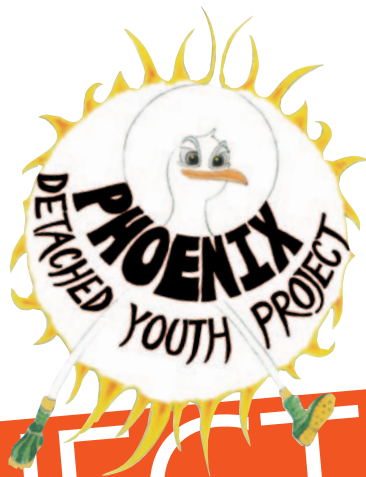


# PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT



## MISSION STATEMENT

Working with young people  
to develop their ideas and  
supporting their life choices  
and education.

Initiated by  
young people and  
creatively delivered  
for young people

Charity number 1106223

# ANNUAL REPORT 2026

# PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT



## FOREWORD

After another busy year, it's all changed here at the Phoenix Detached Youth Project. We said goodbye to Mike Burgess in June last year after 21 years of incredible service. We had some big shoes to fill when Mike left as CEO, and who better to fill them than Luke Johnston. Luke had worked at PDYP for the last 13 years and already knew the ropes. As CEO, Luke has already got to grips with the role and has developed the project and has been exploring new funding. This funding is vital to maintain a future for the Phoenix.

I am now chair of the trustees at PDYP after Anne Marron stepped down from the role after 5 fantastic years of service. Luckily, Anne remains on the Board of Trustees. We really value her experience and expertise.

Becca, Becky and Luke, the staff, and all the volunteers at Phoenix have worked incredibly hard this year. Engaging with young people, building trusting relationships and working together to create new opportunities. They have maintained a vital service for young people in the area.

The success of PDYP is down to a full team effort. Firstly, the commitment and passion of our hardworking staff and volunteers. Secondly, we cannot forget the community we work with, the young people and their families who make that step to work alongside us and get involved. Thirdly, our funders who make our very existence possible.

Our partner organisations, our supporters and North Tyneside Council all advocate in so many ways to support the ongoing development of the project. And last but by no means least, our dedicated trustees who volunteer their time, support and commitment in their governance role to develop and sustain our project.

## We couldn't do any of it without you all!

Youth services across the country have been one of the areas which have seen the most dramatic cuts when budgets have been squeezed. While over 1,000 youth centres have closed with the loss of over 4500 youth worker roles. Here in North Tyneside, PDYP has managed to weather the storm. We have not only sustained our service but we have managed to find funding to maintain a full complement in staffing since Mike left. We have welcomed Abby who has joined the team and will be working alongside existing staff to ensure we can provide more support to the young people in our community which is vital when services are limited elsewhere.

On behalf of everyone, I would like to say thank you. We look forward to working beside you to ensure the success of the project continues in the coming year. Thank you so much for your unwavering support.

Cathy Davis  
Chair  
Phoenix Detached Youth Project



# ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR



This report covers the work of Phoenix Detached Youth Project, herein PDYP from April 2025 to March 2026

- 1 We have contacted and built long term relationships with 259 different young people.
- 2 The staff team has worked hard during the past year in continuing to build effective relationships with young people which has resulted in 5,517 interactions.
- 3 Over the past year we have successfully supported 17 young people into work, 2 into training and 2 into university, which we feel is an excellent achievement with such a small team.
- 4 The five Helping Hands groups continue to be delivered in partnership with Connexions, North Tyneside Council and is a highly valued borough wide service. We have worked with 72 young people across five groups, and young people continued to be offered one to one support with their mental health and emotional well-being as part of the Helping Hands provision.
- 5 We have continued to deliver health and well-being provision to young people from the NE29 area, kindly supported and funded by North Tyneside Council Public Health.
- 6 We have worked closely in partnership with The Meadows, for a second year with partnership funding from The Community Fund (Lottery), to improve and deliver crisis support for the whole community, memorial benches, play work, and community and youth work.
- 7 We continue to build successful relationships with the local secondary schools. Norham High School and John Spence, doing Detached Youth Work, issue-based work, exploring knife crime, relationships, risk taking, health issues and a range of other educational issues as well as one to one work.
- 8 Food and fuel poverty continues to be a major issue on this estate, for this reason we have worked closely in partnership with The Meadows, The Bay foodbank, and Norham Road Tesco. This has made the agencies response to the whole community improve in addressing local poverty. We have given out 69 crisis grants in the past year for: food, gas, electric, ID, baby equipment, household items etc.
- 9 We have continued to develop positive relationships with other agencies, businesses and companies, opening new pathways of support for young people and the community. This has made a massive difference in supporting local young people.
- 10 We took part in the North Shields 800 celebrations including being part of the mural art project at North Shields football grounds and designing models and carrying them in the parade through North Shields.

## Statistics

Some funders require us to record our data as the number of males and females we work with. This is something we are in discussion with funders about as we also work with individuals who identify as non-binary or trans. At PDYP we welcome young people being themselves and for some young people being involved with us is the first time they feel comfortable using an alternative name, gender, pronoun or identity and we pride ourselves on this.

### This year we have worked with 259 individuals

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Males new contact 11 – 17 yrs        | 65 |
| Males new contact 18 – 25 yrs        | 3  |
| Males existing contact 11 – 17       | 38 |
| Males existing contact 18 – 25       | 21 |
| Females new contact 11- 17 yrs       | 39 |
| Females new contact 18 – 25 yrs      | 5  |
| Females existing contact 11 – 17 yrs | 55 |
| Females existing contact 18 – 25 yrs | 33 |

This year we have seen an increase in the number of interactions compared to previous years and we are extremely proud of this as we were a full time member of staff down for a significant part of the year. There have been 5,517 interactions.

|                        |             |                           |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Detached work:</b>  | <b>1862</b> | (973 males, 889 females)  |
| <b>Drop in:</b>        | <b>896</b>  | (424 males, 472 females)  |
| <b>Group work:</b>     | <b>2311</b> | (895 males, 1416 females) |
| <b>One to one work</b> | <b>448</b>  | (176 males, 272 females)  |

# PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT

# ONGOING CORE WORK



## DETACHED YOUTH WORK

Detached work is central to our identity, and we continue to prioritise getting out onto the streets whenever possible. At the PDYP, we value a long-term approach to detached youth work, not simply as a way of bringing young people into the project, but as a means of meeting them on their terms and building trust in their own environments. Despite staffing challenges this year, including a team member retiring, we have maintained a consistent presence in the community and delivered detached youth work as often as possible, despite operating on a reduced staff team. This year, we were also out on the streets on Bonfire Night, engaging with young people and sharing key messages around safety.

