is open to any organisation working with young people in the North East of England that has an interest in developing their impact measurement practice. The network exists to support youth organisations to undertake meaningful evaluation and impact measurement. It does this by providing a 'safe space' in which members can share issues or challenges that they are facing in their work, seek advice from peers, and access support that

enables them to develop solutions that work for them and that will inform their practice.

As part of our work with the Centre for Youth Impact we have supported the delivery of the Enterprise Development Programme. The programme provides a broad range of support for charities and social enterprises in England, helping them make a transition to new enterprise models, or grow existing ones, in order to build their organisational resilience by diversifying their income streams.

### Partnership with National Youth Agency (NYA)

NYA is the national body for youth work, and the Professional Statutory Regulatory Body (PSRB) for youth work in England. Youth Focus North East is delighted to be working in partnership with the NYA to deliver a number of programmes and initiatives aimed at meeting our collective objectives.

- Youth Worker Bursary Fund Programme - a national initiative to open up career pathways in youth work, delivering Level 2 & 3 qualifications.

- COVID - Youth Work Expert Group - the group have collaborated to produce a website, compiling the most relevant COVID-19 advice and tools and making them accessible to the sector.

- Routes to Success Project - a project supporting the delivery of activities designed to support communities through a range of current challenges. Phase one of the Routes to Success project is focused on two specific areas:
  - o Developing Sector Practice
  - o Organisational Development

### Network of Regional Youth Units

The Network of Regional Youth Work Units: England brings together independent organisations working across the youth work sector at regional level across English regions. Youth Focus North East is proud to be the Regional Youth Work Unit (RYWU) for the North East of England.

RYWUs act as hubs for developing and supporting youth work in their region. They work to develop new initiatives and joint partnerships for the benefit of youth work and young

people. The Network provides a bridge between national policy and initiatives, and local policy and delivery -

In the past year we have represented our region within the following forums and working groups:

- Education and Training Standards Committee England
- National Youth Policy Advisory Group
- Funders Infrastructure Collective
- DCMS Youth Voice
- Institute for Youth Work

## Join our network

As an organisation we are uniquely placed in our region to connect, develop and influence the policy and delivery of services for young people, and to act as a unified voice for the North East.

We aim to connect everyone who cares about young people - bringing together organisations, local and regional government, and young people themselves. We're developing and sharing knowledge and skills, equipping others to help young

people access the support they need. We're influencing policy and practice, generating the new ideas that will help young people thrive.

We want you to join us in this network. Our network allies get exclusive access to our latest news, important youth sector updates, events, and training and development opportunities.

The network provides:  
Fortnightly e-newsletters  
Thematic Seminars and Events  
Training Sessions

Links - with national and regional government, with national youth sector agencies

Collaborative working opportunities with a range of statutory and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations

Links to the North East Youth Alliance

The opportunity to add your events, vacancies, training, etc. to our e-newsletter and social media

Visit our website to let us know you want to become a Network Ally.



<https://youthfocusne.org.uk/join-our-network/>

## Amplifying Youth Voice

We want young people's needs to be at the heart of everything the alliance does. To ensure this we are working with young people who will be involved in a range of ways which are relevant and interesting to them, but most importantly meaningful.

Over the last 12 months we have had mini youth voice groups, with young people working on our funding bids, speaking to funders,

and designing activities which our youth board are involved in.

We recently set up a Youth Board which brings young people together from across the North East and each of the twelve local authorities. The group come with a range of skills and experiences and we are excited to see the group develop and how their ideas shape the youth voice element of the North East Youth Alliance.

## "Finally someone is listening to us"

Following on from the successful project, Our Community Matters, we wanted to explore working in a multigenerational model for a longer period of time, with community members taking the lead. We began working in three streets (Wilton Avenue, Broadway West, and Armitage) in Dormanstown in 2020/2021. We started by door knocking, detached work to meet members of the community, using the model of What's Wrong to What's Strong and hosting pop up youth

provision using green space. We engaged 157 local people during this time and community members were keen to not only have their voices heard but be part of creating their own solutions.

This project has worked with those who have been overlooked, enabling local people to take control of identifying and tackling issues they feel matter to them. We wish to showcase that people are assets in these communities, that they are not a problem and that they have the power to affect real and lasting change for the better. We are working to embed a sustainable and long term approach to people feeling more connected, involved and included in their communities. We want people of all ages to become leaders and equal partners in designing, delivering and evaluating positive

change and to showcase the difference they can make in their own communities.

We have supported the group to facilitate a space for them and to take their own actions and create their own solutions. The group have been gifted a hut to meet weekly and have worked hard to make the space suitable and friendly - this has included decorating and creating a garden space for the community. During this time the group has worked on a number of projects based on issues the community face. An example: the group have identified that speeding is a big issue for them so they created a slow down sign that will be unveiled to the community. The young people designed the sign and a community member then did the drawing. The group have also identified that isolation and loneliness is an issue in their community and they have planned and hosted events and activities to encourage community members to connect and meet new people. This has led to people making new friends and providing peer support to each other.



