



## Our priorities

- **Networking**
- **Learning and Support**
- **Including People**
- **Tackling Discrimination**

### This year....

Hosted a networking event for 40 participants  
'Working Together for Employability, Welfare  
and Digital Inclusion'

Enabled 14 BME women survivors to gain Level  
2 Award 'Surviving to Thriving'

Supported 10 volunteers to provide 300+ peo-  
ple with support to improve their online skills

Delivered Community Development, Disability  
Awareness and Steps to Employment and En-  
terprise accredited learning

Collaborated with 10 partner agencies to build  
innovative projects

Developed the Dyscovered programme sup-  
porting 20 individuals with learning differences  
into training, volunteering, enterprise and  
work

Trained 8 parents and carers as peer mentors

Achieved the Matrix Standard for the quality of  
our advice and guidance

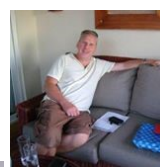
Won funding from RBS Skills and Opportunities  
Fund by public vote

Launched Lets Get Together community de-  
velopment project in South Tynedale

Facilitated 'From the Horse's Mouth' event  
for 80 young people, professionals, carers  
and employers

### 'What a positive agenda'

Alan Carrick, Commissioner SEN  
Northumberland County Council



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## Chair's Remarks from John McGough

Welcome to the annual report for Northumberland Community Development Company, the legal entity that underpins Northumberland Community Development Network or NCDN as we're usually called.

In spite of a further year of austerity measures and lack of investment by both central and local government, NCDN continues to offer good quality services to organisations and people in communities.

Over the past year we have assisted over 30 organisations with their growth and development through providing earning activity, project development, partnership offers and fundraising support. The Dyscovered Project with people with learning differences has been a particularly strong achievement, recognised in a public vote which resulted in our winning funds from RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund.

Our learning and accreditation service has enabled over fifty learners from a range of organisations throughout Northumberland and Tyneside to gain nationally accredited qualifications in fields of work associated with Community Development and community-based support.

Our Digital Inclusion Programme continues to play a unique role in reaching local residents and supporting them to come to terms with the increasing necessity to use IT to access services or to comply with welfare to work regimes.

We have as always worked in partnership with other organisations to develop new strands of provision and representing the VCS Sector in arrange of forums and groups across the county and region, making the case for improved recognition and resourcing for our sector

Our latest rural community development programme called 'Let's Get Together' brings organisations within South Tynedale together through building capacity in those associated with village halls and community activity. Our key partner in this innovative project is Community Action Northumberland



We have said farewell this year to two of NCDN long-time supporters. Firstly we thank Dean T Huggins for his stint as Chair of the organisation at a time of change and uncertainty. We have also just said goodbye to Hala Zaluczkowska, woman of all trades and brilliant community development worker, who has supported our work with a range of excluded groups, has delivered learning programmes, and has supported our digital inclusion programme in the north of the county. Thanks to Hala for all you have done and good luck in your new Scottish adventure.



Of course little of this would have been possible without the support of our funders which include Comic Relief, Peoples Health Trust, RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund, ESF Community Grants programme, DWP Flexible Support Fund, and the Tinder Foundation.



Finally I would like to thank my colleagues on the board and all who have worked on our behalf for their sterling efforts over another challenging year. We have been pleased to welcome Pat Barber as Treasurer and hope to recruit more new members of the Board in 2016 as we set out to consolidate, review and grow the organisation in ways that take account of the environment in which we are working as well as staying true to our core community development values and approach.

# Networking Achievements in 2015

Everything that NCDN does is designed to encourage collective working, partnership and networking.

## Networking Event on Employability, Welfare and Digital Inclusion

This year we decided to use our involvement in digital inclusion to provide a focus to bring together a range of organisations involved in employability work and supporting people through welfare reform. The event attracted 40+ people and explored how the various strands needed to support people excluded through poverty could create new and innovative collaborations. For NCDN these have included participation in a Universal Support Delivered Locally pilot led by VoiCes Northumberland with the Council, and in ongoing partnership with BRIC, Age UK, Dawn Advice, Community Action Northumberland, and No 28 Hexham.



NCDN has maintained a web-based directory of information, shared by organisations and partner agencies, to provide each other with background about their track record and aspirations in relation to forthcoming funding opportunities for learning, skills and employability. See [www.nleap.org.uk](http://www.nleap.org.uk) for more information. This year a group of providers in Blyth have re-

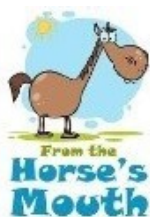
visited the need for this kind of shared information base, with the backing of Business in the Community, resulting in new discussions about how to use the directory for improved networking into 2016.

