



Annual Report **2025-26**



90 Years of Supporting Young People





WELCOME

TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT

As we reflect on the past year, there is much to celebrate. This year has been particularly special as NE Youth marked its 90th anniversary, a significant milestone that provided an opportunity to recognise nine decades of supporting young people, strengthening communities and championing the value of youth work across the North East.

A highlight of the year was our 90th Anniversary Gala Dinner, which brought together supporters, partners, members, trustees, staff and friends of the organisation. It was a wonderful evening that celebrated our shared history while looking ahead with ambition and optimism. The event reminded us of the collective effort that has sustained NE Youth over the years and the countless individuals who have contributed to our success.

Throughout the year, we have continued to grow our impact, supporting thousands of young people through a diverse range of programmes, partnerships and opportunities. From youth voice and participation initiatives to targeted support programmes, workforce development and community based youth work, we have remained committed to ensuring young people are safe, healthy, involved and able to achieve their potential. I am particularly proud of our Trailblazer programme, delivered in partnership with the North East Combined Authority. Through the programme, young people were employed as Peer Ambassadors to research barriers to education and employment, helping to amplify youth voice and strengthen strategic relationships across the region.



None of this would be possible without the dedication, passion and expertise of our staff team, who work tirelessly to support young people every day. We are equally grateful to our volunteers, whose generosity of time and commitment enriches our work in so many ways, and to our trustees, whose guidance, oversight and unwavering support help steer the organisation forward.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in NE Youth's journey this year. Together, we have achieved a great deal and, as we look to the future, we remain committed to creating opportunities, amplifying young people's voices and ensuring they have the support they need to thrive.

 Jon Niblo
Chief Executive 

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VISION

All young people in the North East of England have the opportunities they deserve to get involved in their communities, enjoy their lives and achieve their potential.

MISSION

To provide a high quality, diverse and positive youth offer in the North East through our own services and by providing our members with relevant information, advice and support.

VALUES

Involve – young people are involved in communities and positive activities

Enjoy – young people enjoy their lives and the communities where they live

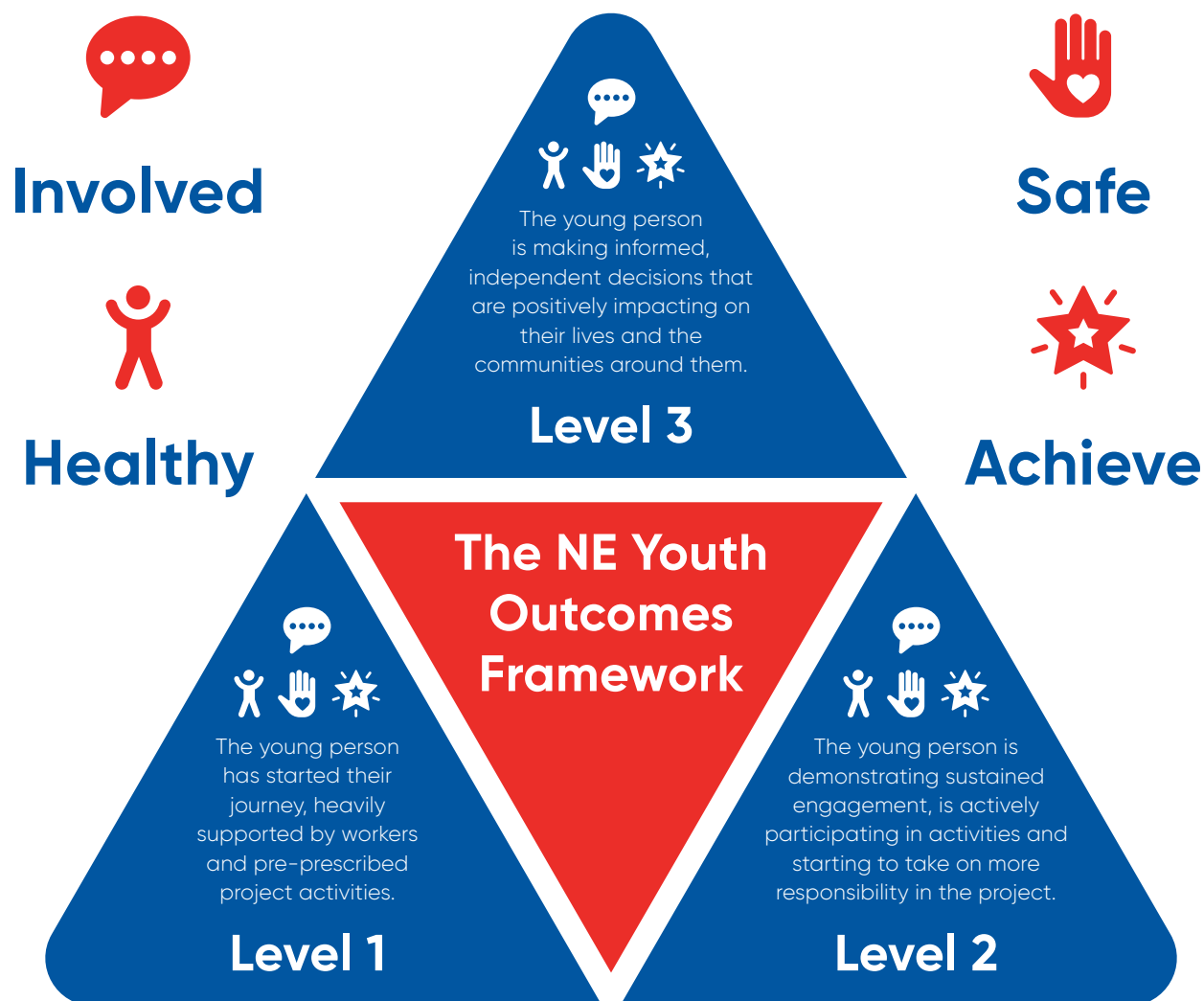
Achieve – young people are prepared for the future and are recognised for their achievements

