



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

FUNDING

GOVERNANCE

EMPLOYMENT

VOLUNTEERING

NETWORKS

# In the community, for the community

NCVA exists to enable the community, voluntary organisations and charities to develop and succeed. To do so we provide expert advice, training and information. We provide a voice for the voluntary sector and help to build partnerships.

## Working with people in Northumberland to improve lives, we:

- PROMOTE volunteering and community activity
- CHAMPION the voluntary sector, giving a voice to and highlighting the efforts of people working in their communities
- HELP people find volunteering opportunities and help organisations find volunteers
- ENABLE people to develop skills, become more employable and find jobs
- RUN voluntary programmes to help older people retain their independence
- EMPOWER people organising voluntary groups and charities in the community
- ASSIST voluntary groups, organisations and charities to operate legally and effectively, and to find trustees
- GUIDE voluntary groups and local charities to find funding for their work
- ORGANISE networks and bring community organisations into partnerships that amplify their reach and enable them learn from each other
- PROVIDE practical services available to community groups and local charities that small organisations cannot have 'in house'.



# Chair's report

The end of our financial year coincided with the retirement of our Chief Executive Officer, Anne Lyall. Because of Covid restrictions we were unable to say to her publicly at our January Annual General Meeting our many thanks for all the work she has done, not only for our organisation but for the voluntary sector in general. So Anne, thank you, and our best wishes to you for a happy retirement. Our best wishes also go to Jackie Auld and Ann Atkinson on their retirement.

Behind the statistics in the Annual Review there are human stories of how we have been of help and a support to many in what has still been a difficult year. However, they are now historic and in a changing and challenging environment we have to be alert to the needs of our members and of the sector. I know that our new Chief Executive Officer Caroline Rogan and the team will make every effort to meet the demands for our services, and we will continue to work together with others in the sector for the benefit and for the good of the voluntary sector in the North East.

It is regrettable that there seems to be a lot of negativity around in the sector at the moment, but I hope that this is temporary, and with the country returning to some normality after Covid, that this attitude will change, despite all the problems with ever increasing cost of living and heating bills.

I am not going to lament over all the problems and issues that abound in the voluntary and community sector at the moment, or just complain about so many issues, because there are opportunities out there. We need to have a positive attitude to these challenges and we need to adopt the attitude that 'we can' in order to play our part to help and support the needs around us in the year ahead. Last year has not been without its problems but we have been able to support and help many in Northumberland and I am sure that we will continue to do so in the year ahead.

I conclude these few words with many thanks to all the staff, trustees, volunteers and partners in the Bridge Project for their support and help to many groups and people in Northumberland during the past year, and also a big welcome to our new Chief Executive Officer Caroline Rogan.



**Rodney James**  
Chair of Trustees

# Northumberland's VCSE infrastructure organisation

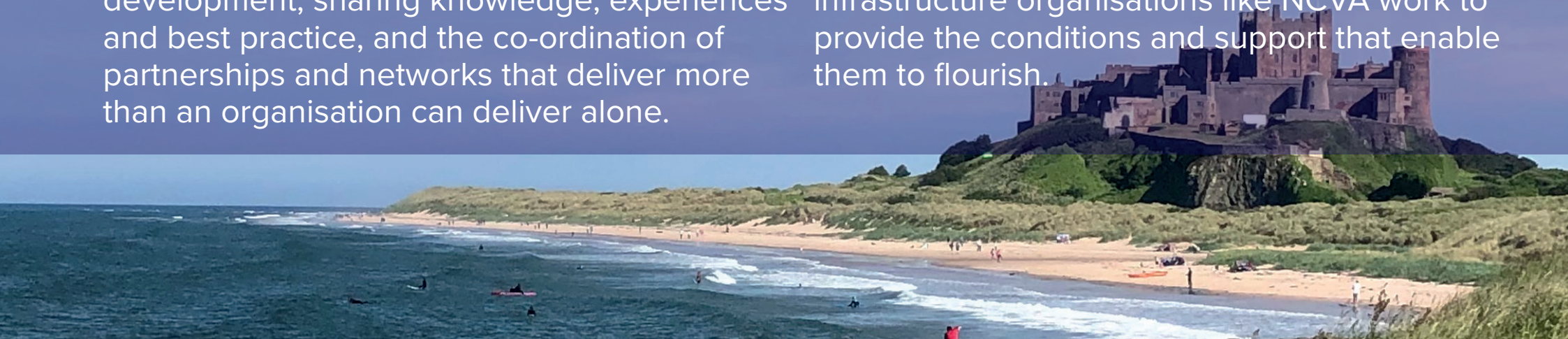
NCVA is what is these days referred to as an 'infrastructure organisation' serving Northumberland.

An 'infrastructure organisation' enables organisations that directly offer services to people and communities do so more effectively. In this case NCVA serves voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. Our members are those organisations, rather than individuals.

The services NCVA provides are known as 'infrastructure services'. This includes helping organisations here in Northumberland to win funding, build capacity, supporting their development, sharing knowledge, experiences and best practice, and the co-ordination of partnerships and networks that deliver more than an organisation can deliver alone.

As an infrastructure organisation we also offer support and mentoring, help develop skills and spread knowledge. NCVA promotes volunteering and community action and is a voice advocating for VCSE organisations throughout Northumberland.

But it's not just about providing services. Voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises are shaped by the community needs that they were created to serve. They are flexible and fluid, changing with those needs and responding to new challenges as they arise. This is one reason partnerships involving VCSE bodies offer more than the sum of their parts and why infrastructure organisations like NCVA work to provide the conditions and support that enable them to flourish.





# Caroline Rogan CEO writes:

As Northumberland CVA's new Chief Executive it would be obvious to say that the organisation is in a period of change. The reality is the sector's landscape is always in a period of change and adapting to this, to ensure our community receives the support it needs, is our forte.