## NELEP VCS Focus Group for Skills and Performance



With secretarial support from VONNE John McGough chairs this network which over the last year has made significant contributions to the work of NELEP. We have ensured that the rural nature of the county is always considered when planning regional provision. Throughout the group has enjoyed membership from Skills Funding Agency, NELEP, DWP, some local authorities and major training organisations and disseminated topical information from them to the sector. In 2015 we have developed links with the emerging North East Combined Authority

## From the Horse's Mouth



This innovative event was hosted by the SpLinter Group with NCDN's backing, to enable young people with learning differences to speak out about their life experience and the highs and lows of their dealing with the services that are there to protect them. The event featured three high profile speakers with learning differences themselves—a young entrepreneur, the UK's first mayor with a learning disability, and a dyspraxic journalist. 8 members of the SpLinter Group then run workshops on aspects of learning difference. The 80 participants found the event inspiring and unique, and the young people have already been invited to contribute further in the training of educational psychologists, to Remploy staff and clients and at a regional autism conference.

## Let's Get Together

In October NCDN launched a new community development project funded by the People's Health Trust, to bring together people and communities focused around six village halls in the South Tynedale area. New partnerships and links are already emerging including joint working with CAN to help make the area's community resources sustainable, and engage village halls in a shared programme of community learning.



# Networking in Practice - Digital Inclusion Project

A framework for training and supporting digital volunteers across Northumberland, who support people with IT and getting online, wherever and whenever.

Building better partnership is an important part of the programme, so thanks to all our partners including Arch, libraries, community centres, social housing providers, shops, post offices, banks, and a range of specialist voluntary groups.

The project team consists of Julia overseeing the funded programmes and supporting volunteer systems and practices, Gordon who coordinates activity, partnership building and volunteer support in the west of the county, and Hala who has held a similar role in the north and SE.



**In a lather with your laptop? In a mess with your mouse? Not sure about surfing?**

**Want help with IT?**  
**NCDN can help!**

- Learn to be safe online
- Find financial advice, discounts, offers
- Shop, pay bills, manage accounts online
- Online help for benefits, health and more

**Also looking for Volunteers...**  
Read more at [www.ncdn.org/digitalinclusion/digitalvolunteers](http://www.ncdn.org/digitalinclusion/digitalvolunteers) and get in touch

**Northumberland Community Development Network**  
01668 219879 or 07775 817544, email [info@ncdn.org](mailto:info@ncdn.org) [www.ncdn.org](http://www.ncdn.org)

NCDN provides resources to help reach people and areas where lack of broadband or equipment is an issue. We have dongles and several laptops and tablets, which are borrowed on a short-term basis or occasionally gifted.

NCDN has recruited over 40 people as digital volunteers since the project started, with around 10 active at any time. Support sessions deal with both community and techie issues where volunteers can also pick up ideas from each other.

Particular thanks to Gordon for his tireless volunteering, and support for the website and social media



Our website includes all kinds of useful resources for anyone aiming to help someone else to get online, including a volunteer blog and monthly 'homework'

<http://www.ncdn.org/digitalinclusion/digitalvolunteers/digitalvolunteers-resources>

NCDN is pleased to be a partner in a three year project led by Age UK Northumberland supporting people who are over 55 to get their 'money to go round.' NCDN takes a lead on digital inclusion supported by BRIC and together we have provided supports for 250 older people each year.



NCDN brings in funds from a range of sources to help provide a service across the county. In 2015 NCDN was funded by:





# Learning Together

We're proud of our track record of providing accredited learning for many years, through the Open College Network and City & Guilds. In the last five years we have supported more than ten individuals to become qualified tutors and assessors. Community-based learners work hard to develop their skills, and they deserve the chance to have their learning accredited wherever possible. That's why we created the 'Credit to You' project back in 2012, to enable people to feel confident about accredited learning.

## Community Development Qualifications

During 2015 NCDN launched a higher level course for community activists and workers, leading to the Level 3 Award or Certificate in Community Development Work. There are a brilliant group of nine learners from a wide range of backgrounds, including community volunteers from Newbiggin, Pegswood Blyth and Amble supported by NLT and Sure Start, staff from the North-umberland National Park, Riverside Community Health Project, Newcastle Tenants Federation and St Aidan's Community Project in Stobhill.

Community Development qualifications are sometimes under-recognised so we are very pleased to be supported by a number of employers who value this kind of learning for their staff.

## Steps to Employment, Training and Personal Development

The SETPD programme has replaced 'progression' qualifications and gives learners a lot of flexibility to strengthen some core skills like goal setting, planning, teamwork and career development alongside vocational skills to match their own preferences. NCDN has used SETPD this year to help 20 people achieve accredited outcomes in cooking skills, IT, mentoring, enterprise, citizenship, rights and child safety, as well as in core employability skills.



## Supporting Individuals with a Learning Disability

NCDN is developing this new qualification in response to interest from parents and carers, paid workers and people with learning differences themselves. So far we have accredited an autism awareness programme, have covered 'positive risk-taking' with members of the SpLinter Group, and have run a day on 'Models of Disability' with a varied group of interested individuals. We will be running further modules in 2016 to enable people to complete a full Level 2 or 3 qualification, which for many will gain them the kind of recognition they deserve for many of their skills, to enable them to look for paid work in this important field.