Insightful – Building our expertise and our field of work

Engaged – committed long-term to the young people we engage with

Impactful – working to secure sustainable outcomes

Professional – with everything and everyone



The NE Youth Outcomes Framework is organised into four outcome areas which allow us to support young people to thrive in line with our organisation's vision: All young people in the North East of England have the opportunities they deserve to get involved in their communities, enjoy their lives and achieve their potential.



Involved



88%

of young people have
tried new things

92%

of young people feel part
of something bigger

“

“Having somewhere
I can go and have fun
and get advice.”

Case Study

For more than a year, our older youth group at West Moor has provided young people with a consistent space to build relationships, develop confidence and become more involved in their local community. With a strong core group and new members joining throughout the year, young people began expressing an interest in taking part in social action and finding ways to support others locally.

During group discussions, young people became aware of the Christmas wishing trees displayed in the community centre foyer, which highlighted gift requests from local young people and families in need. The group collectively decided they wanted to contribute and took full ownership of the initiative by selecting gifts and organising donations.

As their ideas developed, the group chose to create Christmas kindness hampers to provide additional support for members of the community. Young people were involved in every stage of the process, from deciding what items to include to designing how the hampers would look. The hampers included hot chocolate, socks, candy canes, lip balm and personalised Christmas cards. One young person, SB, designed

the cards, giving them the opportunity to showcase and develop their creativity.

Throughout the project, young people demonstrated teamwork, empathy and a genuine commitment to supporting others. Receiving positive feedback from the community centre gave the group a strong sense of pride and achievement, reinforcing the importance of young people playing an active and positive role within their community.



Case Study

Through ongoing group work and relationship building with a group of young men in a school, they have been increasingly involved in shaping honest conversations around masculinity, identity and the issues affecting them in their everyday lives. The programme aimed to create a safe and respectful space where young men could openly discuss topics they would not usually explore within a traditional classroom environment.

Sessions focused on masculinity, relationships, sexism, stereotypes, emotional wellbeing, sexual health and communication, alongside practical preparation for adulthood such as interview skills. Activities and discussions encouraged young people to share opinions, reflect on their experiences and respectfully challenge each other's thinking. Rather than feeling like formal lessons, sessions were designed to feel relevant to their real lives, helping young people engage more openly and confidently.

Over time, there was a noticeable change in how the group interacted with one another. As trust developed, young people became more mature in discussions, listened more carefully to others and showed greater confidence in expressing themselves.