Over the last twelve months delivery methods were adapted to ensure the people we serve could continue to receive the support they so desperately needed. With support from our wonderful funders we have continued to provide projects that have reduced isolation, provided digital connectivity, promoted volunteering confidence, supported community needs and development, and provided employment confidence, skills and training.

We have continued to support the sector through disseminating crucial information via social media platforms, facilitation of networks, providing information with support and advice to individuals and groups, and providing a hub of infrastructure services to support the sector to continue delivering their much needed services.

We have learned from the experience. There are lasting effects with political and funding changes which impact our community and the sector particularly. We face rising inflation and a cost-of-living crisis that will hit our community hardest. However, there are also opportunities to provide continued support to our community, with partnership collaboration across sectors, adapting technology, delivery methods and approaches to be responsive to reach those most in need.

In the coming period we will be unapologetic for showcasing the work of the sector and continuing to provide a hub for

collaborative information sharing and working. Our core community action work will receive a higher profile to demonstrate the value it delivers; building on community assets to benefit community, people and places and empowering those active in the sector to support capacity for the future.

We will continue our work building confidence, training and success in employability for our residents and we will be providing an inclusive employment network to identify gaps in skills and build partnerships with pathways to employability. We will continue to involve and encourage the sector to be influential, responding to calls for evidence and campaigning for change, ensuring every voice is heard. We will continue extending our digital reach to be better placed to promote the work of our members and project the community networks that we build. We will also continue to be involved in projects that harness our ability to build partnerships, to use volunteering effectively and to bring together the best the sector has to offer.

Our mission is to support the community and champion the sector, highlighting areas of need and adapting approaches, enabling funders to support the sector and shared causes. It is our fantastic staff and trustees with their enthusiasm and commitment to support the community and the sector at the core of making this all work and they will be highlighted in this Annual Report.

Our thanks and appreciation, as always, goes to our funders, partners and members, and I would add to that my personal thanks to the Chair of Trustees, Rodney James, and to my predecessor as CEO, Anne Lyall.

**Caroline**



# The impact we make in Northumberland

NCVA makes an impact throughout Northumberland, helping organisations win funding, operate more effectively, improve the skills of their members, and find able people to act as trustees.

Over the last twelve months or so NCVA has:




**In 2021/22 groups supported by Northumberland CVA have raised funding in excess of £4.27m**

## Bridge Northumberland




NCVA starts 124  
69 Female,  
54 Male,  
12 Non White British,  
71 with a disability,  
16 ex offenders



**Delivered 1,975 hours of telephone befriending support**

## NEWS

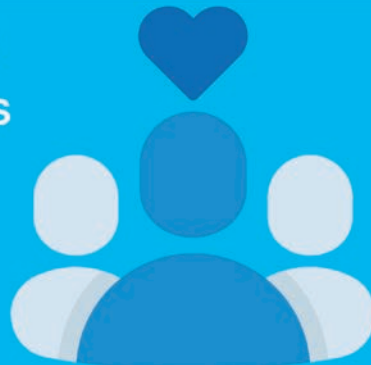


**Throughout the year, we published:  
24 fortnightly and additional e-bulletins**



Facebook - Reach 41,772  
1883 reactions, 1095 Likes  
and 646 shares

Twitter  
50k tweet impressions



We posted 539 new  
volunteering opportunities



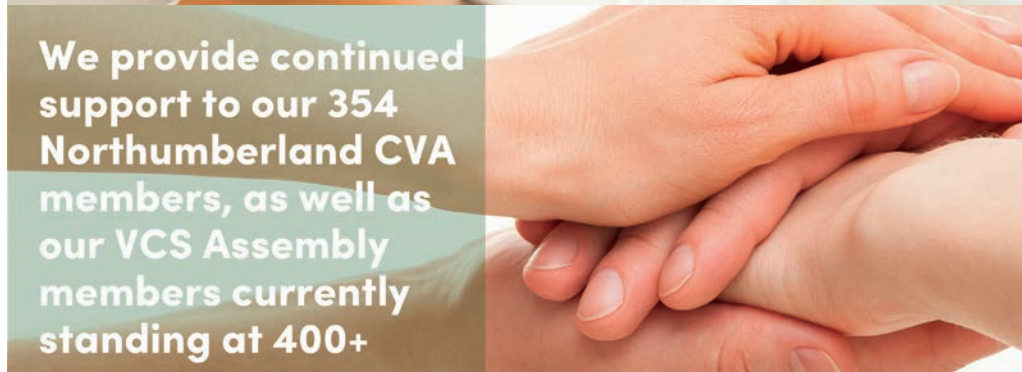
Handed out over 100 FREE  
Pay as You Go SIM cards  
to local community groups



Delivered Safer Culture  
online training sessions



We provide continued  
support to our 354  
Northumberland CVA  
members, as well as  
our VCS Assembly  
members currently  
standing at 400+



Skills for everyone  
Weekly 'Tea & IT'  
sessions help people  
get the idea of  
digital skills whether  
they have some  
experience or none.



# Our services

NCVA provides services in five main areas. During the Covid-19 pandemic new or adapted methods of service were essential.

Since emerging from the pandemic and the re-opening of our Ashington HQ in March 2022, NCVA has been taking stock of the lasting changes that have taken root and is looking at how the services we provide can adapt to harness new practices.

## FUNDING

The success of a community group depends on its ability to secure the resources needed to make a difference to the lives of its beneficiaries.

Before groups start applying for grants they need to make sure they have the basics in place. Funders need to know that they can trust the group with their money, and that projects and organisations are well managed and likely to succeed.

NCVA assists community groups to get fit for funding, to develop funding strategies and in searching for funding from among the many sources available in Northumberland and beyond. For community and voluntary groups the development of strategies can be daunting but with the right guidance a written plan can be put in place that details future projects and provides a path through the actions, time-scales and possible funding sources.

