

WELCOME TO OUR FEBRUARY BULLETIN

This bulletin includes **current news articles and an Alliance update.**

You will also find information on **corporate and community volunteering opportunities, job opportunities, training, social value and funding news.**

We hope that you enjoy the bulletin, and we look forward to any feedback you may wish to share.

Please share this newsletter with anyone you feel may find it useful.

Anyone can opt into or opt out of our mailing list.

For more information email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

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UPDATE FROM ALLIANCE MANAGER TRACY HASSAN

An important part of our role is to help ensure the voices of the sector are heard. The Alliance takes part in a range of meetings with public, private and the voluntary sector to represent and give a voice to the voluntary and community sector across Sunderland. We do not aim to speak on behalf of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations because we know we cannot possibly represent the independent interests of all the different organisations. Instead we work to support an environment in which our sector is heard and respected. We use our position to champion the role and value of VCSE organisations, and to challenge decisions which could be detrimental to them.

Featured below is a list of the meetings we have attended since our last e-bulletin.

North & Central Integrated Care Partnership

We were invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the North & Central Integrated Care Partnership.

The North and Central Partnerships have been merged to provide a more joined up approach for the work of the ICB across the region. It's important the VCSE sector are included in these discussions and we find a mechanism for feeding information into the Partnership.

We have made contact with VONNE to look at how we increase our presence from across the region to ensure the VCSE sector are well represented. We will keep you updated with any future developments.

Health & Care Alliance

We were in attendance at the meeting in January.

A Links for Life (LFL) presentation was delivered explaining this is a system-wide approach to social prescribing, operating across the city. The Alliance is in the final stages of a Social Prescribing and Community Mapping research project which is funded by the ICB. Once the report is finalised it has been agreed the report and recommendations will be presented at the Health & Care Alliance.

UPDATE FROM ALLIANCE MANAGER TRACY HASSAN

Low Carbon Shadow board

We attended the Low Carbon Shadow board as a Partner in October 2024. This is city-wide forum for discussion and development of Sunderland's approach to becoming carbon neutral. The Alliance gave an overview of how we as an organisation, and the sector, are looking at ways to feed into the City's Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2030.

Real Living Wage Sunderland Action group

In January 2025 we attended the quarterly Real Living Wage Sunderland Action group. This group encourages Sunderland businesses and organisations to become Real Living Wage Employers. Moving forward we will be looking at engaging VCSE organisations based in Sunderland who are currently paying the real living wage and not yet accredited. Working with the Real Living Wage Foundation we are looking to support organisations through the process.

The Alliance was also represented at the following:

**Starting Well Board,
Living Well Board
Ageing Well Board**

CAPITAL GRANTS

Throughout 2024 we were asked to support capital funding applications and discovered there is limited funding available. Built on the evidence we have gathered identifying the needs of the sector we secured a UKSPF grant of just over £80,000.

Following the success of our Transport Grant opportunity we launched a capital grant offer to support renovations, repairs and refurbishments for community buildings.

We received 25 applications and awarded 13 grants worth £80k.

We must thank AGE UK and Sunderland Counselling Service for providing independent members of their teams to sit on the decision making panel.

It's been a positive process and organisations across the city are now in a position to improve their premises with works such as new flooring, damp proofing, roof and ceiling repairs, toilet blocks and painting and decorating.

FUTURE FORWARD: COLLABORATION, CHANGE, AND GROWTH - A STEP TOWARDS STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS

In November, Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance (SVSA) hosted an online event titled ***Future Forward: Collaboration, Change, and Growth.***

The event aimed at strengthening collaboration across the sector by introducing a new collaborative matching service. This service will help organisations connect with compatible partners to work together on issues of joint interest, and receive support for joint bid writing. Additionally, the workshop explored strategies for diversifying income streams beyond traditional grants to ensure long-term financial resilience.

The event featured an impressive line up of guest speakers, including:

- **Steven Irvine-Duffy**, CEO, Ability Consultants
- **Ruth Walker**, Operations Manager, Sunderland All Together Consortium CIO
- **Toby Sweet**, CEO, Sunderland Counselling Services
- **Joanne Leask**, Senior Manager, Procurement, Sunderland City Council
- **Tracy Hassan**, Manager, Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance

With 40 organisations in attendance from across the city, nearly half signed up for the new collaboration matching service. To tailor the service effectively, participants were invited to share insights on barriers to collaboration, past challenges in working in partnership, and their needs for effective partnerships. They also provided input on the types of resources, tools, or services that would help them tackle collaboration challenges.