One teacher reflected on this change, saying, "When you first started working with the group they were very immature boys and now they are young men, it's incredible."

Young people spoke positively about having a space where they felt heard and involved. One said, "You teach us stuff that we need to know, that school won't teach us," while another shared, "This gives us a place to talk about private matters." Another young person reflected that the programme taught them that "it's okay to be a man but also okay to speak about feelings with mates." Perhaps the most powerful summary came from one young person who simply said, "We talk about reality."

The programme demonstrated the value of creating spaces where young men can meaningfully participate in conversations that affect their lives, helping them build confidence, self awareness and stronger relationships with others.



HEALTHY

82%

of young people feel
more confident

82%

of young people feel
better about themselves



“

*“Staff are very supportive,
makes things like trips and
residential very accessible to
those who might not usually
have them opportunities.”*

CASE STUDY

It became clear that a young woman who attends our youth club was struggling with school and other pressures in her life and the support during youth club time wasn't enough. We were able to accept her onto our 'Purely Belta' programme, which provides 6-weeks of 1:1 mentoring support.

The programme gave her regular time with a trusted adult outside of school and family settings, creating a safe space where she could talk openly about how she was feeling and the pressures she was experiencing. Through these conversations, we worked together to map out different areas of her life and identify the things that were affecting her wellbeing most.

One key issue identified was the impact her dyslexia was having on her confidence and experience at school. With practical support, including coloured overlays to help with reading, she began to feel more comfortable and supported in lessons.

A major focus of the mentoring was helping her develop a healthier balance in her daily routine. She explained that after school she would spend every evening revising until bedtime because she felt that was what she should be doing. Together we explored the importance of rest, enjoyment



and self-care alongside achievement. We created a new evening routine that still included revision time but also made space for activities she enjoyed, including reading before bed again. As part of this, we chose a new book together to help her reconnect with something she previously loved.

The mentoring sessions helped improve her emotional wellbeing by giving her space to reflect, build healthier routines and develop practical strategies to better manage pressures both in school and at home.

CASE STUDY

When LP and ES first joined the sessions, both young people were reserved and reluctant to take part in some group activities, particularly cooking and eating activities which were a popular part of the youth club programme.

As staff developed trusting relationships with them, it became clear that both young people were facing barriers linked to their wellbeing and confidence. ES shared that they had never cooked before and felt nervous about getting things wrong, while LP experienced significant food anxiety and worries around food poisoning, which made eating unfamiliar foods very difficult.



To support both young people, staff worked individually with them while also creating a safe and supportive group environment with no judgement or pressure. Activities were planned around simple foods the whole group enjoyed and felt comfortable making together. The group began with cheese toasties before progressing to pancakes the following week, allowing the young people to build confidence gradually and at their own pace.

The impact on both young people's emotional wellbeing and confidence has been significant. ES reflected, "last week I couldn't even make a cheese toastie, this week I am making my own pancakes from scratch."

LP also shared that they were able to manage feelings of anxiety and enjoy eating something they had made themselves. The project has helped both young people feel healthier, more confident and more included within the group.



safe



83%

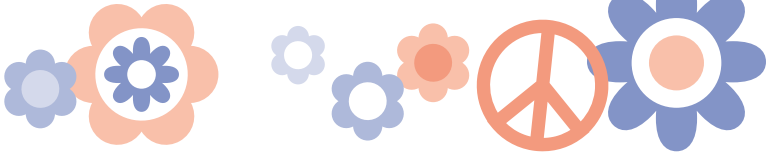
of young people
make better decisions
around their safety

98%

of young people know
more about how to keep
themselves safe

“

*“Feeling safe,
always having someone
to talk to.”*



Case Study

Young people attending the Throckley youth session took part in a fire safety workshop delivered by the Fire Safety Team. The session focused on increasing awareness of fire risks, promoting responsible behaviour and helping young people understand their role in keeping themselves and their communities safe.

Through open and engaging discussions, firefighters explained how quickly fires can start and spread, and the potentially devastating consequences for individuals, families and neighbourhoods. Particular attention was given to deliberate fires and fire related anti social behaviour, exploring both the risks to public safety and the impact these incidents have on emergency services. Young people also learned about the legal consequences of fire related offences and the challenges firefighters can face when responding to emergencies.

