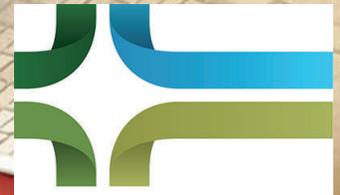


NorthumberlandCVA

ISSUE 3: July 2019

# FOUR CORNERS

The magazine for voluntary and community organisations in Northumberland



NORTHUMBERLANDCVA

Supporting Communities, Enabling People



## In this issue:

- **Northumberland VINE: A new solution to your networking dilemmas**
- **Delivering FREE Safeguarding training to the VCS**
- **CASE STUDY: Being a Buddy can help to find work**
- **Men without a shed join the upcycling revolution**
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# Welcome



Welcome to the third issue of Four Corners: our newsletter magazine in which we bring you all our latest news on what we've been up to at Northumberland CVA.

It's been a very busy year so far, with a huge emphasis on partnership working.

We've worked with the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership to deliver Safeguarding training to the VCS to fill the gap left when VoiCeS Northumberland were no longer able to deliver their Safeguarding training.

We've hosted a conference on developing a partnership approach to tackling poverty, which inspired interest and commitment from across the voluntary and public sectors. We've also supported the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to host an information and workshop session in Blyth on their Community Investment Programme.

In addition, we're currently working with other representatives from the VCS Assembly Executive as part of a working group with Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Primary Care Networks (PCNs) to explore improved collaborative working, particularly around models of social prescribing for the county.

We've had discussions around whether the Social Prescribing Link Workers proposed by NHS England should sit with a GP surgery, a statutory body or be part of the wider VCS. We've asked members for expressions of interest in hosting Link Workers and providing social prescribing services, we've consulted on an appropriate Link Worker role description, and we've stressed the importance of funding being available to cover the anticipated increase in referrals from GPs, whether the Link Workers sit within or without the VCS.

We'll continue to give updates on this work via our various communication channels. In the meantime, please enjoy reading the following pages. There are contact details on the back page if you'd like to speak to any of the team and find out more about our services to the sector.

**Anne Lyall**  
Chief Officer

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## Introducing Jo

Jo Ellis has recently joined us as our new Reception and Admin Support Worker.

Jo has a background in admin and finance. She worked in private industry, NHS and local government before moving to a post in a school as office & finance manager.

After four years she moved into a teaching assistant post in a primary school setting and worked there for a further four years before deciding to go back to her roots.

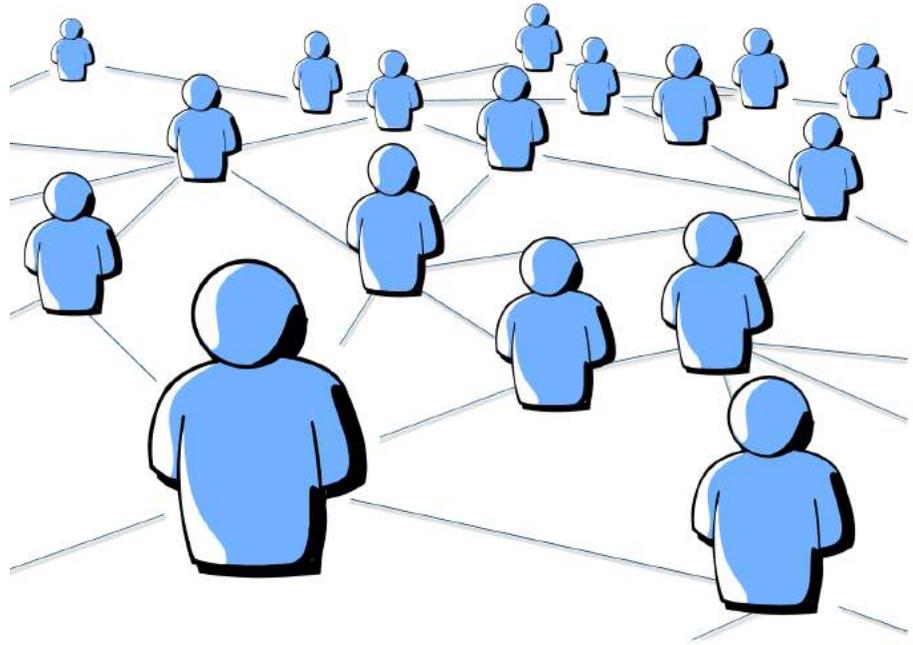
She is now very happy to be back working in an admin/reception role and meeting new people, particularly in a voluntary and community setting.