Searching for funding can be time consuming, regardless of the type of project or the level of funding required. The funding landscape can be fast-moving with opportunities on short time-scales. NCVA offers one-to-one advice to its members, documents and publicises funding opportunities, and organises regular funding fairs that bring together funders and potential bidders. We also help member organisations by developing their skills in writing and submitting funding bids.

## GOVERNANCE

Enabling community and voluntary organisations to maintain legal and effective governance is a core function of NCVA and a key service to new and existing member organisations.

Good governance is about effective leadership and ensuring that an organisation is properly run. NCVA provides advice to member organisations to facilitate good and more effective governance through one-to-one advice, training, collective advice to management committees and by enabling the recruitment of trustees.

We advise new organisations on how they can best set themselves up and tailor their governing body to best suit the day-to-day functions and activity targets they have set themselves. We can provide newly established or growing organisations with guidance on adopting constitutions and rules, how to monitor their governance and establish simple methods of ensuring transparency and accountability during their operation. Not just running properly, but being seen to run properly.

For existing organisations there is always the problem of doing things the same old way – even when the organisation has long outgrown its constitution or structures. NCVA can provide advice on reviewing mission, goals and values and on putting in place new structures. We also keep our members up to date on changes in the legal framework for charities or other legislation that requires action; for example safeguarding policies or data protection legislation. We help management committees discharge their responsibilities by ensuring they can make the right decisions based on the most up-to-date advice and information.



## EMPLOYMENT

Since 1995 NCVA has been working to improve the employment prospects and help develop the skills of people in Northumberland. More than 3,000 people have been helped by the award-winning programmes we have run or led.

During that time we have benefited from a range of different funding sources, from the UK Government and the European Union, through major institutions and trusts to local charities. Whatever the source of funding the aim remains the same; to provide support to people struggling with unemployment and underemployment by helping them build their skill sets, cope with new technologies and methods and to engage better with the labour market.

Over more than quarter of a century working on employability NCVA has accumulated expertise and knowledge in the field that has enabled the organisation to deliver employability services that are more client-centred, better targeted and supported effectively one-to-one. This expertise led to NCVA becoming the lead partner in Bridge Northumberland – a flagship employment programme supported by the National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund.

We are proud of what we have achieved with Bridge and the approach it has developed. As well as being the lead partner, NCVA has provided its volunteering specialism to Bridge Northumberland, offering supported volunteering opportunities enabling participants to add experience to their CVs.

## VOLUNTEERING

Many of the charities and community groups NCVA work with rely on volunteers to provide the services they offer to their communities throughout Northumberland.

NCVA works to help organisations find volunteers and potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities. We want to help as many people as we can into volunteering. We provide information on volunteering, what it involves and doesn't, the skills that can be useful to charities and community organisations and how volunteering can help the volunteer.

Volunteers benefit in all kinds of ways; gaining new skills, making new friends, becoming more active, getting out and about, improving mental and sometimes physical health but most of all in enjoying the feeling that you are making a real difference to the cause you're supporting or the community in which you are based.

NCVA promotes the message that all kinds of people volunteer – that volunteers are people like YOU – concerned for their communities or committee to a cause because of personal, family or community experience.

Many charitable and voluntary organisations have found it more difficult to find willing volunteers since the Covid-19 pandemic. NCVA operates online brokering services to match volunteers to volunteering opportunities and has been increasing the profile of its online and physical volunteering promotions.

## NETWORKS

Community networks are essential to NCVA's mission to champion the county's voluntary sector. They amplify the voice, extend the reach, and build the influence of community and voluntary organisations.

NCVA uses its knowledge and experience of the sector to enable partnerships, maintain networks and broadcast their achievements. We have three key networks:

**EMPLOYABILITY** – Improving the skills and job prospects of people in Northumberland is central to NCVA's work. The Northumberland Employability Network brings together organisations delivering services in this field to share experiences and build links.

**HEALTH & WELLBEING** – The Northumberland VCFSE Health and Wellbeing Network is a new partnership bringing together community and voluntary groups to share information, experience and good practice and link with statutory services in the County.

**SOUTH EAST NORTHUMBERLAND** – the towns of this area accommodate 50% of the County's people in 3% of it's land area. The network shares experience addressing shared problems of limited transport connectivity and high levels of social deprivation.

# We delivered and more ...



## Elements Training

Over 200 people have enrolled on a course during the past year.

There are now four courses on offer and two more planned for 2023.

## Online Survey

Working with our North of Tyne Partners, VODA, Connected Voice and Volunteering Matters, we held a series of 'focused conversations' with Northumberland VCS organisations to talk about the raft of issues and experiences they have had from both an organisational and volunteer perspective. This was followed up in late 2021 with an online survey which will feed into the longer term resources the project is looking to develop.

## Funding success

We continued to work in partnership with Community Foundation Tyne and Wear/ Northumberland to support community organisations access the Wind Farm Community Fund. In Spring and Summer 2021 we hosted a number of online 'meet the funder' session and then held our first face-to-face session with groups in December 2021. The most recent funding round saw grants of approx £165k awarded to eligible VCS organisations and community groups.



## Connecting Bridge Northumberland

13 Bridge Connectors undertook training. Connecting support was provided to 17 beneficiaries on the programme.



## National Lottery Open Day

To celebrate 'The National Lottery Open Week 2022', in March we held a free creative workshop at Full Circle Food in the Hirst Park Hub. Sixteen people enjoyed a 'find your talents' session hosted by Creative Remakery.

## Working in Partnership with The Ballinger Charitable Trust

We help allocate £5,000 in small grants to ten small voluntary organisations to deliver activities in their local communities. We look forward to developing this partnership further in the future to benefit communities in Northumberland.





## NCVA Community Recovery Facebook

Approx 720 posts were made in the 12 months, with popular updates having a reach of over 2.5k users.

We continue to post VCS related information from the Government.

## North of Tyne Combined Authority Wellbeing Roundtables

Thanks to funding from Carnegie Foundation, we facilitated some roundtables with VCS organisations and activists to feed in observations and evidence to the North of Tyne Combined Authority in order to influence their 'Well being Framework for the North of Tyne' released in January 2022.

