



June Update

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Welcome to your monthly update from Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance – bringing you the latest news, training, funding opportunities, events, inspiring stories, and ways to get involved across the city.

Starting a new Chapter

After 4 years developing and leading the Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance, I have decided it's the right time to start a new chapter. Over the summer, I will be spending precious time with my baby granddaughter in Dubai. I am leaving proud to have recruited an experienced and knowledgeable team with a passion for the voluntary sector and making a difference for local communities.



In the first two years of our registration, we have made great progress - implementing a membership scheme, delivered over 3,000 hours of 1:1 intensive support, secured over £1,546,000 funding, facilitated over £750,000 worth of Social Value, facilitated over 900 hours of volunteering, and implemented a community grants process successfully distributing £129,564 across 55 organisations.

I have worked with some amazing people from the voluntary sector who are delivering fantastic services across our city. A special thanks goes to all those who have supported our journey. I have established some great partnerships across the voluntary, statutory and private sectors.

I would like to introduce you to Austin McNamara, who has been appointed as interim CEO, and look forward to following the ongoing developments moving forward.

I wish the Alliance and the sector lots of luck for the future!

Tracy Hassan

Alliance Manager

tracy.hassan@sunderlandvca.co.uk



Introducing Austin McNamara as Interim CEO

Austin is a highly experienced Interim Leader, specialising in supporting purpose-driven organisations through periods of transition. After a successful career in teaching, culminating in 12 years as a secondary head, he joined the newly created Learning & Skills Council before moving to Connexions Northumberland as CEO.

Since then, he has built on his experience of leadership to forge a career as a Professional Interim, working mostly in the public sector – including one year as Associate Director for Education in Sunderland. More recently, he has moved with enthusiasm into the VCSE sector as Interim CEO of two North East charities, The Key and Newcastle Carers.

In his private life, Austin is a devoted husband and a proud parent and grandparent. He has a passion of most types of music, and he enjoys walking, foreign travel, spicy food and reading crime fiction.

Austin said on his appointment:

"I am thrilled to be joining Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance at such a critical point in its development, and I am very grateful to the team for giving me such a warm welcome. They have already impressed me with their extensive experience in the sector and with their passion for making a real difference.

transformation of the city, and I know that is still the case now. I look forward to working positively with all our partners to further build on those foundations and to ensure that the sector has a strong, influential voice, and that it is well positioned to take full advantage of all the opportunities to come for the benefit of everyone in the city."



We've Moved!

As of **June 11th, 2025**, Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance has a brand new home at the **Raich Carter Centre, Commercial Road, Hendon, SR2 8PD**.

While our location may have changed, our contact details remain exactly the same - and so does our commitment to supporting the incredible charities and CICs across Sunderland.

We're absolutely delighted to be based in such a brilliant venue and can't wait to welcome you!

Whether you're nearby and fancy popping in to say hello, or you'd prefer to arrange a visit, drop us a line at contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk - we'd love to see you in our new space.

We also want to say a few heartfelt thank you's:

- **Jo Cooper and the fantastic Back on the Map team** for giving us a home when we needed it most.
- **Veterans in Crisis** for helping us move.
- **The wonderful team at the Raich Carter Centre** for making us feel so welcome/

Here's to the next chapter!

Training

Maney Park Community Fire Station, Old Mill Road, Sunderland

The course delivered by Washington Mind covers resilience and the key components of resilience, stress and impact upon resilience, strategies to develop personal resilience at work, skills and practical tools to build, maintain and recharge.

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A Life Worth Living - YP | 26 June, 9:30am - 1:30pm
Bethany City Church, Burdon Road, Sunderland

This training session is for those working with, living with, or supporting young people (11 - 18 year olds) across the City of Sunderland.

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[View our full training calendar](#)

To book our training courses, simply email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

Funding

Looking for funding?

Our website is regularly updated with the latest funding opportunities for organisations based in Sunderland. Here are the latest five, and please check our [Funding page](#) for more listings.