Jo is now the first point of contact for callers and visitors to our building. You can contact Jo on 01670 858688 or by emailing: [joanne.ellis@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:joanne.ellis@northumberlandcva.org.uk)



# Communicating better

## Northumberland VINE: A new solution to your networking dilemmas



We all know the benefits of networking.

Keeping in touch with our VCS colleagues allows us to help others and gain support, to exchange fresh ideas and good practice and to influence things positively. It can also open doors to new opportunities.

But face to face networking takes time and effort. Northumberland is a huge geographical area with a transport infrastructure that leaves a lot to be desired. Opportunities for 'in-person' networking are not always available at a time and place that suit everyone, and frankly it's sometimes just too difficult to justify the time out of the office. Let's face it, unlike more urban areas, it takes more than simply a couple of hours out of one's day to effectively network face to face in Northumberland, and time equals money.

And of course there is also the increasingly important environmental impact of travel to consider, whether it be by car or public transport.

So now, as part of our Northumberland County Council commissioned services, we have launched a new email network which will give the voluntary sector an additional resource to enable more effective communications and efficient networking.

Northumberland VINE (Voluntary (Sector) Information Network) is open to staff, volunteers and trustees of voluntary sector organisations

in the county, and we hope it will be used to raise issues, ask burning questions and promote activities & events, to ask for advice and offer peer support, and to develop greater partnership working.

We've modelled Northumberland VINE on an existing chief officers information network (COIN) used by the CEOs of organisations that are members of the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NAVCA), of which Northumberland CVA is one.

The COIN network has proved itself over the years to be an invaluable resource, allowing CEOs from across the UK to communicate effectively, and we hope that Northumberland VINE will prove to be equally as invaluable to anyone working in the voluntary and community sector in Northumberland as a volunteer or paid worker.

Once you become a member of the network you will be able to send emails to a dedicated email address, which will then automatically send them to every other member. You can choose to receive emails immediately or as a daily digest.

Not a member yet? Like to join? Simply email [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk) and tell us your name, email address and the name of your organisation.

# Working in Partnership

## Delivering free Safeguarding training to the VCS



Conscious that there has been a lack of awareness recently of available opportunities for VCS organisations in Northumberland to access safeguarding training, we partnered with the Northumberland Strategic Safeguarding Partnership (NSSP) to deliver a free introductory training session on Monday 1 July at Stanington Village Hall.

73 people from the voluntary and community sector attended the free Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Training session.

This half-day course provided an introduction to child and vulnerable adult protection issues for those who work in the voluntary and community sector. It aimed to provide participants with an awareness of what abuse is, how to follow protection procedures and report their concerns.

Together Robin Harper-Coulson from the Northumberland Safeguarding Children Board and Karen Wright from the Northumberland & North Tyneside Safeguarding Adults Board presented an engaging and informative session.

They have also volunteered to repeat the training at six-monthly intervals and we will be bringing



Robin Harper-Coulson.



Karen Wright

you news of these sessions via our website and our regular fortnightly e-bulletin.

Anyone wishing to go on to do further training can find out what's available at: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/NSCB-Multi-Agency-Training.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/NSCB-Multi-Agency-Training.aspx).

You can report abuse and neglect by calling OneCall, which is open 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, on **01670 536400**, or by visiting [www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/What-can-I-do-if-I-suspect-a-child-or-young-person.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Children/Safeguarding/What-can-I-do-if-I-suspect-a-child-or-young-person.aspx)

## Developing Community Approaches to Tackling Poverty

On Monday 24th June 60 people attended our 'Developing Community Approaches to Tackling Poverty' conference at Newbiggin by the Sea Sports and Community Centre.

Poverty affects thousands of people in Northumberland, impacting on their ability to feed and clothe the family, pay the rent and utilities, buy essentials for children, and even to find a job.