A key strength of the session was its practical approach. Young people were given the opportunity to explore a fire engine, learn about specialist equipment and try on firefighting uniforms and protective clothing. These activities helped bring the learning to life and provided a greater appreciation of the skills and responsibilities involved in keeping communities safe.



The session encouraged young people to think critically about safety, responsibility and respect for others. It also helped strengthen positive relationships between young people and emergency services. By the end of the workshop, participants had developed a greater understanding of fire safety and the important role firefighters play in protecting people and responding to emergencies within the community.

Case Study

Young people attending our session in Gateshead took part in a creative project in partnership with Orbis Community. The project explored young people's perceptions and experiences of knife crime, using art as a way to encourage discussion about an issue that can have a significant impact on their sense of safety and wellbeing.

Starting with a blank canvas, each young person created a pop-up book that represented what knife crime meant to them. Throughout the session, participants were encouraged to reflect on their own understanding of the issue, discussing what they had seen in their communities, whether they knew anyone affected by knife crime, and how high profile incidents had shaped their views. Jon-Paul also shared his own experiences, helping to create an environment where honest and respectful conversations could take place.

The activity provided a safe space for young people to explore a difficult topic in a way that felt accessible and non-judgemental. Through creative expression, they were able to communicate fears, concerns and hopes that may have been difficult to articulate in a traditional discussion. Staff took time to speak

with each participant about the meaning behind their work, helping them reflect on the choices they had made and the messages they wanted to convey.

Young people completed a pop-up book, which is now displayed at the Orbis Community building in Gateshead. Their artwork not only raised awareness of the impact of knife crime but also demonstrated the importance of creating safe spaces where young people can discuss community safety openly.

The enthusiasm generated by the project was reflected in one young person's simple but powerful question: "Can we do something like this again?"





Achieve



82% 

of young people
know more about what
they're good at

77%

of young people
feel good about
their future

“

*“You feel part of the
activities and you can do
whatever you want.”*

Case Study

Three young people involved in NE Youth's Peer Action Collective, Penny, Lucy and Ellie, achieved a significant milestone when they were invited to Parliament to share the findings of their peer led research with Members of Parliament. Drawing on their own experiences of school exclusion and youth violence, they played a leading role in designing and delivering research that engaged more than 400 young people from across the North East.

Through the project, the young people developed their research, communication and leadership skills, gathering evidence from their peers and analysing the issues that mattered most to them. Their work focused on young people's experiences of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education and the ways schools can better support young people facing complex challenges. Rather than professionals speaking on behalf of young people, Penny, Lucy and Ellie ensured that young people's perspectives were heard directly and authentically.

The quality of their work and the confidence with which they presented their findings attracted the attention of local MP Liz Twist, who invited them to Parliament to speak with a wider group of MPs.

Reflecting on their contribution, she commented:
"I was so impressed by just how articulate they were that I invited them down to parliament to speak to more MPs."

Presenting in Parliament represented the culmination of months of hard work, commitment and determination. The experience demonstrated not only their ability to influence decision makers but also the value of meaningful youth participation. By turning their lived experiences into evidence and advocacy, Penny, Lucy and Ellie helped ensure that the voices of hundreds of young people from the North East were heard at the highest levels of national decision making.



Case Study

G is a young person who joined the Healing Hearts and Minds (HHM) programme while experiencing significant barriers to independence. At the time, G spent most of her time at home, often sleeping during the day and rarely leaving the house except to attend a local youth club once or twice a week. Ongoing mental health challenges and physical disabilities had affected her confidence and made it difficult for her to take steps towards the future she wanted.

One of G's aspirations was to become more independent and eventually move into her own home. Through the HHM programme, we worked closely with her to identify goals, build confidence and create a sense of purpose and progression. Support was tailored to her interests, with regular visits to places such as the Baltic Art Gallery providing opportunities to build routine, social confidence and motivation.

A key aspect of the programme was helping G to recognise and celebrate her achievements. With encouragement and practical support, she began setting realistic goals and taking positive steps towards them. As her confidence grew, G successfully started volunteering with a number of organisations, developing new skills, gaining valuable experience and meeting new people.