[Aviva Community Fund's Crowdfunding Scheme Accepting Applications](#)

[One Stop Community Partnership Programme Opens for Applications Across Britain](#)

[NLCF's New Solidarity Fund for England to Open 11 June 2025](#)

[Clarion launches Making a Difference Fund](#)

[Energy Saving Trust's Carbon Emissions Reduction and Innovation Funds Now Open](#)

[View more funding opportunities](#)

Events

Sunderland VSA Events

Meet the Funder: The National Lottery Reaching Communities Funding

24 June 10am – 11am | Online

The Reaching Communities Fund aims to strengthen communities and improve lives, with a focus on those most in need.

This event will allow you to hear information on the funds they have currently available, how to apply, and an opportunity for you to ask questions. To book, please email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

Other Events

Chairing Network – 8 July 5-7pm | North Tyneside VODA

The responsibilities of Chairs of charities are extensive and can vary greatly between organisations. The Chairing Network at the Community Foundation exists to explore key themes affecting all Chairs and to bring you together with your peers.

This session is for you if you are an experienced Chair seeking fresh inspiration for developing your board or an aspiring Chair preparing for your next steps in governance.

Spotlight On...



Funding secured for District Youth ABC!

We're thrilled to share District Youth ABC, working with Sunderland VSA, has been successful in securing £5,980 from Sport England!

This Concord-based group in Washington will use the funds towards new gym and boxing safety equipment, helping to keep our young people fit, focused, and safe as they train.

A huge thank you to Sport England for supporting grassroots sport – and well done to everyone involved in the application. The whole team is absolutely delighted!

If your charity or CIC would like support from Sunderland VSA, email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk



Spotlight on Sunderland VSA Trustee: Trish Cornish

Meet Trish - a lifelong Sunderland resident, who has spent over 28 years making a difference in the voluntary sector, with 14+ years in executive and senior leadership roles. Her journey has seen her support local charities through VCAS (formerly CVS) before moving to Sunderland Mind, where she spent four years as Deputy Manager before stepping up as Chief Executive Officer two years ago.

Since taking the helm at Sunderland Mind, Trish has renewed the organisation's business plan, expanded its service offer, and increased its financial turnover to meet the growing needs of the community.

With her wealth of experience and passion for the sector, Trish is committed to supporting SVSA in building a strong, trusted reputation and driving forward its development for the benefit of Sunderland's voluntary sector.

SVSA In Action

Here we share what we've been doing and pick our favourite highlights.



Visit to Sunderland Fans Museum

Last week month we had an inspiring visit to the Sunderland Fans Museum – and wow, we were blown away by the incredible support happening behind the scenes!

Far more than a space for football memories, the museum is a vibrant hub for the community – offering support that truly makes a difference. From men's mental health groups to dementia-friendly sessions, and tailored support for neurodiverse young people, the museum is proving how powerful community spaces can be when they open their doors wide.

Huge respect to the team and volunteers creating such a welcoming, inclusive environment. Sunderland's community spirit is alive and thriving here.

SVSA is supporting the Fans Museum with its policies, procedures and grant applications. For further information on support available to your organisation please visit www.sunderlandvsa.co.uk or email contactus@sunderlandvsa.co.uk.



Helping Sunderland Maritime Heritage get funding for upgrades

Ian and an incredible team of volunteers, alongside support from Jenny, our Development Worker, are thrilled to share that they have been awarded nearly £10,000 to upgrade their workshop area at the Museum!

This funding will help the organisation continue preserving Sunderland's rich maritime history while providing a better space for learning, restoration, and community engagement.

Sunderland Maritime Heritage wish to extend a huge thank you to everyone who supports them - this is a fantastic step forward! Stay tuned for updates on the transformation.

Volunteering



Feedback from Sunderland Volunteer Coordinators' Network Meeting

The May meeting of our peer support network welcomed a mix of attendees from a range of charitable organisations across Sunderland, including a number who are new to their role or organisation.