This conference, funded by the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland through the Guy Readman Fund, explored ways VCS organisations and communities can develop sustainable approaches to tackling poverty in all its guises.

During the morning we heard from Alan McNiven: CEO of Renfrewshire's Third Sector Interface 'Engage Renfrewshire' which supports local community action, volunteering, and social enterprise, and Emma Richardson: Senior Manager Specialist Services - Poverty Lead from Northumberland County Council. Two of our local VCS organisations, the Full Circle Food Project and Newbiggin Learning Hive, spoke on the impact they make in their communities.

The afternoon featured a workshop activity in which participants split into groups to consider how we can work together better to deliver on four related themes:

- Ensuring people in our communities eat well
- Involving people in our communities through social actions and volunteering
- Helping people in our communities to maximise their income
- Ensuring households in our communities have affordable warmth

Under each theme, participants also looked at who needs to be involved, what the obstacles are to making progress, and what actions can be taken now to move things on.

A collective view that we should share information and resources more effectively came over loud and clear when considering how we can work together better, as did the need to involve the communities themselves in finding solutions as well as VCS organisations and statutory providers, and most importantly to keep the conversation going.

One participant wished that the day had been longer



Alan McNiven

in order to give more time for questions to the speakers. One said it was a "really excellent networking opportunity" and another was "impressed by the knowledge and passion of all the speakers".

The overwhelming feeling was that we all need to keep the conversation going and actively seek to work in partnership in order to tackle the issues raised during the event.

We intend to use the information gathered from the workshops to produce a report on the conference, which we'll circulate to all concerned as soon as possible with suggestions for next-step activities.

# In Brief

## The Coalfields Regeneration Trust free funding workshop



On the 2nd July 2019 we supported the Coalfields Regeneration Trust to host an information session at Briardale House in Blyth on their Community Investment Programme, which includes grants of up to £10,000 and a practical support offer.

In total, 25 people attended to find out more about the programme.

The Funding Support element of the programme is a £500,000 fund created to support activities that tackle some of the key challenges still remaining in coalfield communities.

The fund is open to projects which deliver in the top 30% most deprived coalfield communities and will make a positive difference in addressing the following themes:

**Skills:** Growing the skills of people in order to increase their opportunities

**Employment:** Developing pathways to increase the number of people in work

**Health & wellbeing:** Supporting projects that increase participation in activities/services that improve the health and wellbeing of people in former coalfield communities.

The Coalfields Community Investment Programme (CCIP) - Practical Support offer in England has three main objectives: to build the capacity of coalfield organisations to become more sustainable; to develop a membership of connected coalfield organisations across England in order to share good practice and respond to local needs; and to develop joint-working and income generation opportunities.

If you'd like to know more about the Investment Programme, visit the CRT website:

[www.coalfields-regen.org.uk](http://www.coalfields-regen.org.uk)

## Volunteer co-ordinators invited to stay connected through the VINE



Owing to changing priorities in our new Northumberland County Council commission to provide voluntary and community sector support throughout the county, we are no longer able to provide dedicated support for volunteer co-ordinators.

This means we are also no longer able to host the regular Volunteer Co-ordinator Forum meetings that were a feature of our work under the previous commission, which ran for five years.

The forum meetings provided a platform for co-ordinators to network, talk about issues and share good practice, and they were popular amongst co-ordinators who could spare the time out of the office to take part.

However, there have always been co-ordinators

working in Northumberland for whom face-to-face meetings were difficult to access.

Now we have launched the Northumberland VINE group emailing network and we'd like to invite all the volunteer co-ordinators and managers working in Northumberland, whether you attended the forum meetings or not, to start your own conversations on the VINE about what matters to you in your work.

To join, simply email [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk). Go to page 3 to find out more about the Northumberland VINE.

We also provide a wealth of resources to support volunteer-involving organisations on our website: [www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/resources](http://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/resources), and of course our [Volunteer Connect](#) interactive volunteer recruitment database offers a great platform to advertise your volunteering opportunities.