**GOING  
GREEN  
TOGETHER**

## Linking in with VONNE's 'Going Green Together'

We are supporting the climate change agenda, producing guides to assist organisations and groups to reduce their carbon emissions and participating in the Going Green Together roundtables at a regional level.



## Ashington Children's Network

Co-ordinated by Children North East, we act as a voice for the voluntary sector with this network. We have contributed to a consultation/mapping exercise and, using our membership data and networks, were able to contribute to this.



## Supported volunteering

NCVA provided supported volunteering to enable people to get essential experience through volunteering with one to one support of a volunteer buddy.

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# Looking to the future

NCVA has emerged from the pandemic with a new set of skills and experiences to use in the future. We are developing a new, more proactive approach to projecting the organisation in the community. Changes to the organisation and co-ordination of the VCSE sector in Northumberland have presented NCVA with new opportunities. In the current and coming period NCVA will be building on both its recent successes and opening new channels of activity.

## Making a real difference for real people

Bridge Northumberland is a 'Building Better Opportunities' programme that brings unemployed and economically inactive people into the labour market. NCVA became the lead partner in Bridge when the project was struggling to find its feet and was instrumental in turning it round.

By March 2023 more than 2,000 unemployed or economically inactive people will have benefited, with Bridge Northumberland exceeding its ambitious targets and delivering a positive gain to both the local economy and the public purse.

Bridge Northumberland recently celebrated its success, which stems from the ethos of recognising that individuals face barriers that must be broken down to create a realistic chance of engaging in the labour market. The approach centres on individual needs, constructing programmes with one-to-one support, addressing root causes that go well beyond

the ability to write a CV. Bridge Northumberland takes real people on real journeys that can open doors and change lives.

## Successful funding fairs for Northumberland

14 funding organisations spoke with more than 50 community groups at the latest funding fair organised by Northumberland Community and Voluntary Action (NCVA).

One of the funders, Community Foundation said:

“The funding fair was a great success, the Community Foundation was able to speak with over 40 organisations on the day, which hopefully will lead to more applications. The information prior to the event was great, being able to shuffle around orgs to ensure that the right person got to speak with them was very useful and removed any confusion on the day of the event. 10/10 for organisation.”

After such positive feedback NCVA is already organising its next funding fair for early March 2023 – watch this space for further details nearer the time.

One of the community groups seeking funding said:

“I found the funding fair a valuable experience. The format of booked appointments provided a great opportunity to sit down with potential funders and build up a rapport with them. It was also a useful opportunity to network.

“Everyone we saw were welcoming and listened with interest about what we are trying to do with our building to help improve our local community. They provided very useful advice on the whole process of grant funding. When they were between meetings, people we didn't have an appointment with took

time to chat and also gave us tips on how to move forward, which was really appreciated.”

## Employment fairs around Northumberland

Working in partnership with CAN under the Bridge Northumberland banner, NCVA has developed local employment fairs, linking local employers with jobs on offer to job seekers of all ages. So far we have run successful fairs in Prudhoe, Morpeth and Berwick, with Ashington to be held in November. Further fairs are planned for 2023 in Alnwick, Hexham, Bedlington, Prudhoe, and Cramlington.

## Volunteering remains at the heart of NCVA

With 30 year's experience working with volunteers, we help find the right route for volunteers and the organisations and projects that need volunteers. Our volunteer website currently has around 1,538 organisational records and hundreds of volunteers. Most community organisations noticed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a damaging effect on volunteering, with some people reluctant to return to volunteer activity outside their homes. Partly in response to this NCVA has been running a new campaign to promote volunteering and to link new volunteers with opportunities.

## Activities with Bridge

NCVA delivers the activities for Bridge Northumberland clients to help build confidence and self-esteem. Since April we have delivered 242 hours of activities to 101 clients on programme. The range of activities on offer include: gardening, She DIY and yoga but the most popular so far has



been the four week smart phone photography workshop. Four Bridge clients have taken stunning pictures which will be on view in an exhibition at our Ashington office from 3rd November 2022.

### **New look new website for NCVA**

A fresh new brand for NCVA to reflect the organisation and its future work, 'In the community, for the community' sums up what we do and our ethos. We have launched a new website to showcase our services to communities, groups and individuals. The new website will have additional features for our members, with access to fact sheets, training, policy and information.

### **Hosting the Illuminated Sheep Art Trail**

To celebrate the return of the Lindisfarne Gospels to the North East, the artist Deepa Mann-Kler produced an art trail of Illuminated Sheep inspired by light, pilgrimage and the illuminated manuscripts

During October and November NCVA is hosting one of the flock which will spread across the country From Berwick to Hexham and Haltwhistle to Blyth, the flock have separated creating a number of FREE art trails across the county.

NCVA was chosen for its prominent position and ideas for community-based work with businesses and organisations. Our sheep, named Sheepington by pupils at Ashdale, The Dales School, is being used with the help local businesses to encourage locals and visitors to find their inner shepherd, exploring the county's rich landscape, heritage and culture to #FindTheFlock.

### **Building networks and partnerships**

NCVA helps to initiate, develop and maintain networks and partnerships across the voluntary and community sector in Northumberland. We also focus

our work in targeted projects where our experience can benefit individuals and our community as a whole.

### **Connecting Northumberland**

Simply Connect Northumberland enables people to find self-help groups, advice and support organisations or to get involved in leisure and social activities by searching a database of hundreds of local community organisations.

### **Assisted Shopping**

NCVA brings together volunteers to help enables older people to get out to the shops with one-to-one support. The service helps combat social isolation as well as meeting a basic need in which participants can do things for themselves.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Having identified a gap in ICT provision in the area, NCVA established a digital inclusion programme for older people through which they can become familiar with the essentials that make life liveable in a digitally-driven world.