The valuable feedback gathered will shape the future of the collaborative matching service. SVSA will keep those who signed up informed on the next steps in the coming months. Stay tuned for updates as we work together to foster stronger, more resilient partnerships within our sector!

WELCOME TO LYNDSEY EVERETT - TRUSTEE TREASURER

Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance welcomes a new Trustee to our Board.

Lyndsey Everett is the Treasurer of Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance and a Partner at Stafford Accountancy, based in Sunderland City Centre. As well as providing business support and accountancy services to the firm's client base of small and medium sized, owner managed businesses, Lyndsey has joint responsibility for the strategic direction and management of the firm.

Prior to joining Stafford Accountancy in 2020, Lyndsey worked at a top 10 national accountancy firm for almost 15 years, over which time she qualified as a chartered accountant and gained significant experience within the firm's general practice and corporate finance teams, providing services to corporates, charities and not for profit organisations.

WELCOME TO VICTORIA BROWN - VOLUNTARY SECTOR DEVELOPMENT WORKER

In January we welcomed Victoria Brown to the Alliance. Victoria joins our team of development workers and we are excited to have her supporting the voluntary and community sector across the city.

Victoria has many years' experience working in the voluntary sector and she will be a real asset to the Alliance and the sector.

Victoria brings with her an extensive career spanning 34 years in the voluntary sector. Her wealth of experience, knowledge, and passion for improving lives within local communities makes her an asset to the team.

Her most recent role was as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Grace House North East, where she served for 8 years. During her tenure, she successfully led the organisation in providing a range of services to children with disabilities and their families by building strong partnerships with local agencies, and developing services to better support families.

Before her time at Grace House North East, she worked in various roles at Age UK Sunderland, where she made significant contributions to the organisation's services and outreach initiatives, supporting older people in the community. Her extensive experience at Age UK Sunderland allowed her to develop a deep understanding of the challenges facing older people, while also helping to shape services to meet their needs.

Through her long career, Victoria developed a comprehensive range of skills and expertise, from strategic leadership and governance to direct service delivery. She has a keen understanding of the importance of effective management, community engagement, and collaboration across sectors.

As a Sunderland resident, Victoria's dedication to her community is at the centre of her work.

CASE STUDY-SUPPORTING SHINEY ROW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Background

In May 2024, SVSA received a support request from Shiney Row Business Association (SRBA) to assist with creating a formal constitution and establishing their organisational framework. SRBA's aim is to support local businesses in Shiney Row through collaboration, advocacy, and initiatives to drive economic growth.

Challenges

- **Lack of Formal Structure:** SRBA was operating informally and needed guidance on forming an unincorporated association.
- **No Constitution:** The group lacked a formal constitution, essential for defining its purpose, governance, and decision-making processes.

Interventions

1. **Initial Contact:** SVSA received a support request and arranged a Teams meeting to discuss SRBA's requirements.
2. **Provision of Resources:** Guidance and templates for creating an unincorporated association and a constitution were shared with SRBA.
3. **Draft Review:** During the meeting, the draft constitution was discussed, and SRBA agreed to develop a draft for review.
4. **Draft Submission and Feedback:** SRBA submitted the draft constitution, which was reviewed, amended, and returned with recommendations.
5. **Client Confirmation:** SRBA confirmed satisfaction with the amendments and planned to finalise the constitution, indicating no further support was required.

Outcomes

- **Formal Constitution:** Delivered a comprehensive constitution tailored to SRBA's needs, including:
 - Purpose and objectives, such as fostering collaboration, advocating for businesses, and promoting local customer engagement.
 - Governance framework and actionable strategies to support Shiney Row's business community.
- **Organisational Development:** Equipped SRBA with a foundational document to formalise their structure, enabling effective governance and future funding opportunities.
- **Enhanced Client Capacity:** Provided tools and templates to streamline SRBA's operations and ensure long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

SVSA's support empowered Shiney Row Business Association to establish a solid organisational framework, enabling them to pursue their mission of fostering a vibrant local business community. The collaborative process ensured the client could independently manage future initiatives while remaining connected to SVSA for ongoing support as needed.

SOCIAL VALUE OFFER

Opportunity for Sunderland Voluntary & Community Sector

The Bloom Catalyst Fund is offering grants of up to £500 to help make local communities better places to live and work.