One of G's most significant achievements has been securing her own home. Through HHM, we supported her with paperwork and preparations for the move. Receiving the keys to her new home marked an important milestone and reflects the determination, resilience and progress she has shown throughout her journey.



Our Year



100,000+

young people indirectly
engaged with via our network

5385

Individual young
people directly
worked with

200+

Member
organisations

100%

of workers and
volunteers increased
their knowledge by
attending training

619

Training places
filled for workers
and volunteers

12

Local
Authorities

5000+

Volunteers across our network



in Numbers

TRAILBLAZER programme

We recruited four young people to become Peer Ambassadors as part of the Trailblazer programme, funded by the North East Combined Authority. The project explored the barriers young people face in education and employment through youth led research and engagement.

The ambassadors designed and delivered focus groups and interviews with young people and employers, before leading the planning and delivery of a large scale roundtable event at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead. The event brought together employers, stakeholders, youth organisations and decision makers to hear the findings of their work and engage directly with the ambassadors. During the event, the ambassadors premiered a video created in partnership with Digital Voice, presenting six personas that reflected some of the most common barriers young people experience when accessing employment opportunities.



90 Years of Supporting Young People

Throughout the programme, the Peer Ambassadors consistently challenged themselves and developed new skills. Many stepped into unfamiliar professional environments for the first time, including interviewing employers and speaking publicly about their own experiences. They demonstrated strong teamwork, communication and organisational skills, particularly in the lead up to the high profile event at the Baltic where they worked hard to ensure the right people attended and engaged meaningfully with the project.

The long-term impact of the programme has already been significant. Krystal and Jackson have continued their involvement with NE Youth through further youth led initiatives. Maksim secured an IT apprenticeship through a connection made during the project and has since started work as an IT Consultant Apprentice. Alex has gone on to begin training with the Navy.

Krystal's journey in particular demonstrated the transformative impact of the programme. Initially reserved and uncertain, she grew in confidence throughout the project and embraced every opportunity presented to her. Despite personal and educational challenges, she showed resilience, determination and a willingness to step outside her comfort zone. Her confidence was especially visible during the final event at the Baltic, where she spoke openly and confidently in front of a large audience. Since completing the programme, Krystal has continued working with NE Youth and is now exploring opportunities within youth work, including apprenticeships in the sector.

The ambassadors exceeded expectations and achieved far more than originally anticipated. Their openness, honesty and willingness to speak about their own experiences brought authenticity and depth to the project, making a powerful impact on those involved. The programme concluded with meetings with local MPs, Catherine McKinnell and Liz Twist, where the ambassadors shared both their personal journeys and the findings from their research.





Workforce Development

The North East Youth Alliance (NEYA) workforce development programme has delivered another successful year, continuing to strengthen the skills, knowledge and capacity of the regional youth sector.

A key highlight has been the development of a strategic partnership with Ingeus, enabling the delivery of a range of short courses that have expanded learning opportunities and supported organisations to respond to emerging sector priorities and workforce needs.

We have also strengthened our partnership with the University of Sunderland, delivering information sessions on the Youth Work Degree Apprenticeship.

These sessions have helped raise awareness of professional development pathways, generated significant interest from employers and prospective learners, and contributed to wider workforce sustainability across the region.

Additional training has focused on cultural competency, inclusive communication and supporting learners of English as an additional language. Sessions exploring how to write English for a global audience have also helped practitioners improve the accessibility of their communications.

Collectively, these developments demonstrate the strength of NEYA's workforce development offer and its continued commitment to building a skilled, resilient and connected youth sector workforce.



