



# Community Foundation

Vital Signs North East

**Rob Williamson, CEO**

**Connect, collaborate and make a difference**  
**21 March 2024**





# Community Foundation

Vital Signs North East



- 'Takes the pulse' of our region to identify challenges and opportunities, and how philanthropy can best address them.
- Acts as a guide to inform effective giving – of money, time and expertise - to support communities and civil society.
- Draws on statistics, research and knowledge from our funding and networks.



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Culture



Environment



Economy



Homes



Community



Justice



Health



Living standards



Education



Access



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- *Philanthropy*: giving that is thought through and done well. Not about how much, but how it links with the difference you want to make. Includes giving time and talent as well as 'treasure'.
- *Civil society*: people and organisations coming together to do things not for profit or because they must, but out of care, creativity, principles or passions. Local charities and community organisations are the backbone of the UK's civil society.
- *North East*: the English region covering the new North East Mayoral Authority and the Tees Valley Combined Authority.



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- **Research:** Mark Pierce, with Nils Stronach and Jo Cundall
- **Editorial group:**
  - **Jo Curry MBE DL**, Sir James Knott Trust
  - **Ngozi Lyn Cole**, consultant
  - **Professor Tony Chapman**, Durham University
  - **Matt Bratton**, CBI
  - **Dr Christopher Hartworth**, Difference North East
  - **Claire Malcom MBE**, New Writing North/CF trustee



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Vital Signs North East: Economy



- Higher unemployment
- Lower economic activity
- Lower median earnings
- Lower levels of self-employment
- Fewer businesses

But!

- *Excellent universities*
- *Strong areas of industry*
- *Tourism, culture, environment*
- *Inclusive growth agenda*





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Vital Signs North East: Economy



- Helping ensure everyone can contribute and benefit from a prosperous regional economy
- Fostering local economies
- Increasing civil society organisations' capacity to be strong economic partners



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Vital Signs North East: Education



- Attainment gap at GCSE and A levels
- Lower rate of HE progression
- Bigger proportion of people with no qualifications
- Higher percentage of NEET young people

**BUT!**

- *Our schools do well on 'distance travelled'*
- *Progress happening on skills*
- *Commitment from key bodies to do more*





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Vital Signs North East: Education



- Supporting civil society organisations to add value to, or fill gaps in, mainstream education and training
- Contributing to raising attainment and skills by closing the gap and supporting individuals at risk of exclusion
- Promoting greater equity, diversity and inclusion and supporting learning as a force for change in communities



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Vital Signs North East: Health



- Lower life expectancy and fewer healthy years of life
- More obesity, smoking and problem drinking
- Worrying suicide rate

BUT!

- *Integrated health and care plan*
- *Vaccination uptakes*
- *Skill and reach in civil society*



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Vital Signs North East: Health



- Tackling obesity through promoting active lifestyles and healthy eating
- Providing activities and services that improve mental health
- Helping people make positive health choices





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Vital Signs North East: Environment



- Key contributor to historic carbon
  - Vulnerability to storms, flooding and rising sea levels
  - Vulnerabilities in population
  - Relative complacency
- BUT
- *Rapid fall in greenhouse gas*
  - *Good air quality*
  - *Green economy potential*
  - *Well served with green spaces*



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Vital Signs North East: Environment



- Addressing local environmental issues in relation to climate change, biodiversity etc.
- Helping communities benefit from opportunities via the 'green industrial revolution'
- Ensuring communities have a voice on environmental issues



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Vital Signs North East: Culture



- Lower arts and heritage participation
- London disproportionately favoured by arts, heritage and sports funders
- Household income under pressure
- Local authorities squeezed

BUT

- *Routes to participation and enjoyment*
- *Support for culture among regional and sub-regional bodies*
- *Burgeoning creative industries*





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Vital Signs North East: Culture



- Ensuring everyone has opportunities to engage in culture
- Funding arts, heritage and sports to address social and economic challenges and opportunities
- Increasing capacity of organisations through core support, volunteering and partnerships



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Homes

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## Cross-cutting issues and ideas

- Poverty and inequality
- The role of philanthropy
- The value of civil society organisations
- The opportunity of greater devolution



[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/vitalsigns2024](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/vitalsigns2024)