## Peat Rigg Outdoor Training Centre

### Streetlaw

Streetlaw began in the US in the 1970's and involves law students going into schools and youth groups to inform young people about legal issues using practical and interactive teaching methods.

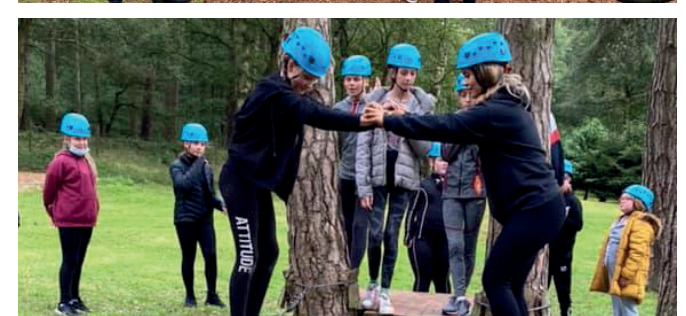
Since 2011 we have had the pleasure of working with Newcastle University to support their own Street Law project. The project develops and evolves every year, led by the student Street Law Ambassadors (SLAs).

As a key partner on the project Youth Focus North East delivers bespoke interactive training sessions to undergraduate students from

Newcastle Law School to enable them to gain skills and confidence to work effectively with young people. The training is delivered through interactive sessions where participants experience and have the opportunity to put into practice a range of techniques and exercises they can use in their practical delivery of the project

The SLAs have developed materials on legal issues such as police powers, access to legal advice, rights at school, street drinking and transitions into adulthood.

This year we trained 30 new SLAs and supported them to deliver sessions to youth groups in Blaydon and Throckley.



## A massive thanks to our funders



## COMING UP IN 2022



## Community Renewal Fund

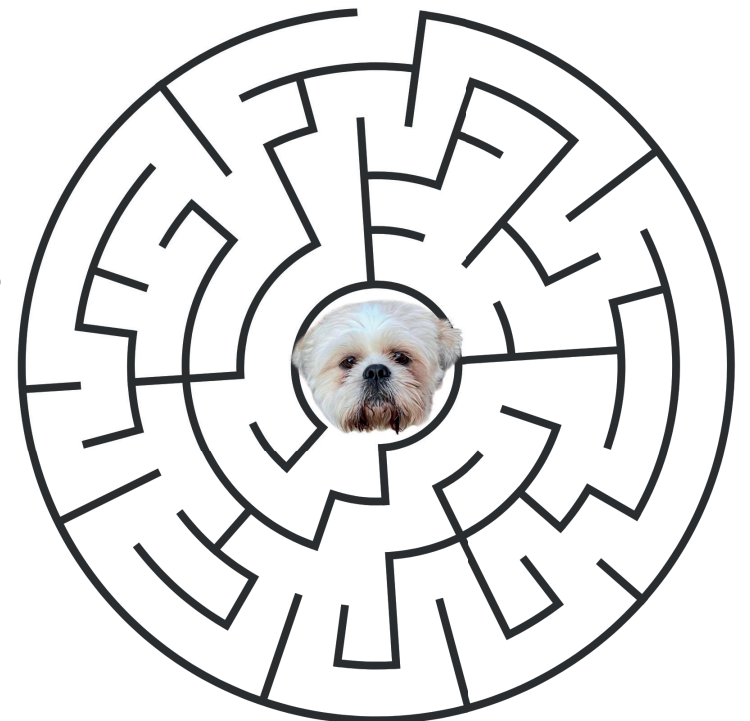


## Charlie's Maze

## Youth Work Wordsearch

C O M M U N I T Y E A S Y X C  
 V Z P J G L M L Q B Z Z O C H  
 A P L U R H U O S A I B U H O  
 L O K H H F S N J V D M T A I  
 U S D H Z T I E X O N L H M C  
 E I Y U V N C L F I O O B P E  
 S T H M L I H I Z C R W E I C  
 W I Q F P M A N S E T F M O O  
 M V P A R T N E R S H I P N S  
 S E Q A T Y G S B X E E B S O  
 J I Q E V H E S R U A V H F C  
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 V T E W X N O H R R T W S R A  
 D Z N I N C L U S I O N K F L  
 Q Q I S Q T L X V W U V E M G

- VALUE
- LONELINESS
- ALLIANCE
- CHAMPIONS
- YOUTH
- VOICE
- PARTNERSHIP
- NORTHEAST
- CHOICE
- CHANGE
- MUSIC
- COMMUNITY
- POSITIVE
- SOCIAL
- INCLUSION



Save Tilly's dog Charlie so he can go back to helping young people!



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