### **Employability Network**

Improving the skills and job prospects of people in Northumberland is central to NCVA's work. The Northumberland Employability Network brings together organisations delivering services in this field to share experiences and build links.

### **Health & Wellbeing Network**

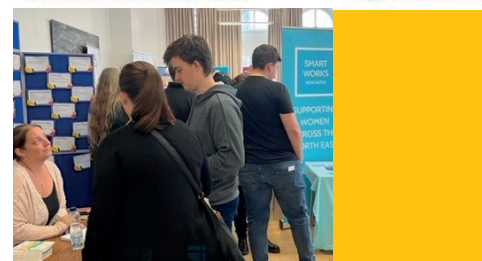
The Northumberland VCFSE Health and Wellbeing Network is a new partnership bringing together community and voluntary groups to share information, experience and good practice and link with statutory services in the county. The network held its first conference in September.



## **We're up for it!**



Lend a hand,  
become a volunteer



# NCVA team



## Marc Johnson VCS Support Services Manager

I manage the VCS Support Services Team and Volunteer Development Officer. We provide advice to community and voluntary groups on all aspects of governance and organisation.

We advise organisations on their structure, the operation of their management committee, what they might need by way of policies and standards, how to ensure that their finances are properly managed and even on how to wind up a community group properly.

Funding advice to community and voluntary groups, including identifying relevant funding sources and support to complete funding applications, is an important part of the work making a big difference to what they can achieve. We work to bring together funders with applicants, advise on applications and publicise opportunities.

The team also develops the chargeable services element of VCS support services, for example advising organisations on how to register as charities – something where it is a lot easier to use the expertise of NCVA than it is to re-invent the wheel and where paying for proper advice can avoid delay and wasted energy.

This support helps to build and sustain a vibrant and effective voluntary sector in Northumberland. It's good to see the volume of funding we've been able to help deliver and rewarding to see a group grow from start up into making a real difference in its community.



## Caroline Burden Bridge Worker Lead

As Bridge Worker Lead my role is to support the team of Bridge Workers to deliver on the project targets.

I love the variety of the work, no day is ever the same!

I am fortunate to work with a fantastic team of skilled workers and there is always a good atmosphere in the office despite the challenges we sometimes encounter. It's great to see how the work of Bridge enables beneficiaries to build confidence and develop skills and helps them move towards achieving positive outcomes.

The Bridge Project makes positive differences to so many lives. Through the support of Bridge and its range of interventions we not only help the individual on their own personal journey but we are also able to support local groups and organisations when beneficiaries are able to share their skills and experience through volunteering or finding paid work.



## Rob Gillie Volunteer Development Officer

Working with clients and volunteers on the shopping and IT projects has been extremely satisfying. They provide positive and immediate feedback on the shopping trips and after they have received help through Tea and IT. One IT client emailed to say, "I'd like to thank you again for your help and patience. I hope you are experiencing huge job satisfaction today - you deserve it". That sort of thing means a lot.

Our Assisted Shopping project takes older people to Manor Walks Shopping Centre in Cramlington. We call it a shopping project but the real benefit to clients is the social contact with others, our volunteers and staff. For some clients this is the only time that they leave their home. One said: 'It's alright where we live but this is wonderful, to get amongst the real people'.

In 2021 we received funding from Northumberland County Council to run some basic IT training in communities across Northumberland. We initially delivered sessions in Cramlington, Newbiggin by the Sea and Haltwhistle. We called the sessions 'Tea and IT' to promote the informal nature of the sessions rather than using terms such as 'training'. Feedback from the sessions were extremely positive, with clients reporting that they had grown in confidence in their use of IT. We have since set up weekly sessions from our offices in Ashington and have delivered sessions at Seaton Sluice Community Centre. and are due to start sessions at New Hartley and with the Northern Butterflies Group in Cramlington.



## Clair Parker Bridge Engagement Officer

My role is to promote Bridge Northumberland, and to engage with potential participants, and with organisations who refer clients. I'm often the first point of contact, offering a friendly introduction to people about what they can expect from Bridge.

I enjoy working alongside a great team. Knowing that the Bridge Workers, intervention and 'behind the scenes' staff are expert professionals who genuinely care, enables me to promote the project confidently.

The most rewarding aspect of my job is building a rapport with individuals and describing how Bridge is able to help. It's great when I hear about people's progress and successes despite the many challenges they may have faced. It's very clear that Bridge has an excellent reputation, with feedback that we deliver a unique and valued service. Bridge engagement is often a 'go to' for professionals seeking signposting information for people who have complex challenges.

Many of the people that Bridge can support do not tend to self-advocate, so a broad and varied reach in the community is essential in building a 'grassroots' awareness of Bridge. In addition to the recorded contacts below, there is plenty of ad-hoc Bridge promotion. Dropping in to hand out Bridge advertising materials at a range of places; from soft-play centres to pharmacies, from dentists to bookmakers, and hairdressers/barbers and convenience stores, coffee shops, churches, pubs and community centres.





**Angela Evans**  
**Bridge Worker**

I am a Bridge Worker for Northumberland CVA and I support a range of individuals with often complex needs to make positive changes to move forward in their lives. The role involves using various techniques, advice and guidance to encourage people to take a closer look at themselves and their lifestyles as they are often in denial and do not always see how or why they need to gain support as they live in their own comfort zone and fear change. As a Bridge Worker I help them recognise and acknowledge their skills and capabilities so they can move closer to their goals and succeed.

What I like about the role is meeting new people, their honesty about their life experiences and how they are often open minded and willing to accept constructive criticism for improvements so they can begin to believe in themselves.

Bridge has helped and supported so many individuals to grow and be more positive about themselves by engaging in a range of support networks and activities, it has been a pleasure to be apart of their journey when they take ownership of their lives and reach their own personal goals.

The benefits of Bridge Northumberland in supporting the local community are: providing voluntary opportunities not only to support individuals by gaining relevant work experience and personal development but also supporting local organisations and charities in raising awareness about their cause, and to raise their own profiles.