The Bloom Catalyst Fund recognises that it can sometimes be hard for community groups to raise funding to progress with community-based projects. They want to work with NEPO Member Authorities, of which Sunderland City Council is a member, to help support local community projects/programmes by offering support.

Bloom aims to maximise sustainability and social value in local communities, dedicating their time and resources to support causes that matter to the North East. Their mission is to become a catalyst for good, with a common goal of leaving a positive legacy for the benefit of everyone - helping their customers create meaningful local social value.

The types of programmes they would like to support are:

Building safe communities e.g. support for local youth groups, lighting for public spaces, private security, etc.

Supporting older, disabled, and vulnerable people e.g. befriending schemes, digital inclusion clubs, etc.

Engaging people in health interventions & wellbeing initiatives e.g. stop smoking, obesity, alcoholism, drugs, physical activities, etc

Tackling Homelessness e.g. supporting temporary housing schemes, etc

Creating or managing green infrastructure e.g. increase biodiversity or to keep green spaces clean and deliver net zero, etc.

Please note: They do realise that different localities will have varying priorities; therefore, if your project does not align with the above, they would still like to hear from you.

If you are a VCSE organisation operating within the Sunderland Local Authority area, with an annual turnover less than £500k, and believe you could benefit from this offer, we would love to hear from you.

What Next?

If you would like to apply, you can request an application form from sharonquinn@sunderlandvsa.co.uk the deadline for the submission of applications is Friday 21st February 2025 at 12 noon.

If you have any questions about this process, please contact Sharon Quinn via email or by mobile on 07770155710.

[To become a member register here](#)

SOCIAL VALUE UPDATE

The Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance (SVSA), in collaboration with Sunderland City Council, is creating opportunities to utilise Social Value in innovative ways. The objective is to invest in community organisations, local charities, and social enterprises to enhance the lives of residents and neighbourhoods in Sunderland.

Social Value is an invaluable resource for our local communities, particularly when public funding is scarce. It promotes more effective spending that not only provides services but also tackles social, economic, and environmental challenges within the community.

By applying for these opportunities, local voluntary and community organisations can access vital services and funding that support their objectives, enhance community well-being, and align with wider social and environmental initiatives.

Successful Social Value Donations

Local Construction Company donates £1k to 5 organisations

A construction company based in Sunderland, providing construction and civil engineering solutions throughout the North East, donated £1,000 to five organisations. This contribution supported a range of fantastic local community projects across Sunderland.

The successful organisations were:

- Crafting Connections
- Fans Museum
- Herrington Scouts
- Veterans in Crisis
- We Make Culture

A Museum, Exhibition, and Design Company contributes £500 to Arts and Culture

A prominent design company specialising in museums, exhibitions, and attractions within the heritage, sports, and entertainment sectors donated £500 to a local Arts and Culture project, demonstrating their commitment to social value. The successful organisation, Roker Methodist Church, will utilise the funds to connect people living with dementia and their Carers through interactive arts sessions.

A local construction company donated £250 to support individuals with mental or physical disabilities.

This experienced contractor, specialising in building refurbishment and committed to delivering social value to the Sunderland community, pledged the donation to assist individuals with mental or physical disabilities. The funds will be utilised by the successful organisation, Creative Minds, to host a family workshop focused on enhancing the mental health and well-being of both adults and children.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Free NCFE Level 2 award in Digital promotion for business

SSAB and Sunderland Safeguarding Children Partnership Schedule of Training

Free Online Safeguarding Training

Introduction to Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (EDI) workshops

Understanding Trauma and the Affects of Trauma

Become a Sunderland Health Champion

Understanding Sexual Violence

University of Sunderland - Building Futures in Youthwork

The Peer Partnership Training Opportunities

Youth Work Apprenticeship

Level 1 Food Safety

Level 2 Food Safety

[To find out more information click here](#)

UPCOMING VIRTUAL FUNDING SESSIONS

DBS ELIGIBILITY WORKSHOP

The workshop will cover -
The benefits of DBS and your organisation working together
Safer Recruitment Practices
The different levels of DBS checks and when an employee/ volunteer is eligible for a check
Definition of Regulated Activity
Examples of roles in sport with eligibility for a DBS Check
The three different barring referral routes
When a DBS barring referral should be made, including when the legal duty to refer is met
How to make a good quality referral
The consequences of not making appropriate barring referrals and the consequences of an individual being included in one or both Barred Lists
Q&A session

Tuesday 4th March 2025 10:00am - 11:45am (90 minutes includes time for Q&A)

To book a place email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

BID WRITING WORKSHOP

Led by ABL's Senior Bid Manager, this workshop teaches how to prepare, write, and submit successful grant bids

Outcomes:

Learn the essentials of a strong grant application
Understand how to analyse requirements and customise submissions.
Clear and persuasive writing skills.
Avoid common mistakes.
Gain confidence in creating competitive bids.