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment is consistently high on the agenda for the PDYP. We are passionate about working alongside young people to create meaningful job opportunities in an increasingly competitive environment. Supporting young people into work has a significant impact on their lives that goes far beyond financial benefit. We often see improvements in both physical and mental health as a result of gaining employment.

A key part of our role is reducing barriers to work. This includes practical support such as interview skills coaching, assistance with job applications, and providing moral support throughout the process. In addition, we are able to offer targeted financial support, including travel grants to help young people attend interviews or get to work before receiving their first paycheque. We have also supported young people with grants for interview clothing, ensuring they are able to present themselves confidently and make the strongest possible start.

While the phrase “money doesn’t buy happiness” holds some truth, what money does provide is security - the ability to pay rent, buy food, and heat a home. When young people are no longer consumed by these immediate pressures, they are better able to focus on the more positive and fulfilling aspects of life.

This year, the PDYP has supported 17 young people into work, 2 into training, and 2 into university.

## GROUP WORK

Over the past year, our group work at PDYP has continued to grow in both scale and impact, delivering 347 group sessions resulting in 804 session hours. These figures reflect not just activity, but meaningful engagement where young people have consistently shown commitment, curiosity, and a willingness to develop both personally and socially.

A key principle of our approach is ensuring that young people are at the centre of what we do. We actively support young people to shape and set up their own groups, giving them ownership over what they would like to participate in. This youth-led model is fundamental to informal education, as it empowers individuals to make decisions, express their interests, and take responsibility within a supportive environment. At PDYP, our role is to create safe, inclusive spaces and facilitate activities that encourage participation, while allowing young people the freedom to explore and lead.

Through shared experiences in group settings, participants naturally build essential life skills such as teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. These sessions provide opportunities for young people to learn from one another, navigate challenges together, and develop positive relationships. This collective learning environment strengthens not only the individual but also the wider group dynamic, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect. More specific groups such as Helping Hands, Hopes and Fears and I.N.I.T.I.A.T.E are covered in a separate part of the report.

With all groups we now alternate sessions between the office and off site activities. The sessions in the office include; issue based discussions, arts and craft, games and cooking. The community trips include a range of enrichment opportunities such as Beamish, zoos, trampolining, bowling, ice skating, laser quasar, and a highlight this year was a theatre experience to see Mary Poppins. These experiences broaden horizons, build confidence, and create lasting memories that further strengthen group cohesion.

A lot of groups are formed through friendships and each group gives themselves a group name. This year we have worked with The Newcastle lads, The Mineorities, Levi’s group, Ginger Guinea Pigs and John Spence Alpha’s.

Two groups were set up in a different way which also highlights the strength of our inclusive approach. The Wider Group was established in response to individuals who found it difficult to form or join larger friendship groups. By introducing a “walk-in approach”, we created an accessible entry point that has since



*"My granddaughter finds the group very welcoming and enjoys the companionship as she doesn't have many friends so it has been great for her to meet other people her own age and have the motivation to go out."*

**Grandparent**



grown into a thriving, mixed group. Participants who once felt isolated are now actively engaging and forming meaningful connections. The success of this group has resulted in a second wider group being set up.

Similarly, the ToGetHer Group supports young females who have experienced social isolation or anxiety around group settings. This group has gone from strength to strength, building confidence and trust among its members. Notably, they have successfully completed Stage 1 of The Key programme, developing ten key skills through their project work. Some young women from this group attended a residential to High Borran, which is covered in the Residential section.

Overall, our group work demonstrates the power of informal education in supporting young people to grow, connect, and thrive - both individually and as part of a community.

## HEAD V HEART

This is the aspect of our work which focuses on physical health. Over the last year we have delivered 55 healthy activities and 95 different young people have been involved.

We also continue to work in partnership with Active North Tyneside and are able to refer young people for free gym passes. Through this partnership young people have also been able to benefit from free active / gym wear through their kit bank. This has been particularly beneficial for young people coming on residencies with us. New this year has been the bike project which has seen young people being given refurbished bikes, these have been really well received.



*"The bike has allowed me to get out of the house significantly more than ever I would beforehand. Plus it's been great fun, I have been through the pedestrian Tyne tunnel to explore South of the river as well as going further North up the coast."*

**Young person**

## I.N.I.T.I.A.T.E (AMBASSADORS/ HEALTH CHAMPIONS)

We have always had young people involved as ambassadors / health champions but this year young people wanted a rebrand, hence the new name, I.N.I.T.I.A.T.E.

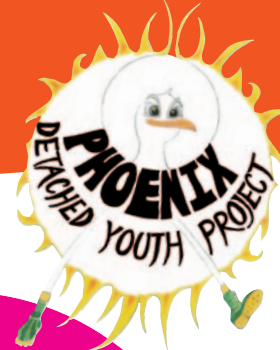
The ambassadors wanted a name which reflected their purpose and chose an acronym, which stands for; Include, Now, Involved, Together, Intergen, Accessible, Trust, Everyone. This group are the official youth ambassadors of the PDYP, representing the voice, creativity, and leadership of young people. Since January 2026, they have worked closely together to deliver a range of impactful social action projects, building a strong sense of teamwork and shared purpose. Throughout this time, the group has developed into a confident and supportive team, encouraging one another while developing their skills and ideas. A key highlight has been their "trip down memory lane" intergenerational afternoon tea project, where they connected with older members of the community at Chirton Lodge. This work created meaningful conversations, allowing young people to learn from the past while building respect and stronger relationships across generations.

Alongside this, the group has launched a TikTok account with PDYP to capture and share their journey, helping to engage a wider audience and inspire other young people to get involved.

Looking ahead, the group will be working with CREW GAL, a North Shields-based music and film production company, to develop skills in podcasting, recording, and media production. In addition, they will be working in partnership with I Love North Shields on podcasting events, as well as creating and editing content for the I Love North Shields magazine. Through these opportunities, the I.N.I.T.I.A.T.E group aims to better connect with local young people, amplify youth voice, and to continue developing social action projects that respond to the issues that matter most to them.



# PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT



## HELPING HANDS

This continues to be a significant part of the work of PDYP and is delivered in partnership with North Tyneside Councils Connexions service, with Helen Heslop being the lead worker from Connexions. We thank Helen for her continued dedication to Helping Hands. Thanks must also go to Ann Courtney, our sessional worker for her support with the Monday night groups.

*"Helping Hands has been a huge help to my daughter. She has been given the opportunity to mix with other young people with similar difficulties. I think the whole staff team at Helping Hands are worth their weight in gold. Thank you so much."*

**Parent**

We have 5 groups meeting on a fortnightly basis offering support to young people regarding their mental health and emotional well-being. Two of the five groups are for young people over 18 years and who have left college or sixth form. Group sessions focus on issues such as anxiety, low mood, sleep, resilience and give young people the opportunity to realise they aren't alone and share coping strategies and techniques.

Some people attending Helping Hands don't get the opportunity to socialise with people their own age so offering activities during the school holidays is beneficial. It often sees people out of their comfort zone but they are doing so with the support of other. It also gives young people the opportunity to develop and practice important life skills, such as using public transport or ordering refreshments. Over the last year groups have enjoyed visits to a range of places such as Edinburgh zoo, pottery painting, trampolining, the coast, farm trips and bowling to name a few.

We have been complimented by parents and referral agencies for the speed in which we contact new referrals, often within a week. All young people attending Helping Hands or on the waiting list for a space are offered one to one support which many young people find beneficial.

Helping Hands has been running for over 20 years now, and the thing we hear and see time and time again is the sense of relief people find in meeting other young people in similar situations to themselves or who 'get what it feels like to be me'.

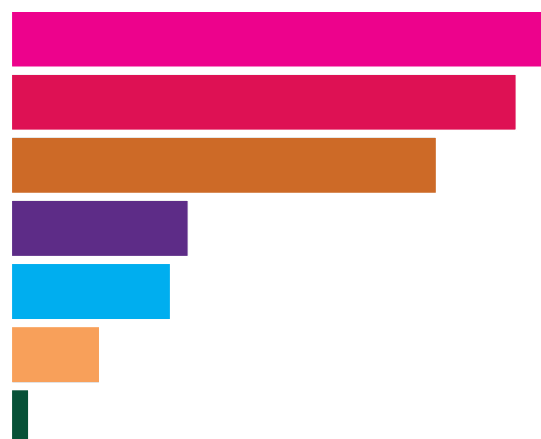
*"Attending Helping Hands has given me a routine and structure. I'd make an effort to go to bed earlier knowing I had to get up for the group the next day. Helping hands has improved my confidence and allowed me to find my voice. When I started coming to the session I didn't have the confidence to say much especially if I didn't agree with what was being said, but now I do and I have also learnt when to stay quiet. My mental health has benefitted by listening to others and being able to share my thoughts and concerns and it's given me somewhere to get things off my chest."*

**Young person attending Helping Hands**



### WHERE REFERRALS CAME FROM

|    |                                    |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 36 | CAMHS                              |
| 12 | Schools                            |
| 5  | Connexions                         |
| 5  | Mental Health Nurse                |
| 4  | Social Workers                     |
| 3  | GP                                 |
| 1  | Community Learning Disability Team |
| 1  | Early Help Team                    |
| 1  | First Contact Clinical             |
| 1  | North Tyneside Young Carers        |
| 1  | Phoenix Detached Youth Project     |
| 1  | School nurse                       |
| 1  | VODA                               |



### REASONS FOR REFERRAL

|    |                 |
|----|-----------------|
| 59 | Anxiety         |
| 54 | Resilience      |
| 45 | Low Mood        |
| 26 | Self-harm       |
| 16 | Sleep           |
| 6  | Panic Attacks   |
| 2  | Eating Distress |

## LGBTQIA+

The work at PDYP is young person's needs-led so despite having a lot of young people who identify as LGBTQIA+ involved with the project there hasn't been a request for a dedicated group. At PDYP young people are seen for being the individuals they are and welcomed into all of the groups. We pride ourselves for respecting young people's rights to self-determine their identity, with young people feeling confident enough to explore their names, pronouns and appearance at PDYP.

## INTERGENERATIONAL WORK

Our work with residents from Chirton Lodge, Anchor Trust continues to be well received by residents whilst benefitting young people who get involved with this area of work. In addition to the monthly supermarket trips we have done a range of other sessions including arts and crafts, meals out and music nights where local young people perform for them. Young people benefit from socialising as well as increased confidence in conversations and for those performing at the music nights it gives them the opportunity to gain experience of performing in front of an audience. We also took residents from Chirton Lodge to see Norham High School's version of Grease which was well received and has led to one of the residents donating costumes to the school.

*"It's good that Phoenix DYP take us out and organise things like the afternoon tea, and the shopping trips to Morrisons are really appreciated. It is great we get to do these trips with Phoenix as we don't get the chance otherwise."*  
**Resident from Chirton Lodge**

## WORK IN SCHOOLS

Working with schools continues to be a key element of our work. Having access to local high schools allows us to engage with young people who we would not usually meet out on the streets. School-based settings also provide a more comfortable and familiar environment, helping young people to get to know us without the nervousness that can sometimes come with visiting our office or the uncertainty of encountering us in community spaces. This approach to school-based detached work enables us to plan and deliver structured group activities, as well as engage in informal, one-to-one conversations with young people.

Alongside our detached work, we continue to support local high schools through targeted 1:1 work with young people who have identified needs. We have also delivered preventative group work within schools. This year, we worked with John Spence High School to deliver a six-session programme focused on raising awareness around key issues including drugs and alcohol, mental health, and community safety.

In addition, we have continued to support Norham High School through the delivery of educational sessions during PSHE days, covering topics such as risk and safety in the community. We also supported Norham during their transition week, using this opportunity to build

## MENTAL HEALTH

In addition to our Helping Hands group support (see Helping Hands section) we find mental health is the most common request we get for supporting young people on a one-to-one basis. The advantage we have of working with young people holistically is we can look at what may be causing an individual to be suffering with their mental health as well as the wider impact it is having on them. It means we can help young people emotionally and practically. What we often find is that people benefit from our time and being listened to, without being judged. Where young people need more specialist services we support them in accessing these.

We are proud to continue to be part of the Borough wide planning group for the North Tyneside Mental Health Day event and this year there was another successful event involving motivational speakers, a band, comedian and a range of activities taking place. It was great to have young people attending from PDYP. The theme for this year was 'Community' and everyone was asked what Community meant to them.