**Martin Conway**  
**Community Engagement Officer**

My main focus is community development and engagement, working with community organisations and volunteers to ensure they have strong foundations to carry on the good work they do in their communities

To sustain local work we try to transfer the skills and knowledge they need to effect the change they want. There's no 'typical week'. Sometimes I might be advising a group on a funding bid and what they need to focus on, I might be working with colleagues at community events, I could be pushing out Facebook posts about training opportunities, or representing the voluntary sector when working with public sector bodies.

It's the variety that community work brings. I meet so many people with different backgrounds and experiences. I feel I am an invited guest into so many community groups. It's a pleasure to be around people who are committed to improving the lives of others or make their town or village the best it can be.

Things are never easy in the voluntary sector, and resources are often tight. The challenge of looking at a problem or issue and finding a good solution is motivating. Change doesn't happen overnight but it's great to get a bit of good news, 6, 12 or 18 months later, that someone's life has turned around or a community group are thriving after a little bit of support from myself.



**Jane Coney**  
**Communications Officer**

I see my job as very simple. I tell people what NCVA and Bridge Northumberland do and how we make a difference. I help make the argument for what we do throughout Northumberland and sharpen the tools we use to do so: our social media output, our displays, our image – this report.

You tell stories with words, pictures and numbers, but to engage people those words and numbers have to be about people.

Volunteering and community activity are inherently optimistic concepts, based on the idea that we can make change happen and have a positive affect on the lives we live and the places in which we live them.

To communicate these ideas we have to have an optimistic language and we have to shout about our success in terms that anyone can understand.

Success follows success. My job is to make sure that everyone knows about the professionalism of our Bridge Workers; that people know the value of 25 years experience in employability, that people want to be part of networks that look and sound professional, and that everything we do is positive and accessible to any reader or viewer.

I love it when a strategy delivers its aims. When I see our engagement rising and our releases being covered it gives me a buzz. When I see an event come together it's a win I enjoy.



**Tony Stroughton**  
**Supported Volunteering and Connector Project Administrator**

I support my work colleagues with the admin side of things from filing, updating spreadsheets, online training and DBS applications. Wherever I am needed to support.

I enjoy my job working for Bridge Northumberland. I am actually honoured to be a part of the team, or you could say family. Knowing the work I do is going to benefit people's lives gives me such a sense of pride. I actually love waking up in the morning to come to work, I would work weekends if I could – as long as Newcastle United aren't playing.

The reach of Bridge benefits so many by building confidence, self-esteem and reducing social anxiety. Plus giving to the community by volunteering, allowing many to changes their lives and to better themselves and achieve what they want to achieve.

All and all, I'm proud of what I do and I'm proud of all the beneficiaries that have come through the programme and are still going through it. Well done!



**Sharon Harris**  
**Volunteer Development Officer**

My role is part of the North of Tyne Project to make the North East an area of excellence for volunteering. A partnership with Connected Voice, Newcastle Volunteer Centre and North Tyneside VODA, the aim is to promote a climate in which volunteering can flourish. We draw on local and national research exploring priorities for local volunteering, involving organisations from across the region. As part of this project, we are developing free training for volunteers to access online as well as good practise guides for organisations.

I also work alongside community organisations in Northumberland to help them promote volunteering opportunities through our website as well as offering advice and guidance on volunteering.

What I love about my role is that I get to meet so many different people and organisations, no two days are the same. Engaging with potential volunteers I can help them find the right opportunity, as well as making them feel comfortable and knowledgeable about volunteering and how it will benefit them. Working with Bridge beneficiaries is particularly rewarding as it is aiding them though their barriers to volunteering and enabling them to take a valuable step to build confidence and self esteem.

I help community organisations find the volunteers to support services they provide. Without volunteers, many organisations just simply could not operate. By supporting them, I am helping them to engage with their local communities and the fantastic work that they do.



**Angela Broome**  
**Executive Assistant to CEO**

I assist with a variety of administrative tasks to ensure that evidence is collected, collated and stored in accordance to GDPR requirements.

I ensure all beneficiary files are compliant with ESF/National lottery audit requirements.

I record all starts and exits by quarter and relay this information back to NCC at fortnightly meetings, ensuring that all results match across each system.

I enjoy seeing the journeys of the beneficiaries and how much support Bridge Workers and partners provide, delivering such high numbers of positive outcomes.

To be part of a team that has such a positive impact on the community with both hard and soft outcomes, seeing a person move forward in their life in any way makes NCVA an amazing place to work.

So ensuring that all files are compliant and show auditors the amazing journeys beneficiaries get through this project is my aim.



**Julie Fox**  
**Bridge Activities Co Ordinator**

My role involves setting up activities and events for our beneficiaries as well as working with other organisations involved in providing activities in local communities.

Activities deliver mental health and psychological improvements which include better decision-making, feeling mentally clearer and more receptive to communication. Improvements in mood and lower levels of stress have been obvious from start to finish.

What I really enjoy about the job is empowering people through engagement. For example the photography workshop; at the start the group were self-conscious, nervous and quiet. One beneficiary had to meet us at the location for the photography after feeling a barrier to attending the class at NCVA, Ashington. This gives me a real buzz, working with people watching their confidence grow and trying to inspire them to move forward.

The activities with Bridge have been successful. After regular participation in activities beneficiaries have been able to establish new routines, incorporating more structure into their daily lives and making adjustments to other lifestyle behaviours. For example taking up gardening after the regular gardening sessions.

The social aspect of the Bridge programme is key for many beneficiaries. It helps them to be more motivated to continue their involvement, creating a sense of belonging and connectedness and for beneficiaries that were socially isolated. It provides new opportunities to meet new people, increase their social network and support their local community.



**Tony MacDonald**  
**Bridge Worker**

I have often thought of Bridge Workers as 'agents of change', helping people overcome barriers to employment, education or training.

