

# Our Impact

Annual Review  
2024 - 2025

We amplify voices · We champion equality · We inspire change  
We support action · We connect people

# Contents

<b>Chair's Report</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Connected Voice Support and Development</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Connected Voice Business Services</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Connected Voice Haref</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Connected Voice Health Equity</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Connected Voice Volunteering</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Connected Voice Advocacy</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Our Thanks</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>11</b>

## Chair's Report

I'm delighted to present our Annual Report for **2024 – 2025**. It was a great year for us in many respects. We launched our new strategy *Connecting People, Supporting Action* in October, following extensive consultation with our members and stakeholders. The strategy gives us a strong foundation to ensure we provide services that support, connect and develop the VCSE sector in a rapidly changing external environment.

Our membership grew steadily and now stands at **860** VCSE organisations. Our networks, including Haref and the VCSE Alliance, continued to attract new members too, and have grown in strength and influence over the year. Our financial services saw a period of stabilisation after significant changes and staff churn during the preceding year. Our advocacy team developed excellent new person-centred training sessions, which have been beneficial for not only our members, but also public sector partners. Our volunteering team supported more volunteers than ever – always with a focus on working hand in hand with people, and targeting our support where it is most needed. We've built strong relationships in corporate volunteering and strengthened our ability to connect VCSE organisations to specialist pro bono support.

Sitting at the heart of everything we do is our support and development service, which supported VCSE organisations with advice and training on everything from sourcing funding opportunities to cyber security. We know that just being aware there is a team there for advice and support when you need it is a lifeline for many smaller VCSE groups, and we are proud we have

been able to sustain a strong level of local support, thanks to ongoing commitment from our core funders. Their continued trust and investment makes a huge difference.

Things are not easy for the VCSE sector and individuals we support at the moment. Issues of reduced funding, cost pressures, community tensions, increased demand, increased complexity of need, and challenges in trustee and volunteer recruitment continue. We see it as an important part of our work to highlight such issues, and we are indebted to the many organisations who contribute to our networks and forums, providing us with valuable intelligence which helps us amplify our message about the value of the VCSE sector and to find practical ways of helping them to deliver the best services.

I'd like to thank my fellow trustees for their support, thoughtful input and constructive challenge over the past year. We face the same pressures as our members on many fronts, and having a strong board who are able to understand the challenges and debate the solutions is invaluable.

The whole staff team continues to impress us all with their commitment, creativity and hard work. They take great pride in our work and are excellent ambassadors for *Connected Voice*. I hope you enjoy reading our highlights of another busy and productive year.

**Peter Deans**  
**Chair of Trustees**  
**March 2026**

“  
Big thanks to Connected Voice who have helped us in so many ways. We are blessed!

## In 2024/2025 we:

Were awarded the Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation by NAVCA.

Supported **544** organisations with funding, governance, policies & procedures and organisational development.

Helped organisations to secure **£2,014,446** of grant funding.

Held **16** networking meetings attended by **127** different organisations.

Delivered and supported **19** training courses on subjects including: Funding Strategy, Effective Bid-Writing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Introduction to Safeguarding, and Trustee Roles and Responsibilities.

Our VCSE Alliance now includes **130** organisations and has secured more than **£1 million** in NHS ICB funding for children and young people's mental health and neurodiversity projects.

### We also:

- Hosted events including the Newcastle and Gateshead Funding Fair, attracting **141** organisations and **23** funders.
- Grew OurGateshead page views by **56%**.
- During the year, there were **563,370** site visits with **1,579,570** pages viewed.



**Connecting charities, social enterprises and  
community organisations to guidance and support**  
Funding · Planning · Governance · Strategy

Each year our accounts are completed quickly and efficiently, within a short time after submitting our figures.

## In 2024/2025:

Working for the first time this year as a team within Connected Voice rather than a separate trading company, Connected Voice Business Services continued to provide financial services for VCSE organisations across Newcastle and Gateshead.

We supported with year-end accounts preparation and completed Independent Examinations for **93** organisations. We provided Bookkeeping and management account services for **13** organisations.

Business Services also supported organisations to switch to digital finance systems, providing training as QuickBooks Pro certified advisors.

Our Independent Examination team ensured organisations are up to date with actual and proposed legal and financial reporting changes for charities.



**Connecting organisations to our specialist charity  
finance expertise**

Accounts · Training · Reports

## In 2024/2025:

The Haref Network grew to **112** organisations.

The Haref Allies membership grew to **96**.

We held **2** Place of Faith Open Days.

We delivered **8** Health Inequalities Sessions for Haref Network Members.

We provided **2** Haref Allies Skills Building Sessions.