## SEXUAL HEALTH

We continue to be a C card outlet which provides young people with information regarding their sexual health and free access to condoms, STI testing and lube. Where young people need more specialist support or alternative forms of contraception we support them access the One to One centre.

## SUMMER PROGRAMME

This summer was an unusual one for us. We were two staff members down for much of the period - one through retirement and another due to injury - which brought its challenges. However, despite the reduced team, we pulled together, adapted, and ensured that young people continued to receive consistent support and opportunities.

We continued to deliver a wide range of activities, maintaining a strong and engaging programme throughout the summer. In fact, we made a conscious effort to expand our offer by incorporating more trips using public transport. This not only allowed us to visit new places but also gave young people valuable life skills and greater independence, helping them learn how to navigate their local area safely and confidently. Trips included visits to places such as Shiremoor Adventure Playground, as well as days out to South Shields Park and the fair, travelling via the ferry. These experiences were not just about having fun, but about broadening horizons, building confidence, and creating shared memories. Despite the challenges we faced as a team, the summer remained a positive and impactful time for the young people we support.

relationships with the incoming Year 7 cohort. This year we developed a programme of social action projects with students from the EDEN and ARP departments. These departments support students with social, emotional, mental health needs, those with language and communication issues as well as neurodiverse students. The programme included three projects: a beach clean, decorating Chirton Lodge for Christmas, and preparing Christmas goodie bags at the Meadows, followed by a reward trip to Laser Quest.

This year we also developed new links with Moorbridge, working with a group of young men to deliver preventative education around topics including knife crime, healthy relationships, and positive masculinity, a topic we have always addressed but came to the forefront of public discussion with the release of the show *Adolescence* in 2025.



# PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT



## NE29 MUSIC COLLECTIVE

The NE29 Music Collective has played a vital role in supporting local young people by creating opportunities to explore music, develop skills, and grow in confidence. Through access to professional studio time and structured singing lessons, participants have been able to express themselves creatively in a safe and encouraging environment. For many this has been their first experience of recording music or performing, opening doors to new interests and ambitions.

A key outcome of this support has been a noticeable boost in confidence. Young people who may have initially felt unsure or anxious about sharing their voices have grown in self-belief, learning to perform in front of others and take pride in their achievements. This confidence often extends beyond music, positively impacting their communication skills, social interactions, and willingness to try new things.

The collective has also ensured that young people are actively involved in the wider community. They have attended and contributed to a range of local events, including Picnic in the Park hosted by the YMCA, North Shields Football Club's end-of-year celebrations, and Coast Fest. These experiences have allowed them to showcase their talents, feel part of something bigger, and connect with their community in meaningful ways. This work would not be possible without the support of Traxx Studio and dedicated music tutor Kerry Green, whose guidance and encouragement have been instrumental in nurturing young talent. Their commitment has helped create a positive and inspiring space for young people to thrive.

Overall, NE29 Music Collective has not only developed musical ability but has also supported personal growth, resilience, and a stronger sense of belonging within the community.

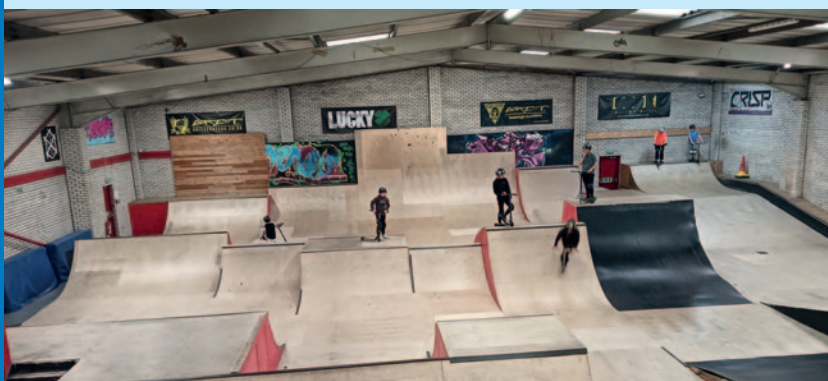
## ONE TO ONE/CRISIS WORK

One-to-one crisis work continues to provide vital, often life-changing support for young people facing complex and immediate challenges. Over the past year we have responded to a wide range of needs, ensuring that young people have access to timely, compassionate, and practical support when they need it most. These sessions have covered a broad spectrum of issues. Many young people have required guidance around benefits, helping them to understand entitlements, complete applications, and navigate often complicated systems. Others have needed urgent support with housing, including preventing homelessness, liaising with local services, and securing safe accommodation. We have also assisted young people in obtaining essential personal identification, (birth certificates, photographic identification) a crucial step in accessing employment, education, and wider support services.

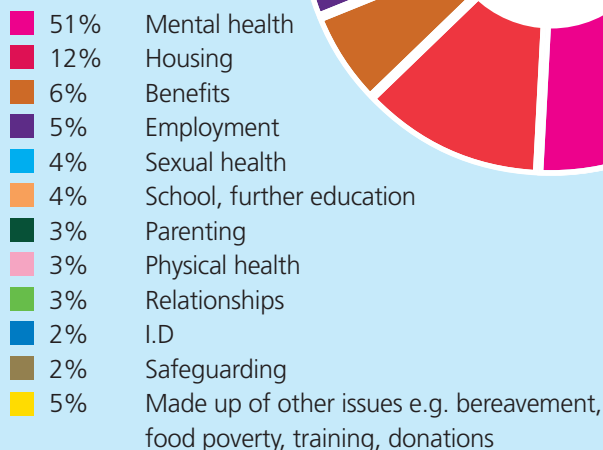
In addition, a significant number of sessions have focused on mental health, providing a safe space for young people to talk openly, be heard, and access appropriate referrals where necessary. We have supported individuals regarding their physical and sexual health, ensuring they receive accurate information, signposting, and, where appropriate, direct intervention. Each session is tailored to the individual, recognising that no two situations are the same and that flexibility is key to effective crisis response.

We are incredibly grateful for those who fund this element of our work as their contributions have enabled us not only to sustain this level of intensive support but also to offer practical assistance where it is most needed. This has included providing essentials such as food, travel costs, emergency supplies, and other resources that can make an immediate difference in a young person's life during times of crisis.