## Assembly network meeting to host NCVO visitor

The next meeting of Northumberland VCS Assembly's South East Network will host a visitor from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

Lev Pedro, NCVO's public services senior officer, will attend the meeting on Tuesday 24th September as part of their 'Reaching Out' campaign to connect more with their membership (of which Northumberland CVA is one) and the sector.

The extra intelligence gathered during these visits will help NCVO to shape and improve their policy work and the support they offer.

Lev's work with NCVO supports voluntary organisations to succeed in tendering for public service contracts and develop consortia. He also leads on NCVO's relationships with infrastructure

organisations (those that provide support and services to other organisations, or 'umbrella' organisations, like Northumberland CVA).

The network meeting will also feature an information session by Health Improvement Practitioner, Andrew Colvin from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust on 'Making Every Contact Count' (MECC): an approach to behaviour change that utilises the millions of day-to-day interactions that organisations and individuals have with other people to support them in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Further details on the network meeting, such as times and venue, will be circulated closer to the date.

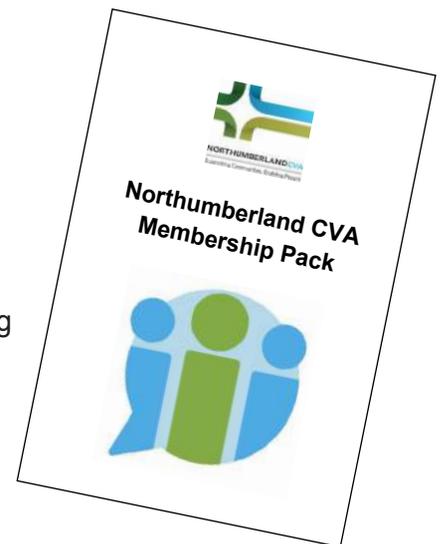
## New Northumberland CVA membership form

Future applications for membership of Northumberland CVA will need to be made in a new application pack to take account of recent changes.

Since we introduced a new associate level of membership earlier this year, we have adapted the pack and improved some of the sections to help us to provide a better service for our members.

Full membership of Northumberland CVA is open to any voluntary and community sector groups, clubs and organisations based within or operating in Northumberland, regardless of size. However, since working more extensively across the county, we found that there were several non-profit organisations wanting to become members that did not fit within these parameters.

Now our Associate membership is open to non-profit making organisations such as community councils, charitable incorporated companies, social enterprises and, if appropriate, parish and town councils.



## Job Club goes back to weekly sessions

Our hugely popular Job Club has recently returned to weekly sessions, thanks to funding from the Virgin Money Endowment Fund via the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland until 18th December 2019.

This funding has allowed us to once more engage the services of Liz Moody to run the sessions, with additional support from volunteers.

A recent lack of funding and staffing resources had meant that we were only able to run Job

Club sessions fortnightly despite the high level of demand.

Our Job Club helps job seekers to set up email and 'find a job' accounts, and to search for and apply for jobs online. Job seekers can also access support to help them create a CV from scratch and update it when necessary.

The Job Club takes place on Wednesday mornings from 8.30am until 12 noon. Access is by appointment only.

# Opportunities for individuals

## Bridge Buddy recruitment: the search is on for Buddies who drive

**Time on your hands?**  
Could you spare half a day a week to volunteer?  
Would you like to enhance your skills whilst supporting others to improve their confidence and independence?  
Northumberland CVA, a partner in the Bridge Project, is seeking Volunteer Buddies/Volunteer Drivers for South East Northumberland, West Northumberland and North Northumberland.  
Out of pocket expenses will be paid and we provide ongoing training and support to all our buddies.  
The Bridge Project is funded by the European Social Fund and National Lottery, through the National Lottery Community Fund. You can find out more about the project at [www.bridgenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.bridgenorthumberland.org.uk)

**COMMUNITY FUND**  
**BRIDGE**  
**Northumberland CVA**  
Alex volunteers with the North East Ambulance Service

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Volunteer Buddy, please call Lisa or Leanne on 01670858688

Transport can often be one of the biggest issues faced by individuals in Northumberland seeking to improve their chances of accessing training, getting work experience or finding a job.