We empower people by raising their self-esteem and confidence and advocating on their behalf. We help those we work with to find solutions to what are often complex problems, such as housing issues, substance misuse, risk taking behaviour and mental and physical health. We work in partnership with a wide range of agencies and partner organisations with the overall aim of improving the lives of the service users.

What I enjoy most about the role is the autonomy given to be able to affect change for the people we work with. Within the team there is a vast reservoir of skills which all bring something different to the table, we share these skills whenever we need to meet a common goal.

The impact is much wider than just working directly with the individual, if a person has exited the Bridge project successfully then they will be a much more resourceful individual at the end of the process. What this means in a wider sense is that they will be less likely to need support services in the future and hopefully be able to make a valuable contribution to society which will benefit the local economy and improve standards of life for all.





## Leanne Brown Bridge Worker

I am a Bridge Worker for Bridge Northumberland, based with Northumberland CVA.

I work with beneficiaries who have some barriers to moving towards education or employment. I coordinate their time on the project, coming up with individual action plans to assist people to realise their potential.

Bridge Northumberland is an excellent project to be part of. My role is varied and no two days are the same. It is very rewarding to be part of the journey each beneficiary makes.

I have an excellent group of supportive colleagues and we all have different areas of expertise.



## Susan Eaton Membership and Networks Officer

My role is to encourage voluntary and community organisations within Northumberland to become members of NCVA. I also manage and develop networks - the mechanism that NCVA uses to bring the VCSE sector together, find out what other organisations are doing, support each other and enable their views, issues, successes to be heard.

The networks are also open to the statutory agencies as it is important that they also know what is happening and can sit with the VCSE to discuss the issues that are important to the sector. The information that is shared across the networks is a vital part of keeping organisations informed and up to date. The networks also have a strategic, influencing role whereby issues that are raised by the sector are communicated at a strategic level to the Local Authority and Health Services and information from a strategic level is communicated back to the networks.

I really enjoy meeting different people and finding out about what they do and how we can work together. Taking complex issues and then talking to people about them, so that they can understand them is very satisfying.

I started in April and the impact I have had has been the formation of the Employability Network, the Health & Wellbeing Network Conference which was attended by 100 people. Connecting more people into the networks and helping them to develop and concentrate on the issues that matter.



## David Gravell Bridge Worker

I help, guide, advise and support people through challenging times – a connector.

I am able to support a client towards a goal that they have chosen: being able to show a client where the answers are in their community and sharing the process for future use; helping the client change direction towards a new goal; giving the client ownership of their pathway; always being supportive and respectful and seeing people develop.

The impact on the person could be minuscule or massive; it all depends on what expectations a person brings with them. As a Bridge Worker I try to find out what support they have away from Bridge or make them realise what the affect on their family will be when they are successful. Motivations are the key to success, I have a recent client who has just secured employment and stated that he would never have thought doing voluntary work two days a week would end up with him being employed as a Branch Manager.

The community benefits in tons of ways from the clients using local facilities available to them, clients feeling they belong and can contribute in their local area. After Bridge the clients are equipped with the knowledge and the tools to enjoy their community.



## Lisa Wackett Project Co-ordinator

I liaise and build relationships with new and existing organisations to encourage supported volunteering opportunities, recruit and train volunteer buddies, look for and match volunteering opportunities and provide ongoing support.

It is the best feeling in the world finding an opportunity that a person really enjoys and watching them grow in confidence to the point that they no longer need my support or the support of their buddy.

Supported volunteering enables people to undertake volunteering regardless of their barriers, which without our buddies some may not be able to do. It gives them and buddies the opportunity to enhance or gain skills to build confidence and self-esteem. Without doubt it has a positive impact on mental well being. Many people continue to volunteer after leaving the project, benefiting the charitable organisations, wider community and themselves.

When opportunities have been available and our volunteers have excelled they have generated employment opportunities for themselves and in some instances this has then opened up opportunities for others – a good experience for an employer can open up a willingness to embrace the benefits of taking people from the programme. Employment has had a positive impact on not just the beneficiary but the family unit and the relationships we build mean they are never afraid to return and ask for support even when they are no longer on the project. There's a knock-on effect – from enjoying volunteering themselves, to family friends and into the community.

# Trustees



Rodney James  
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Joe Jackson  
Vice Chair



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Hindmarsh  
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Maureen Rolf  
Trustee



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Trustee



Sue Ashmore  
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# Income generation & accounts