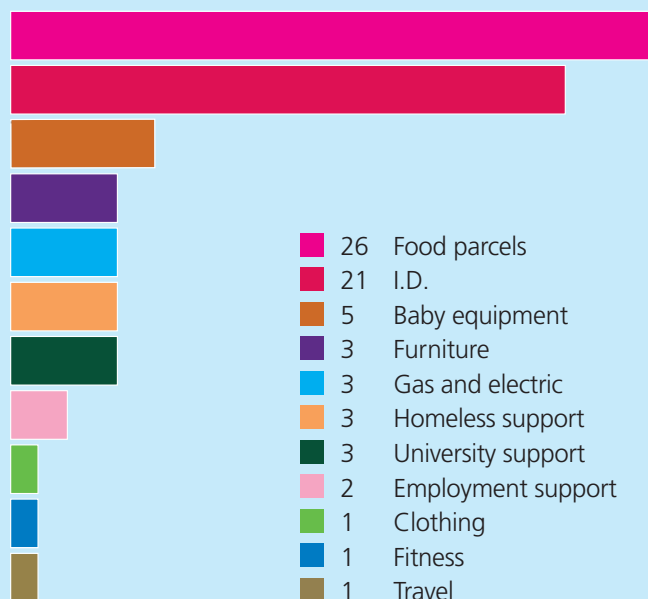
Notably, the number of crisis interventions has decreased compared to last year. We view this as a positive development. It reflects a shift in our approach towards earlier identification of issues and more preventative work. By engaging with young people sooner and building trusted relationships, we are increasingly able to address challenges before they escalate into full crisis situations. This proactive model allows us to support young people more effectively, helping them build resilience, develop coping strategies, and access the right support at the right time. We have also been able to link young people into alternative schemes e.g. energy providers offering credit over the winter and an interview clothing charity. While crisis work remains a crucial part of what we do, our aim is always to reduce the need for it by intervening earlier and more sustainably in young people's lives.



The breakdown of the primary issues young people have been supported with during one to one sessions.



Thanks to different sources of funding we have been able to support young people practically with 69 grants and food parcels.



## PARENTS

Our Hopes and Fears Parent group continues to welcome new and existing parents and children. Over the last year we have done a variety of activities including; soft plays, arts and crafts, farm trips, parks and play areas. Over the school holidays we designed a programme of activities around where was accessible by public transport, rather than relying on our minibus, with the hope it would encourage parents to visit places outside of trips with PDYP. We find that whilst going in our minibus is exciting for the children, on the metro and ferry was even more exciting! A highlight of the year was Santa taking time out of his busy schedule to do doorstep visits to children at home, the looks on their faces was priceless as were other members of the community doing double takes when they saw Santa in our minibus.



## RESIDENTIALS

Residentials create time and space away from everyday environments, routines, and pressures. This change of setting helps young people relax, open up, and engage more fully with staff and peers. It often allows relationships to develop more quickly and more deeply, which is especially important in detached youth work where trust is built gradually.

They also provide valuable opportunities for personal and social development. Young people are encouraged to take part in new experiences, try activities they might not usually access, and develop independence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills in a supportive setting.

Simple things like travelling together, sharing responsibilities, and managing time become important learning experiences. This year we have completed 3 residentials.

The first being to Beadnell, Northumberland, with the parents group, a chance to spend some time with their little ones at the beach, enjoying building sand castles, rock pooling and some much needed time away.

Our second residential saw a group of young men visit High Borrans outdoor education centre in the Lake District. This residential has a work skills focus for young men, spending time doing hands on jobs that have a genuine impact on the young people who visit after. This year they decommissioned a jetty that had become unusable, build some firewood stores, rebuilt some steps and revelled the car park before spending the Sunday ghyll scrambling.

The feedback from the young men, many who don't know each other prior, is that by doing work tasks, it's a great way to get to know each other in a very natural way.

The final residential saw 10 young women visit High Borrans, aged 13-25, providing a safe and supportive space for building confidence, relationships, and personal growth. Saturday was spent doing tasks; building a bug hotel from scratch, pruning and clearing shrubs and moving wood chippings to the low ropes course and edging the drive. For most of the young women it was their first experience of using power tools. The evening saw young women discussing the positive things about being women and what things worry them. There were some powerful discussions around safety, identity and health and these discussions will help shape future areas of work. The Sunday was spent completing a rewarding walk with a view and canoeing. The weekend encouraged the young women to step outside their comfort zones and work with others. When evaluating the weekend, the overall themes was that they felt safe, supported, and more confident, with many initial anxieties reduced by the end of the trip.



# WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

With young people's needs being increasingly complex, more competitive funding, and new initiatives such as Pride in Place, it has never been more important to work in partnership with other agencies to provide the highest level of support to young people and the wider community.

Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen both new and existing partnerships at a casual and service level, enabling us to deliver a wide range of projects. These have included participation in the North Shields 800 (as referenced in another section) and the community fireworks display at the Meadows.

Working in partnership goes beyond financial support; it allows us to share in-kind resources and expertise, helping us to reach a broader section of the community. Through our ongoing partnership with The Meadows, we have continued delivery of the Noah's Bench project, completing two additional remembrance benches for community members.

We have also strengthened our links with organisations such as I Love North Shields and Crew Gal Studios, creating new and creative opportunities for young people in the area.

Alongside these partnerships, we continue to develop our relationships with local universities through innovative projects. This includes exploring the use of virtual reality to support preventative mental health work, as well as delivering study days. These study days have involved Master's students studying Childhood studies from Northumbria University visiting the project, taking part in guided tours of the area, and learning about the history of Meadow Well and the role young people have played in shaping its changing landscape.

We also continue to host Level 5 Social Work students from Northumbria University. Supporting these students allows us to highlight the wider factors that influence young people's lives, while embedding a youth work approach to help further develop their professional skills.

## A Marmot Place

As a youth organisation we are excited for the years ahead, to work in partnership with North Tyneside Council and build on our existing strengths and shared commitment to improving outcomes for local communities. A Marmot place offers a valuable opportunity to align our grassroots experience with wider strategic support, ensuring that the voices of young people continue to shape the services designed for them. By working together, we can strengthen what already works - our trusted relationships, consistent presence, and creative engagement - while expanding our reach and impact across the borough.