Tuesday 25th March 2025 10.00am - 12.00pm

To book a place email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

[To become a member register here](#)

SOME OF THE RECENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES ADDED TO OUR WEBSITE

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33891/Hospital-Saturday-Fund-Opens-for-2025-Applications>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33890/HRUK-Announces-2025-Application-Rounds-for-Healthy-Heart-Grants>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33887/Cash-For-Kids-Children-s-Mental-Health-Grants-Open-for-Applications>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33886/Annual-Pet-Rescue-Grant-Programme-Opens-for-Applications-24-January-2025>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33885/Listed-Places-of-Worship-Grant-Scheme-Extended-for-One-More-Year>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33883/Charles-Plater-Trust-s-Annual-Large-Grants-Open-for-Applications-England-and-Wales>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33882/IT4Good-Grants-Programme-Deadline-Approaching>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33888/Hinrichsen-Foundation-Accepting-Applications-for-First-2025-Funding-Round>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33893/Suez-Communities-Fund-Accepting-Applications-for-First-2025-Funding-Round>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33880/Funding-to-Support-Leadership-in-the-UK-s-Migration-Sector>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33879/UK-Charities-Can-Apply-Now-for-Annual-Innovation-for-Good-Grant>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33878/Sport-England-Offers-Funding-for-Facilities-Damaged-by-Extreme-Weather>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33876/Funding-to-Support-Holiday-Activities-for-Autistic-Children-and-Young-People-in-the-UK>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33934/Grants-for-Youth-Mental-Health-Organisations-to-Deliver-Monitoring-and-Evaluation-Projects>

<https://www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk/article/33935/Small-Grants-to-Help-People-Get-Outdoor-and-Experience-the-Natural-World>

[Click here for more funding opportunities](#)

Our funding page is updated regularly

[To become a member register here](#)

NEWS ALERT: SKIPTON BUILDING SOCIETY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION TO REOPEN FOR APPLICATION ON 3 MARCH

After pausing applications last September, the Foundation has announced it is reopening its grants programme in March 2025 with two new focus areas through which it aims to drive social impact.

The focus going forward will be to help people experiencing hardship and/or underserved groups within the UK to:

- Access a place to call home.
- Improve financial wellbeing.

For both focus areas, priority will be given to charities supporting people in the top 50% of the UK Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The Foundation is also making other changes:

- Only UK registered charities established for at least three years, with three or more trustees and whose work has direct benefit to people within the UK can apply.
- The maximum grant will rise from £6,000 to £10,000 this year.
- The Foundation will consider funding core costs, project costs, and small capital contributions that support its focus areas.
- Applications will be considered twice a year (in June and December) rather than quarterly.
- There will be two specific application windows (3 March to 1 May; 1 September to 31 October), outside of which applications will not be accepted.
- Unsuccessful applicants will no longer have to wait two years to reapply. They can reapply in one year. Successful applicants must wait three years.

The online application form will be available once applications open.

The first funding round will open for applications on 3 March and close on 1 May 2025.

<https://www.skiptoncharitablefoundation.co.uk/>

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL - CALL FOR PROJECTS - ELEMORE MUSIC FESTIVAL 2025

Sunderland City Council's Coalfield Area Committee would like to invite Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups, not for profit organisations and public and statutory providers, who have experience of delivering community events to submit proposals to deliver the Elemore Festival Music Event 2025.

The Coalfield Area Committee has £15,000 available to deliver this event.

Please find details of the brief by accessing the following [Link](#)

Please return your completed application form (attached) to the Area Arrangements Team using the email address area.arrangements.team@sunderland.gov.uk by Monday 17th February 2025

If you would like any advice/support on completion of your application, please contact the Area Arrangements Team at area.arrangements.team@sunderland.gov.uk

SUNDERLAND CITY COUNCIL - COMMUNITY ASSET OPPORTUNITY

Sunderland City Council is pleased to offer the following property for let to Community Occupiers, in order to provide a community facility providing a wide range of services and activities to all within the community.