Child Poverty Network

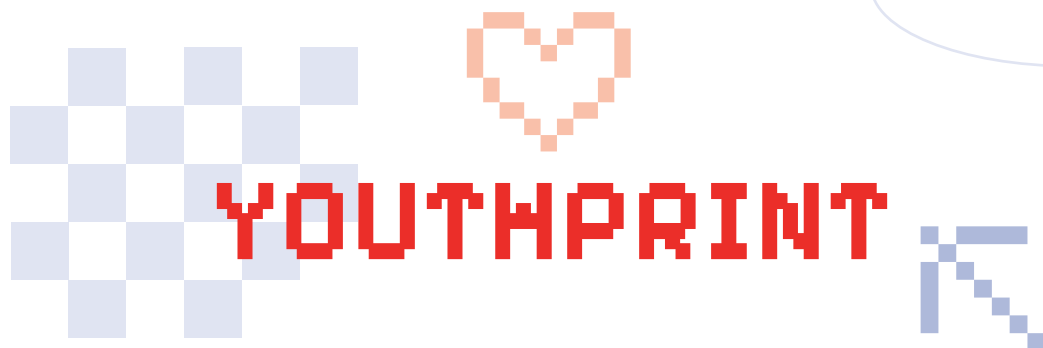
The NEYA Regional Child Poverty Network has continued to strengthen collaboration across the region, bringing together organisations and practitioners to address the impact of child poverty on children and young people. A key feature of the network has been its commitment to inclusion, with meetings rotating across the North East to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and experiences contribute to learning and discussion.

A significant achievement this year has been the collaborative development and publication of the Child Poverty Self-Assessment Framework. Created through partnership working, the framework provides organisations with a practical tool to reflect on their approaches to tackling child poverty, supporting quality improvement, accountability and the meaningful involvement of young people. Feedback has been highly positive, with stakeholders highlighting its accessibility and value, particularly within the faith sector.

The network has also provided an important space for sharing challenges, emerging practice and coordinated responses to child poverty. By strengthening relationships and collective understanding, it continues to support a more effective regional response while creating opportunities to influence future policy and practice.



"Fantastic opportunity to network and share learning with each other and advocate for youth work and the difference the sector can make on the lives of young people. Advocating for the quality of work delivered."



YouthPrint has continued to grow as a countywide youth sector network, bringing organisations together, creating opportunities for young people and strengthening partnerships across County Durham.

300

**young people
engaged with
YouthPrint activity**



60

**young people
completed projects
that benefited
217 community
members.**

90 Years of Supporting Young People

One of the biggest developments this year has been YouthPrint's involvement in Durham County Council's Local Youth Transformation Pilot. Following the National Youth Agency review of the Council's youth offer, Durham County Council secured funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to support the next stage of development work.

As part of this, YouthPrint has been commissioned to lead several areas of work over the coming year, including the development of a County Durham youth work curriculum and quality standards, support for new youth work apprentices and peer ambassadors, alongside wider workforce development and partnership support across the sector.

Local partnership working and youth voice activity have continued to develop across the network, with young people helping shape local activities. Small Grants Big Ideas gave young people the opportunity to lead social action projects within their communities.

YouthPrint also continued to support workforce development opportunities for young people. Two Introduction to Youth Work courses were delivered during the year, supporting 18 young people to develop knowledge around youth work, safeguarding and leadership.



Y2k



31

**young people
completed First Aid
training**

33

**young people
achieved Level 1
Food Hygiene
qualifications**

Membership

2025 Impact Awards!

We welcomed over 300 people to the 2025 Impact Awards Ceremony at the Grand Hotel Gosforth Park. The awards celebrate and recognise the achievements and talents of our member organisations, including their young people, staff and volunteers.



It's the young people that really make this event special. The night kicked off with an energetic performance by MK Diamonds Cheerleaders. Then we were in the safe hands of our charismatic young hosts Penny, Arthur and Lucy of PAC (Peer Action Collective) who guided us through the celebrations like true pros. Between award presentations young people took to the stage to provide entertainment for the guests. Jack McQuillan's musical theatre renditions from Cabaret and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, sparkled with star quality and wowed the audience. Within the opening bars of their first song The Room 14 DofE band had the dancefloor filled with people dancing and singing along.

As for the awards themselves, a big congratulations go out to all the nominees, you are all making such a positive difference to your communities!



"We've been proud members of NE Youth for many years now, and we can honestly say we love being part of it. Being a member gives our staff so many opportunities to develop new skills, grow in confidence, and learn from others. Our young people also benefit hugely - there's always something new, exciting, and meaningful for them to get involved in."

The NE Youth team are incredibly supportive. No matter what we need, they're always there - just an email or phone call away - and that support makes a real difference to the work we do. It genuinely feels like being part of a wider youth family, where everyone is working together to give young people the best possible opportunities."