Through this partnership, we aim to further embed the Marmot Principles into our practice, combining our on-the-ground knowledge with the expertise and networks of our partners. This will allow us to develop more joined-up, inclusive approaches that tackle inequality and promote wellbeing at every level. By building on our strengths and learning from one another, we can create more opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive. We are confident that this partnership will help us grow our impact and continue making a meaningful, lasting difference for all young people.



## North Shields 800

Throughout 2025, we had the privilege of working alongside 78 young people as part of the North Shields 800-year celebrations—a landmark year that brought the community together through creativity, heritage, and shared experiences. These young people were not just participants; they were active contributors, shaping and delivering a wide range of projects and events that reflected the spirit and identity of North Shields.

One of the standout projects was the North Shields 800 animation. Young people played a key role in its development, contributing ideas, artwork, and storytelling that captured the rich history of the town. This collaborative process with animator Si Hetherington gave the young people a strong sense of ownership and pride, while also developing valuable creative and communication skills.

Another major highlight was the mural trail, which saw young people working directly with a professional graffiti artist. Through hands-on involvement, they supported the design and creation of a large-scale mural at the North Shields Football ground. This has not only enhanced the visual landscape of North Shields but also gave young people the opportunity to learn new artistic techniques, express themselves publicly, and contribute to something lasting within their community.

Our partnership with North Shields Football Club was also a key part of the celebrations. At a community festival hosted at the club, young people took to the stage to perform live music for residents. This was a powerful moment of confidence and community connection, as they showcased their talents in front of friends, family, and the wider public.

In addition, we worked closely with the Meadows and the Bay Food Bank on a creative project centred around a photography competition and film. Young people were encouraged to capture images that reflected community, resilience, and everyday life in North Shields.

These photographs helped tell powerful local stories and were incorporated into a wider film project led by the food bank as part of the North Shields 800 celebrations. This initiative not only developed creative skills but also deepened young people's understanding of the importance of community support networks.

In the lead-up to the North Shields 800 grand finale in December, young people participated in a series of art workshops focused on designing and building fish sculptures. These creative pieces became central to the final celebration event. The culmination of this work saw young people and the PDYP team take part in a vibrant procession from Northumberland Square to the Fish Quay. Joined by members of the community, they carried their creations through the streets, ending at the Ice Factory. The event was a true celebration, filled with music, energy, and pride, with some of our young people performing live on the quayside to close the year in style.

# WIDER COMMUNITY



Throughout the year, we have collaborated with local residents and organisations and this has resulted in a further 2,352 interactions. This includes residents from Chirton Lodge through our intergenerational work and the children (under 6 yrs olds) of the young people we work with.

Examples of our wider interactions include; North Shields 800 events (mentioned elsewhere in the report) World Mental Health Day, where young people helped raise awareness and promote positive wellbeing, as well as the Meadows Easter and summer community events, which brought families together through activities, food, and entertainment. Bonfire Night in November was another key moment, offering a safe and inclusive space for celebration.

The PDYP has also made a more conscious effort to represent the voice of young people at different events and partnership meetings. Some of the spaces we have represented young peoples views include The Poverty intervention meetings, Joint Engagement meetings, Voda Mental Health Alliance, North Tyneside Local Partnership and Pride in Place meetings. The PDYP has also delivered the Introduction to Youth Work to 11 professorial and volunteers who are members of the Voda Mental health alliance, sharing our wealth of experience and knowledge on youth work.



## Funders and business

As strong as the work delivered by the team at the PDYP is, it would not be possible without the ongoing support of our funders and local businesses. Whether through funding staff wages, building costs, activities, or crisis support, their contribution is essential. Without the backing and trust of our funders, we would not be able to deliver the level of service that we do.

As funding for the voluntary sector is unfortunately being reduced and competition for resources increases, we remain extremely grateful to those who continue to place their trust in us as an organisation to support young people in our area.

A full list of funders can be found on the back page.

*"The Phoenix Detached Youth Project was recently awarded funding for a 3-year programme from North Tyneside Council to support the work they do with young people. Their bid demonstrated excellent partnership working, passion, creativity, and a complete commitment to doing the best for, and most importantly with, young people."*

*We know the challenges many of today's young people face are multi-faceted and can feel overwhelming. Young people face pressures from every direction – school, social media, peer pressure and family expectations - Phoenix DYP helps them to navigate and get through these challenges. Phoenix DYP offers a space where young people can explore who they are and what matters to them. The team at Phoenix DYP really does change young lives for the better; they help build trust and confidence, raise aspirations and give hope for a positive future. I look forward to continuing to work with the team over the next three years."*

**Rachel Nicholson, Head of Public Health Strategy and Policy.**

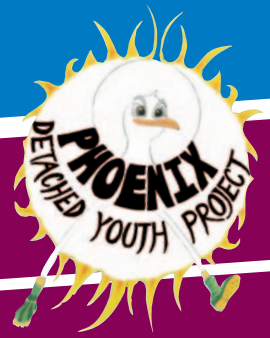
## Training undertaken by staff

Despite being qualified and experienced workers we believe it is essential to continue our professional development. Over the last year staff have undertaken training in the following areas.

- Bias, barriers and the brain
- County Lines
- Disrupting exploitation
- Diversity, equality and inclusion
- Domestic abuse
- Energy support for services users
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene and Safety
- GDPR advance training
- How to speak to learners of English
- Introduction to S.E.N.D
- Knife crime
- Language and communication
- Let's talk about Race
- LGBTQIA+
- Masking and camouflaging in neurodiverse young people
- Mastering confident digital pitching and presenting
- Mental capacity act and young people
- Nutrition 0- 5 years
- Nutrition 5-19 years
- Racism awareness
- Resilience in uncertainty
- Safeguarding
- Suicide prevention
- Using AI to support funding bids
- Working with young men and boys
- Youth work and inclusion of working with young people and disabilities
- Youth and social harm



# RECOGNISING OTHERS



## REECE ALLEN AWARD

This award has been given in memory of Reece Allen who sadly lost his life in 2016. We had worked with Reece for 11 years and PDYP and Reece's family wanted to create a legacy in his name.