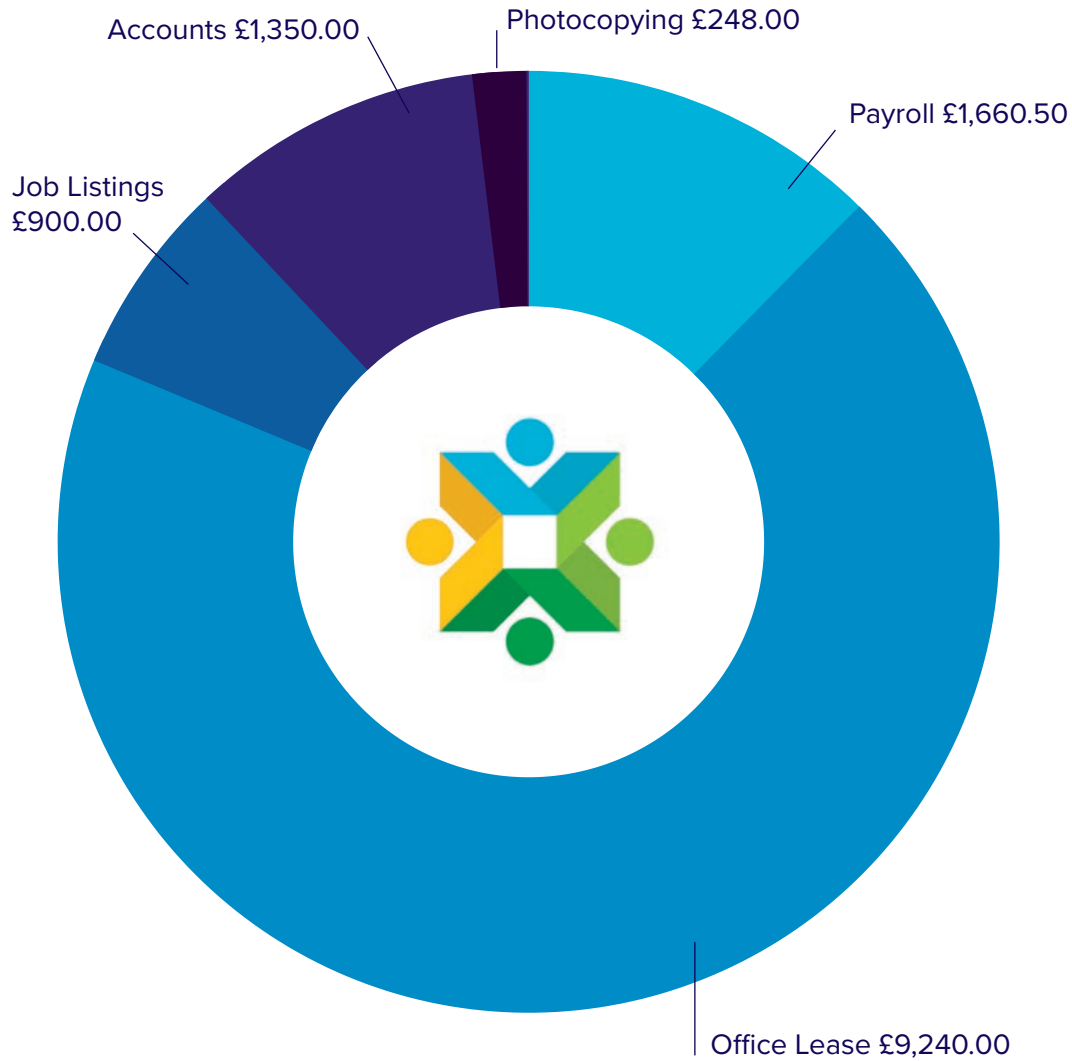
In a normal year, the hire of our conference room facilities would form a large part of our generated income. 2021-22 continued like 2020 and with further lock downs and our conference room was not used again fully until our building fully opened in March 2022.

Our generated income has come from the following sources:

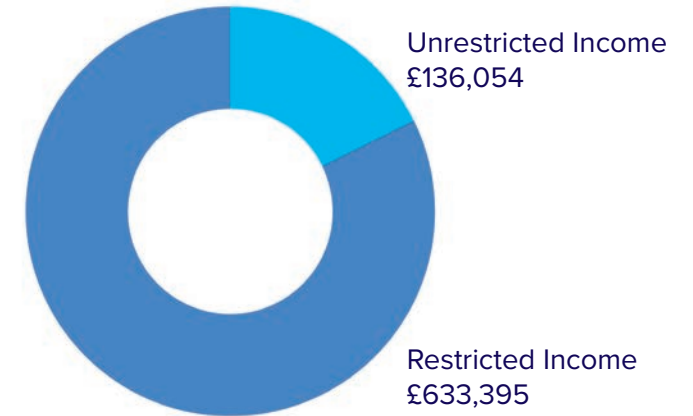
- **Office lease:** Some of our office space in Ashington is leased out to Carers Northumberland
- **Payroll and Accounts:** We provide a payroll and accountancy service for some VCS groups.
- **Printing:** We offer a photocopying and printing service for both members and non-members.
- **Vacancy listings:** We charge non-members £25 per listing for job and trustee vacancies. This service is free for our members.
- **Cheque handling:** For small unregistered VCS groups, that are our members, we can act as an intermediary service to receive grants from funders.



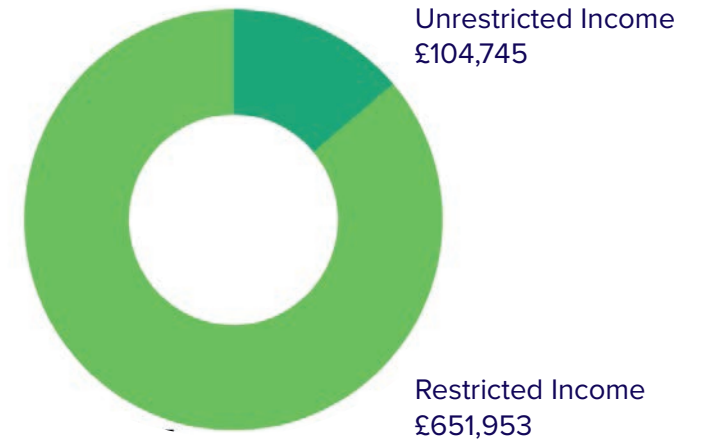
## Income generation 2021/22



## Income 2021/22



## Income 2020/21



# 5 reasons to join NCVA

NCVA exists to enable the community and voluntary organisations in Northumberland to develop and succeed. We work to grow the voice, influence and reach of the voluntary and community sector with a thirty year track record of success.

- 1 Advice**  
Get access to advice and expertise to help for your charity, your club or your community group.
- 2 Information**  
NCVA has all the information you need to be more effective in the community.
- 3 Voice**  
Help amplify the voice of community and voluntary groups.
- 4 Network**  
NCVA helps bring your group together with others, to get new ideas and achieve more together than you can alone.
- 5 People**  
Take advantage of NCVA's networks to find and train the people you need.

And it's FREE ...

## 6 ways to contact us

- CALL:** 01670 858 688  
**EMAIL:** [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk)  
**VISIT:** [Northumberlandcva.org.uk](http://Northumberlandcva.org.uk)  
**WRITE:** Northumberland CVA 107 Station Road,  
Ashington NE63 8RS  
**FACEBOOK:** @NorthumberlandCVA  
**TWITTER:** @NorthumberldCVA