We're proud to be members of NE Youth, and we value the endless opportunities, encouragement, and sense of belonging it brings to our organisation."

Buffalo Centre

CORPORATE EVENTS & SPONSORSHIP

2025/26 has been another positive year for events, as we continue to strengthen our fundraising calendar and build meaningful relationships with supporters, sponsors and corporate partners. Through a varied programme of dinners, challenge events, raffles and community fundraising, we were proud to generate vital income to support young people across the North East.

90th Anniversary Dinner 2025 - £13,368

Held in April 2025, our 90th Anniversary Dinner marked a significant milestone in NE Youth's history and offered a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our legacy, our supporters and the impact of our work. The evening brought people together to recognise 90 years of championing young people across the North East, while also raising an impressive £13,368 to support our future work.



Clay Pigeon Shoot Weekend 2025 - £85,429

Our annual Clay Pigeon Shoot weekend returned in June 2025 and once again proved to be one of the highlights of our fundraising year. Bringing together teams, supporters and businesses for a competitive and enjoyable weekend, the event raised an outstanding £85,429. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who took part and contributed to the continued success of this much-loved event.

90 Years of Supporting Young People

Annual Golf Day 2025 - £4,000

Our Annual Golf Day took place in September 2025, bringing together supporters for another enjoyable day of sport, networking and fundraising. Events like this continue to play an important role in strengthening our relationships with businesses and individuals who are committed to supporting young people across the region.



Bradley Hall Fundraising Event 2025 - £8,411

We were delighted to benefit once again from Bradley Hall's fundraising activity in December 2025. Their continued support generated a fantastic £8,411 for NE Youth, helping us to continue delivering opportunities and support for young people across the region. We are hugely grateful for their generosity and ongoing commitment to our work.

ImechE Annual Dinner 2025 - £2,626.50

In November 2025, we were delighted to be part of the ImechE Annual Dinner, an event which provided a valuable opportunity to connect with supporters and raise awareness of NE Youth's work. We are thankful to everyone involved for helping to champion our mission and for their support of young people in the North East.

Christmas Raffle 2025 - £1,514

Our Christmas Raffle in December 2025 raised £1,514 and provided a festive boost to our fundraising efforts. Thank you to everyone who donated prizes, sold tickets and took part. Support for initiatives like this makes an important difference and helps us continue our work with young people throughout the year.



Burns Night Ball 2026 - £9,436

Held in January 2026, our Burns Night Ball brought together supporters for an evening of celebration, entertainment and fundraising. The event raised £9,436 and continued to be a valued part of our annual events calendar. We are grateful to everyone who attended and helped make the evening such a success.

Wild Deer Event 2026 - £2,467

In March 2026, NE Youth was pleased to be involved in the Wild Deer Event, which raised £2,467 in support of our work. We are grateful to everyone who took part and supported the event, helping to generate valuable income for young people across the North East.



International Women's Day Events 2026 - £2,913

Our International Women's Day events in March 2026 once again brought people together to celebrate, connect and raise funds in support of NE Youth. Together, these events generated £2,913, and we are thankful to everyone who attended, supported and helped make them possible.



THANK YOU SO MUCH TO OUR FUNDERS

Action For Children

Community Foundation
North East

David Dockrey

Dickon Trust

Family Gateway

Frazer Trust

Garfield Weston

Gateshead Council

Henry Smith

High Sheriff Tyne and Wear

LGA Foundation

Metrocentre

North East
Combined Authority

Newcastle Youth Fund

National Institute for
Health and Care Research

North Tyneside Council

Northumbria VRU

Percy Hedley

Pilgrim Trust

Point North

Ponteland Council

RW Mann

Sir James Knott

St Nicholas Trust

Tesco

The Ballinger
Charitable Trust

The Barbour Foundation

The British Museum

The Elsie Davis Trust

The Finn Family Fund

The Gosling Foundation

The Key

The Scholefield Trust

The Shears Foundation

The William Leech
Charitable Trust

TK Maxx

The National Lottery

Tyneside Charitable Trust

Warburtons

Youth Focus North East



In memory of John Shallcross OBE
and Nigel Voules and their
commitment to NE Youth.

Contact Us

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