*"The award is in recognition of the contribution to the local community by a local young person. This year's winner is Saffy Roberts. We have chosen Saffy as she deserves this and we wish her good luck for her future."*

### Reece's family

Saffy has been on an inspirational journey and she is now in a position to offer a lot to inspire and support other young people, the PDYP and wider community. She was referred to Helping Hands (our support group for people regarding their mental health and emotional well-being) 7 years ago by her GP. She has suffered long term with her mental health, in particular anxiety, low mood and lack of confidence and self-esteem. Over the years she has committed to one to one sessions, Helping Hands, Hopes and Fears parents group as well as being an ambassador. It has been amazing to see her confidence improve and develop and identify coping strategies. She has become a positive role model for other young people and has been instrumental in re-invigorating the ambassadors / social action group previously known as 'Shy Bairns'. She came up with a new name for the group I.N.I.T.I.A.T.E an acronym which they wanted to describe the group: Include, Now, Involved, Together, Intergen, Accessible, Trust, Everyone. She is extremely passionate about helping others and has so many ideas that sometimes it's difficult to keep up with the list of innovative and original ideas she has. The one thing all of her ideas have in common is to benefit others. As an ambassador she has been involved in a range of social action projects including; welfare packs for homeless people, Not so secret Santa (providing gifts for parents to give their children), Easter egg hunt, intergenerational bingo night and afternoon tea as well as distributing grants to other local charities through the Shy Bairns group.



Saffy is a positive role model to other young people especially younger women in the ToGetHer group who have been involved in the residential to High Borran. Due to her history she is excellent at empathising with and support anxious members in the group and has a fantastic nurture way of making them believe in themselves as well as bringing people out of their shells and encouraging them to talk. On this year's residential she was instrumental in leading the discussions on what is positive about being a young woman and what are the difficulties they face. She initiated a conversation on consent and showed them the tea and consent film, she then took responsibility of encouraging everyone to contribute songs to a playlist where the theme was women and positivity and led the disco....this was something she would not have had the confidence to do a few years ago.

Sadly for us she is coming to the upper age limit for Phoenix DYP. She has worked hard over the years, we have seen her through extreme lows so it is positive to see her now being in a position where she feels she is able to start looking for work and wanting to get involved in volunteering opportunities outside of the Phoenix as it means her ethos for helping others will continue once her time with us comes to an end. Another example of how she has demonstrated her willingness to improve her knowledge and skills is that this year she completed her Introduction to youth work course. We feel Saffy is an excellent role model for other young people about what can be achieved.

*"The Phoenix DYP has allowed me to grow in every way I can, they have helped me realise who I am meant to be. From allowing me to recentre through residential to supporting and encouraging me with my own ideas. I have also been able to meet and work with a range of different young people who I wouldn't have otherwise crossed paths with. They have helped me to gain confidence, set boundaries and broaden my horizons and opportunities within and outside of the Phoenix DYP. Phoenix see the potential in people and encourage us, not in a 'mind over matter way' but mind and matter working together. Even if you feel scared, bravery is being scared but doing it anyway ... Phoenix made me braver. The journey I have been on and my lived experiences has allowed me to navigate through a lot of different circumstances and because of that I feel I am now in a position to look at supporting others, I would love a career in youth work. I would tell my younger self, and other young people "Your life may never turn out the way you planned it, but it will turn out ok".*

**Saffy**

## INVESTORS IN YOUNG PEOPLE AWARD – LOCAL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

This year's award goes to Whitley Bay Escape Rooms.



We are delighted to award Whitley Bay Escape Rooms this award as they have been supportive of the work of PDYP for many years. They go out of their way to accommodate the needs of our groups and have been extremely flexible in working sessions around us. All of the staff are extremely friendly and make even the most anxious of young people feel welcome and that they can escape!

*"We feel very humbled to receive this award. We genuinely love to run your games. It is always nice to interact with the groups you bring along and see their excitement when they solve the game and escape. We love to give the young people a sense of achievement and hopefully boost their self confidence. Thank you so much and we look forward to welcoming you all back soon."*

**Whitley Bay Escape Room**

## INVESTORS IN YOUNG PEOPLE AWARD – OUTSTANDING LOCAL PARTNER

This year we have made great strides to work more closely with our three main partner agencies based on the Meadow Well estate - The Meadows, Cedarwood, and The Bay Foodbank. Through stronger communication, shared resources, and a more joined-up approach, we've been able to better support individuals and families in the community.

This progress has taken place at both a ground level and a management level, with frontline teams working more collaboratively day-to-day while leaders have strengthened coordination, planning, and shared priorities. By building trust and developing deeper relationships across all levels, we've ensured that people accessing one service are more easily connected to others, creating a more holistic network of care.

This collaboration has not only improved efficiency but has also helped us respond more effectively to local needs, whether that's providing food support, signposting to additional services, or simply offering a consistent and welcoming presence across the estate.

We would therefore like to celebrate all three organisations' commitment to community partnership with this award.



*"Being recognised as PDYP's Outstanding Partner is something we hold tightly and gratefully. The work on Meadow Well only works when the organisations here trust each other and act like one network rather than separate doors. We are proud to share this with Meadows and The Bay Foodbank, and clear that there is more work to do to ensure the residents of Meadow Well and North Tyneside receive the standard of holistic services they need and deserve."*

**Dr. P Solomon Lennox**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cedarwood



*"We're incredibly grateful to receive the Outstanding Local Partner Award from Phoenix Detached Youth Project. It means a great deal to the whole team at The Bay Foodbank and is a reflection of the positive partnership we have built together over the years."*

*The work Phoenix Detached Youth Project does within the community is invaluable, and we are proud to work alongside an organisation so committed to supporting young people and local families. Strong partnerships and collaboration between community organisations are more important than ever, and we firmly believe that by working together, sharing resources, knowledge, and support, we can make a far greater impact than we ever could individually."*

*This award is not only a recognition of the work The Bay Foodbank does, but also of the strength of the relationship between our organisations and our shared commitment to supporting the local community."*

**Joe Scrase**  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Bay Foodbank



*"The Meadows and Phoenix Detached Youth Project have worked in partnership for many years. We have enjoyed collaborating on projects that have made a real difference in our community, including Noah's Bench, Street play and Crisis Support, and we look forward to developing many more initiatives together in the future. Over the last year, the spirit of partnership across Chirton, Percy Main and Meadow Well has deepened, expanding to include Cedarwood and Bay Foodbank in a much more proactive way than before. Together, our four organisations are committed to providing seamless, needs led support that is shaped and developed with our community."*

*I am thrilled to accept Phoenix Detached Youth Project's award for Outstanding Partner. Knowing that this award is shared with our partners across the area makes it all the more meaningful. It symbolises the strength of our collaboration and our collective commitment to the community we are here to serve. Thank you, from all at The Meadows."*