Southwick Community Centre, Southwick Road, Sunderland, SR5 2AB For more information, a description of the building and how to apply please contact brad.shields@sunderland.gov.uk.

Viewing is by appointment on an open morning of **24th February 2025** if you wish to attend please confirm your attendance by contacting: brad.shields@sunderland.gov.uk

Submission of business plans must be received by noon on 21 March 2025

CITYWIDE AFFORDABLE FOOD CLUBS PROJECT

City Wide Affordable Food Clubs Project

Closing date 28 February 2025

Background and Workshop details

Sunderland City Council and Feeding Britain are pleased to be working together to provide a more sustainable response to food crisis and food insecurity issues by encouraging the development of additional Affordable Food Clubs (AFC), that can be close to self-sustaining within 12 months.

An initial project led to funding being provided to two AFCs last Autumn. This new city-wide project aims to award 'set up' funding for at least one new or extended AFC project in each of the five local areas.

Given that this new AFC project is at city level the Council and Feeding Britain also believe that it would be better coordinated with an application headed by one lead organisation, rather than an application from 5 separate organisations all operating completely independently. At a local level however the VCS organisations that are part of the application could still diversify and test different food delivery models – depending on their own local communities needs and existing food support offers.

To help facilitate this process the council will be holding two Microsoft Teams Workshop sessions for organisations interested in applying and especially for potential lead organisations on:

- 30 January 1-2 : being facilitated by the council
- 4 February 1-2 : being facilitated by the council and Feeding Britain

If you wish to attend either event please email

strategic.advice.services@sunderland.gov.uk and a Teams invite will be sent to you for that session.

NEW OPPORTUNITY - SPACE FOR COMMUNITY DELIVERY

Hendon Health Hub is an exciting new pilot initiative based in the former Ashburn Medical Centre, Toward Road. There is an opportunity for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector partners to come on board at its inception to share space to deliver a programme of preventative health innovations and services to the local community.

We have various options available for the use of the Hub for delivery, dedicated room or hourly bookings. Very competitive rates and use of group/meeting spaces also available.

If you require any further information please contact Back on the Map's Head of Business, Craig Richardson, jcooper@backonthemap.org or call 0191 514 7844.

NEW, FLEXIBLE OFFICE SPACE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

YES Enterprise is designed to support your enterprise, located on the 1st Floor of YES, Elliott House, Mainsforth Terrace, Hendon, SR2 8JX and can be accessed via a stair case. A YES staff member will give an induction and tour of the facility to help you familiarise yourself with the building.

Minimum 3 month hire period
Offsite parking is plentiful
Limited on site parking

If you require any further information please contact Back on the Map's Head of Business, Craig Richardson, crichardson@backonthemap.org or call 0191 514 9061.

WELFARE BENEFITS ADVISOR

Organisation: FISCUS

35 hours per week

£30,000 + 6% company contributory pension

Location: Newcastle Foodbank

Deadline: 13 February, 2025

FISCUS is a registered charity established in 2005 to support people who are facing the effects of poverty, hardship and crisis. Many of our service users experience further barriers due to mental health issues, disability, domestic violence issues, homelessness, addictions or seeking asylum.

At FISCUS, we strive to make a real difference to the lives of vulnerable people. FISCUS and Newcastle Foodbank have been working in partnership providing a Welfare Benefits & Money Advice Service to Foodbank Customers for over 3 years. We need an additional full-time Welfare Benefits Advisor to support this service.

We are seeking to recruit an experienced Welfare Benefits Advisor to help us get the best outcomes for our service users. The successful post holder will provide welfare benefits advice, money advice and crisis support to food bank customers who often experience multiple complex barriers. We are looking for an individual with an empathetic approach who will provide benefits and money advice and other support as well as liaising with and signposting to, other specialist agencies. This is an exciting role where 2 days are never the same.

More information

A full job description and person specification for the role is available by email from: courtneyknowles@fiscus.org or by telephoning Courtney at FISCUS on 0191 511 1391.

Apply by outlining how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the post, job description and person specification by emailing your CV and a Letter of Application to: courtneyknowles@fiscus.org

Closing Date: Thursday 13th February 2025

Interviews take place: Thursday 20th February 2025