The purpose of the meeting was to give an insight into neurodiversity and volunteering, including practical suggestions for being as inclusive as possible when considering how to engage volunteers. We also touched on the Vision for Volunteering and how the framework could be used to look towards the future of volunteering in Sunderland.

Thanks to our hosts at St George's Church, Fatfield for telling us all about their wonderful new community space and café, and their inclusive approach to volunteering.

Thanks also to Simon Green, of Luminary Photography, with his inspirational personal and professional journey, and his engagement primarily with those who experience mental and physical issues, and neurodivergence, amongst other barriers.

If you would like to know more about the next meeting, or indeed host a meeting to showcase your venue, services and volunteers, or you would like to suggest a theme, please let us know at volunteer@sunderlandvsa.co.uk.

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Starting Well Delivery Board

The Starting Well Delivery Board met on May 2nd with key agenda items being Sunderland Communicates Together update, child death reviews, community cohesion, child poverty, the Healthy City Plan and an update on the Family Hubs. Sunderland VSA is invited to this Board as representatives of the voluntary sector. The Board brings together senior leads from public health, children's services, local NHS organisations, schools and community/provider networks to plan, commission and monitor interventions that give Sunderland's children and families the best possible start in life. If you'd like to input, or receive more information please get in touch.

Corporate Volunteering Round-up

Lots of corporate volunteering hours have been in the sunshine over the last month or so. From restoring railings in a park and painting skirting boards, to cleaning and painting stables and sorting pre-loved uniforms, employees have been making a difference out and about in communities across Sunderland.

You can read our [case studies](#) of how other corporates are using their volunteering hours with local organisations.

If you are a company looking to give social value back into communities – or an organisation who could use the help (providing specialist pro bono skills or group volunteering) – let us know at volunteer@sunderlandvsa.co.uk.

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How to Safely Engage Young People

This [helpful guidance from the NSPCC](#) covers what you need to know to recruit, engage, and champion young volunteers. Online and in-person training includes: online safety, safeguarding young adults, supporting d/Deaf and disabled young people, and youth volunteering in sport.

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Sunderland Volunteering – here to support you and your volunteers

Volunteers tackle important causes, strengthen communities and inspire change, turning collective efforts into powerful, transformative action.

Sunderland Volunteering is here to help support the development and sustainability of volunteering.

volunteer@sunderlandvsa.co.uk

News



UNLOCK PUBLIC SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES
FREE TRAINING FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL SUPPLIERS

Learn to win more public sector contracts with expert tips on:

-  **Bid writing**
-  **Social value**
-  **Public sector tendering**

REGISTER FOR OUR NEWSLETTER TODAY!

Local News

NEPO's Supplier Partnership Programme

Are you interested in supplying the public sector but don't know where to start? NEPO's Supplier Partnership Programme is the guiding light to public sector procurement, helping regional and local suppliers find, bid for and win contract opportunities with the public sector.

Be the first to find out about upcoming events by [subscribing to their monthly newsletter](#).

Or check out their [website](#) for more information.

Have Your Say: Research into Informal Volunteering and Mental Health

Newcastle University is leading a UK-wide study into how informal volunteering – such as helping neighbours or community members – supports mental health in disadvantaged areas. Dr Fiona Duncan, Research Associate at Newcastle, is inviting people working in volunteering, community, or mental health roles to share their views in a short survey. It takes around 10 minutes and will contribute to a better understanding of this often-overlooked form of community support.

[Take the survey](#)

Free Home Energy Advice with Groundwork's Green Doctor

Groundwork's Green Doctor service offers free, friendly advice to help people stay warm, save money, and live greener. The service supports households struggling with energy bills by offering practical tips, installing small energy-saving measures, and helping people access grants or switch suppliers.

Green Doctors can provide advice over the phone, at community events or even during a home visit. It's open to anyone who could use a bit of extra help managing their energy use or keeping their home warm.