**Karyn Ainsley**  
Chief Officer  
The Meadows



# WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT PHOENIX DYP

*"Love the Phoenix DYP for their work, compassion and love for our community and young people, keep up the amazing work."*

**Parent of young person**

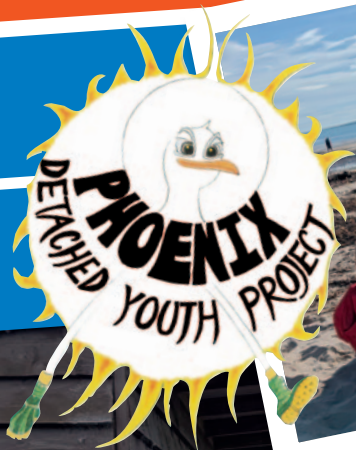
*"It's not often we get to meet the families and organisations who we support and both Jackie and I were delighted to be at your open day. To see the work you do and the number of people you support made us feel gratified that we can help. Keep up the good work."*

**Jane McFadyen, Chair of Trustees,  
Adventure Holidays**

*"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you have done for me over the years. When I first started this journey, if someone had told me I'd go to university, finish my degree, travel and experience the things I have today, I never would have believed them. You gave me hope when I had none. You believed in me when I couldn't believe in myself. You gave me a second chance at life and I honestly wouldn't be here without the kindness, patience and support of every single one of you. No words can ever truly express how grateful I am but please know that I will carry your kindness and encouragement with me for the rest of my life."*

**Young person**





"Throughout my placement at The Phoenix, working alongside Luke, Becky and Becca, I have developed a wide range of valuable and transferrable skills that will support both my studies and future career. From detached youth work in schools and on the streets, to facilitating group activities, supporting Helping Hands sessions, and delivering informal education, each day has provided meaningful learning opportunities. Shadowing such experienced and dedicated professionals has been very inspiring and has strengthened my confidence and understanding of youth work in practice. They have all been very supportive and understanding throughout my placement, offering encouragement and guidance, particularly when I found certain aspects challenging or lacked confidence, which has greatly supported my development and growth."

**Sinead, Social work student  
Northumbria University**

"I love that the staff at Phoenix are so helpful and keep an eye on us oldies. I love that young people include us in their activities and it's great to see youngsters so involved in their community. Phoenix has helped my 2 godsons and other family members over the last 13 years. Your monthly shopping trips are a god send. You all do an amazing job for all of the of the community and a godsend to families in our area."

**Resident from Chirton Lodge  
Anchor Trust**

"It has been a pleasure working with the Phoenix. Through this partnership, we have built strong connections with community groups and provided our pupils with opportunities they would not normally have access to. These experiences have also played a valuable role in developing pupils' communication and confidence skills as they engaged with new people and environments. The pupils have thoroughly enjoyed taking part, volunteering to decorate the lounge for Christmas at Chirton Lodge Residential Home, creating Christmas hampers with the Meadows Community Group, and completing a beach clean at Longsands Beach. The Phoenix supported us by organising, transporting, and staffing all of the trips."

**Sam Mason, Norham High School**

"North Tyneside Launchpad enjoys a strong relationship with the team at PDYP. In particular during the planning and delivery of the celebration event for World Mental Health Day

Every year Becky attends the planning meetings and gives us vital input into the content of the day, including layout, stall area, catering and generally helping to make sure each years event is a success. Becky and Helen (her Helping Hands colleague from Connexions, North Tyneside Council), also host a stall promoting PDYP on the day and ensure every year there is a creative activity on the stall to promote attendees Mental Health as well as the project.

Launchpad really appreciate the input of PDYP and hope it continues for WMHD 2026!"

**Mish Loraine, Development Worker  
Launchpad North Tyneside**

# Thank you to everyone who supports the Phoenix Detached Youth Project and especially our funders and businesses:

- National Lottery Community fund (in partnership with The Meadows)
- Alex and William De Winton Trust
- Ballinger Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation Tyne and Wear
- Northumberland Co-op Community Fund
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- North Tyneside Council
- Public Health North Tyneside
- Tudor Trust
- Bay food bank
- Carney Consultancy
- Chirton Social club
- Greggs Foundation
- Jes Des Staff fund
- John Spence High School
- Joyce Trust
- Karbon Homes
- Little Blossoms child care

- National Lottery Community Fund (Awards for all)
- Norham High School
- North East Access Training
- North Shields Poly Sports Club
- Northumbria University
- Netherton Park Trust
- Poundland Royal Quays
- Prudhoe Street Mission Foundation
- Red Brain Charity Set up
- St Hildas Trust
- Tesco Extra Norham road
- The 1989 Willan Charitable Trust
- The Key
- Traxx Studios
- Tynemouth Decorators
- Ward Hadaway solicitors
- Waterville MOT Centre

- Wellesley Trust
- White knight maintenance
- Winter family fund
- WRF financial solutions
- U.K.S.P. & VODA
- Chirton lodge residents
- Hannah Johnson North Tyneside Councillor
- Nigel Verdon
- Rachel Marron
- Sally Bradford
- Linden Family
- Coop Community Fund
- Asian fund
- The Hokey Cokey (that's what it's all about) Fund
- Out and About Fund
- Adventure Holidays



## PHOENIX DETACHED YOUTH PROJECT

14 Front Street, Chirton, North Shields, NE29 7QW

**T:(0191) 258 5806**

**E: [staff@pdyp.org](mailto:staff@pdyp.org)**

**[www.pdyp.org](http://www.pdyp.org)**

### CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Luke Johnston**

### SENIOR DETACHED YOUTH WORKER

**Becky Rowe**

### DETACHED YOUTH WORKER

**Becca O'Keefe**

### YOUTH SUPPORT WORKER

**Abby Webster**

### SESSIONAL STAFF

**Ann Courtney**

**Caroline Cansdale**



### CORRESPONDENCE:

**Phoenix DYP, PO Box 957  
North Shields, NE29 1HF.**

## TRUSTEES

Cath Davis - Chair  
Taz Akhtar - Company Secretary  
Ben Appleby-Dean - Treasurer

Karen Bolger - Trustee  
Rev Lee Cleminson - Trustee  
Peter Hopkins - Trustee

Anne Marron - Trustee  
Ryan Wright - Trustee



North  
Tyneside  
Council

the  
Tudor trust