## Supporting Other Organisations to Accredit their Learning Offer



In these difficult times for voluntary organisations we have come across many smaller organisations and groups that would like to get accreditation for their learning, but who lack the funds to train staff, or pay awarding bodies to help develop their in-house capacity. So NCDN has developed a support framework to help out and we have extended our own in-house team to enable us to offer our approved learning provider status to other organisations. This year we've worked with Fourth Action, In It Together, Hexham Community Partnership's No 28 Hexham and the Angelou Centre to develop their capacity and to provide accredited learning in peer mentoring skills for 8 parents and carers involved in supporting other parents with disabled children; 14 BME women in 'Surviving to Thriving' resilience skills and 4 digital clients to accredit their online skills.



# Dyscovered

The Dyscovered Project supports people with learning differences to get the recognition they deserve for their skills, abilities and enthusiasms, in work,

This year we moved from our base in Headway Arts and took on an office at CVABV, Blyth where we have held weekly meetings for young people involved in the SpLinter Group. We are working towards a north based group in Alnwick.

The title 'Dyscovered' refers to various syndromes - dyspraxia, dyslexia, dyscalculia and many others that the project describes as SpLDs—specific learning differences. Most people with SpLDs have average or above intelligence and have loads to offer in work or enterprise with the right support.

Dyscovered clients decided that cooking skills were a priority for independent living, and Hala and Amanda ran a series of informal sessions, followed by a group meal at the Point Blyth.

NCDN supports the SpLinter Group to take a central role in Dyscovered. SpLinter members act as voluntary helpers to others in the group who may ask for extra help getting things done online. This helps them get experience of working well with people and making a contribution to the group as a whole.



Dyscovered has been funded by DWP Flexible Support Fund, ESF Community Grant Fund and RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund.



Parents and carers involved have taken part in training and awareness-raising events alongside their young people including support for travel and social activities.



**disability confident**  
make it  
your business

Employers tell us recruiting and promoting disabled employees is one of the best business decisions they've ever made. Their diverse talents, creativity and insights into a fast growing customer demographic help build sustainable growth.



Dyscovered has helped to develop the Waffling On social enterprise, which has combined selling waffles with engaging with the public and employers to raise awareness. The group has run five market stall through the year and provided waffles at arrange of partner events.

We have built up good referral relationships with Job-Centre Plus staff across the county



Find out more at:  
[www.gov.uk/dwp/disabilityconfident](http://www.gov.uk/dwp/disabilityconfident)



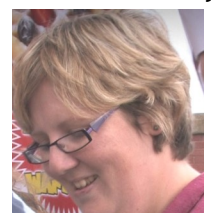
We would love to hear from you to explore working with you to improve access to work for local people with SpLD.

**Dyscovered**  
info@ncdn.org  
07775 817544

The project is for unemployed adults, though many have been working substantial hours on a voluntary basis for many years. Some have been taken on with the promise of lasting jobs and then laid off soon after. We have concentrated on improving chances of sustainable employment through partnership with employers, disability employment support specialists and third sector partners.

The project finds innovative ways of involving people with learning differences in accredited learning at a higher level than they have previously achieved, resulting in 15 Level 2 achievements this year in 'Steps to Employment, Training and Personal Development.'

The project continues to benefit from the brilliant secretarial skills that Kirsty Trimming brings to her part-time admin role.



# How are we doing?

## Finances 2014-15

Income	£35,317
Direct Project Costs	£23,116
Gross surplus	£12,201
Administrative expenses	£12,383
Operating surplus / deficit	(£182)
Interest receivable	£4
Surplus/deficit for the financial year (£178)	

These figures show a slight increase in income this year, and also that we have maintained the ability to live within our means (almost!) while continuing to deliver good quality services and taking time to re-focus.

Copies of statement are available on request.

our full financial are available on

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@NCDNetwork

[www.ncdn.org](http://www.ncdn.org)

We are giving ourselves a pat on the back for achieving the Matrix Standard (2015-2018) for the quality of the information and support we offer to our users, clients and partners.

'Thank you for a chance to find out more about the issues faced by others.'

'If it wasn't for the project I wouldn't feel part of anything. Now I'm one of the team.'

'Could not be better.'

### THANKS to...

**Board** Dean T Huggins, John McGough (both Chairs within the year), Kay Yeo, Cath George, Patrick Barber and Jim Robertson, and Seahouses Accountancy for providing finance support.



**Team** Hala Zaluczkowska, John McGough and Julia Lyford, Gordon Stewart, Kirsty Trimming, Carol Burnett and all of our associate tutors, assessors, mentors and advisers.

**Volunteers** Loads to thank, particularly Kirsty Trimming, volunteer mentors and all of the digital volunteers.

**Funders** Tinder Foundation, Comic Relief via Age UK, DWP, Durham Community Foundation ESF, RBS Skills and Opportunities Fund

...and all the people we've worked with, who have contrib-