To make a referral or find out more, visit: www.groundwork.org.uk/greendoctor or email greendoctorsNE@groundwork.org.uk

New Funding Opportunity for Budding Social Entrepreneurs in Sunderland

The Social Enterprise Boost Fund is now open for applications in Sunderland and South Tyneside. Backed by the UK Government and delivered locally by Firstport and PNE, the fund supports people to kickstart or grow their social enterprise ideas.

Support includes free one-to-one advice, coaching, workshops and funding of up to £10,000. Whether you're just testing an idea or ready to take the next step, there's funding to help you Try, Kickstart or Grow your enterprise.

Find out more: www.firstport.org.uk/funding/social-enterprise-boost-fund

NE Migration Partnership Hate Crime Guide

NEMP has created a [guide](#) to raise awareness on hate crime within migrant communities.

The guide is available in the top 10 languages for refugees/asylum seekers.

National News

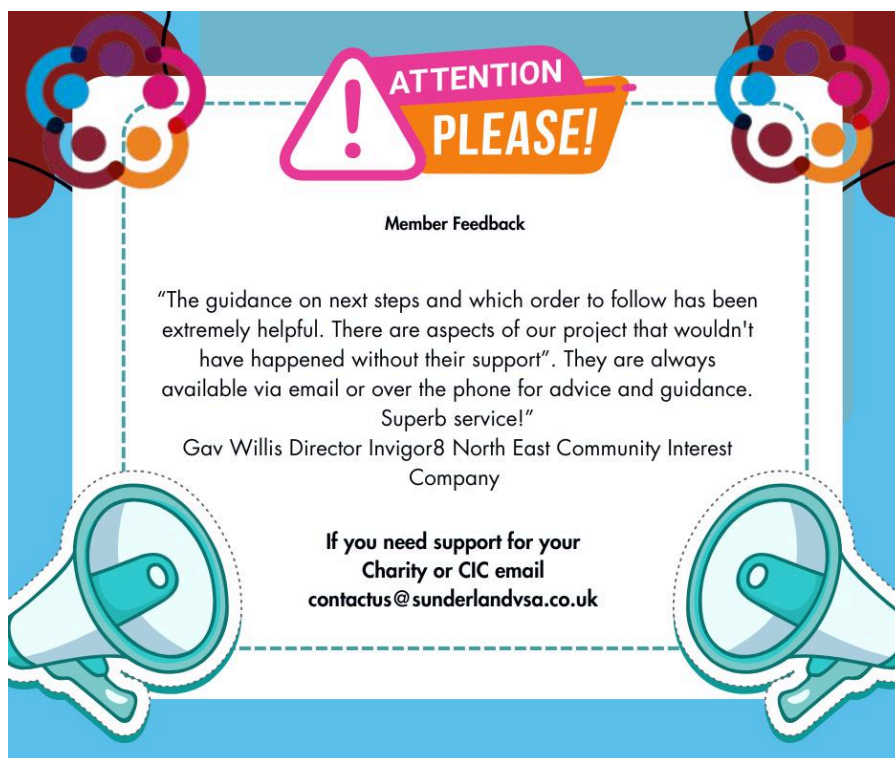
Campaign For The Right To Request 35 Hours Volunteer Leave - Sign The Petition

The Scouts is advocating for a right for employees to request up to 35 hours of paid volunteer leave per year. Imagine the difference this could make to all community and charitable organisations - not just The Scouts!! Employers would have the discretion to decide how much time they can offer, based on what works for their business. This follows the same approach as flexible working requests.

[Find out more and sign the petition](#)

New Research Published - Trusteeship & The Trustee Population

To better understand who serves on today's charity boards, the Charity Commission for England and Wales has produced research following a national survey of charity trustees. The [report](#) shares existing trustees' skills, gaps and who makes up today's trustees, including trends in recruitment, training and tenure.



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