We worked with **16** different Mosques and Muslim Centres to create Ramadan Calendars across Newcastle, Gateshead and North Tyneside.

We held a Joint Celebration with over **90** attendees from Haref Network and Haref Allies Network.

## We also:

- Delivered **17** sessions of Cultural Competency Training, with **190** attendees completing the training.
- Collected **7** patient experiences around using health services as ethnically marginalised community members.





Connected Voice continue to offer the spaces for the most important conversations to happen in our sector.

## In 2024/2025:

### In Newcastle

We raised digital inclusion awareness for **39** organisations. We supported **30** organisations with access to devices, connectivity, funding, and specialist support.

We made **50** targeted connections to funding pathways, NHS App insight, device donation routes, and skills support, benefiting groups supporting older people, ethnic minority communities, carers, asylum seekers, and families.

### In Gateshead

**21** VCSE organisations received UKSPF funding in April 2024.

We delivered **14** digital inclusion training sessions with **213** attendees, addressing current VCSE needs.

We supported **100+** organisations with information, opportunities, and training.

We launched Gateshead Tech4Communities:

Collaborated with Gateshead Council and the Digital Poverty Alliance on a device-refurbishing project, establishing **10** donation hubs across the borough.



Connecting charities and community organisations to health services to improve digital inclusion, mental health and social prescribing

Engagement · Information · Research

## In 2024/2025 we:

Processed **932** volunteering enquiries through the OurGateshead website by Gateshead Volunteer Centre. **60** people with additional needs or multiple barriers were supported into volunteering.

The Gateshead and Newcastle Volunteer Coordinators' Networks continued to grow, with meetings focused on accessibility, digital inclusion, and equity, diversity and inclusion.

**34** new volunteering opportunities were created through Volunteering Newcastle.

**20** VCSE organisations received support to strengthen their volunteer policies, procedures and strategies.

The Newcastle Support into Volunteering Pathway trained coordinators from **18** organisations to better support volunteers in drug and alcohol recovery.

Sector Connector delivered **10** free workshops and events in partnership with **8** businesses.



The service truly embodies the mission of enabling people to have their views heard and their rights upheld.

## In 2024/2025 we:

Advocated for **592** people across multiple project and worked with them on **614** topics providing **14729** hours of direct advocacy.

Noticed trends housing, poverty, isolation and increased support for autistic adults in the community.

Gained over **£23,180** for people by maximising their entitlements, claiming compensation and challenging welfare awards and care packages.

Ensured **12** people were safeguarded or prevented from harm and abuse

Advocated for **40** new people facing court hearings for child protection cases, rehabilitation planning after life changing accidents, or upholding the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards for people.

Delivered **3** training workshops to help people 'Know your Rights' and learn self-advocacy skills.

Launched a training programme to help frontline workers become Social Justice Champions. Focus on Person Centred Approaches, Effective Communication and Supporting People with Neurological Conditions.



**Free, ethical Independent Advocacy**

Rights · Choices · Decisions · Actions

# Our Thanks

## Contracts

- Newcastle City Council
- Gateshead Council
- NHS Integrated Care Board
- Cumbria Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Northumbria

## Grants and Donations

- Barbour Foundation
- Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Durham University
- Newcastle University
- National Institute for Health and Care Research
- National Lottery Community Fund
- NAVCA
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund

## Funding in partnership with:

- VODA (The National Lottery Community Fund)
- VONNE (NHS Integrated Care Board)
- North East Law Centre (The National Lottery Community Fund)
- Comfrey Project (Lloyds Bank Foundation)

**Thank you to all the people and organisations who have supported us in the past year, helping us to make a positive difference across the communities of Newcastle and Gateshead.**

# Our Awards and Accreditation



North East  
Better Health  
at Work Award  
Gold Award

## Income and Expenditure

Summary of income and expenditure for the 12-month period ended 30 September 2025.

	Unrestricted Funds (£)	Designated Funds (£)	Restricted Funds (£)	Total (£)
<b>Income from:</b>				
Generated funds	32,566			32,566
Charitable activities	878,646		941,911	1,820,557
Donations	13,759			13,759
<b>Total income</b>	<b>924,971</b>		<b>941,911</b>	<b>1,866,882</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>				
Raising funds	60			60
Charitable activities	830,656		1,086,670	1,917,326
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>830,716</b>		<b>1,086,670</b>	<b>1,917,386</b>
Net investment gains				
Transfers between funds				
<b>Net income (expenditure)</b>	<b>94,255</b>		<b>-144,759</b>	<b>-50,504</b>

## Find out more

If you would like to find out more about how we can support you, please visit our website or alternatively email or phone us for more information:

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