Northumberland CVA provides the Supported Volunteering element of the Bridge Project. We recruit Volunteer Buddies who work with Bridge beneficiaries to support them to become volunteers themselves, but it can sometimes be a problem getting to and from volunteer positions when the opportunities are a bit off the beaten track, and so we are particularly looking to recruit Buddies who can drive.

Being a buddy can be a very rewarding role and, for those working towards finding employment themselves, the role can help them gain invaluable skills and experience to enhance their CV.

The role of Volunteer Buddy is ideal for anyone who is empathetic and non-judgemental and can count being a good listener and great communicator amongst their existing skills. They need to be willing to undertake training and development, and be available for a minimum of one half day

per week for volunteering, plus time for training. Out of pocket expenses will be paid, and a DBS check will be required.

The Bridge Project is a partnership led by Northumberland County Council alongside seven voluntary sector organisations, which each bring their own specialist skills and experience to the project. It is funded by the European Social Fund and National Lottery, through the National Lottery Community Fund.

## Being a Volunteer Buddy can help to find work

Abbie first came to us in January 2017 to enquire about being a Volunteer Buddy. However, once she'd completed her DBS checks and attended her initial training, she was only able to take up the role for a short time before securing employment, although only on a temporary basis.

Once her temporary job had come to an end, Abbie rejoined us in 2018 as a Buddy and since then she has supported a number of our clients to move from supported volunteering to unsupported volunteering in a variety of opportunities, including at a charity shop in Blyth, a café within a Community Centre and a local food bank.

Abbie has excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to the clients in a friendly but professional manner. She had experience of working with young people prior to moving to the area to be with her partner and was keen on taking part in anything that

would help to increase her chances of finding new work in that field. We were able to offer her training in Safeguarding, Deaf Awareness, Mental Health Awareness and First Aid Training, all of which she has been able to add to her CV.

Abbie has grown in confidence through her volunteering and the experience has helped to provide references to further enhance her CV, enabling her most recently to find employment working with young people with learning differences.



## Developing our Bridge Connectors

The Bridge Connector intervention is a relatively new aspect of our Bridge Supported Volunteering project.

A Bridge Connector is an existing beneficiary of the Bridge Project whose Bridge Worker has recognised that they have developed to the point that they themselves now have the necessary skills to enable them to provide 1:1 support to new beneficiaries in a variety of roles.

As well as possessing good listening skills, patience, and the ability to support others who are less confident, they must also be willing to undertake continuous training and learning and be non-judgemental.

To become a Bridge Connector they must go through a volunteer recruitment process, undergo DBS checks and attend various training sessions such as Safeguarding and Boundaries/Confidentiality.

Working with the Bridge Workers, through our Co-ordinator Leanne, Connectors can provide identified support wherever required. They may take on a befriending role to give new beneficiaries the confidence to stay on the programme. They may support beneficiaries to undertake training, attend appointments with their GP or Citizen Advice, and go for interviews for volunteering roles. They can also help beneficiaries to access foodbanks and to shop on a budget, or to engage in new hobbies and community activities.

Connectors can help to recruit new beneficiaries onto the Bridge Programme too, offering them support to move into supported volunteering and to travel independently. They can also get involved in helping to facilitate Bridge Connector Forum meetings.

Bridge Connectors are in a unique position to encourage new beneficiaries to succeed in breaking down barriers to becoming economically active because they've been there themselves and can share their own experiences of the project. And as a result of being a Connector their own confidence will increase, their skills and knowledge will be enhanced, and they will gain

further transferrable skills to move into a positive outcome.

The monthly Bridge Connector Forums give Connectors the chance to come together to talk about their experiences and give us an opportunity to share any relevant information. Forum themes covered so far have been Autism Awareness training, including a fantastic talk from one of our Connectors about his experience of living with Autism, First Aid Awareness that covered basic themes such as resuscitation and defibrillator use, British Sign Language training, and Thrive mental wellbeing training.

Out of 20 expressions of interest for beneficiaries to become Bridge Connectors, 15 have now completely or partially completed their training. Having completed all the checks, 6 of these are now fully-fledged Bridge Connectors and an additional 4 are ready and waiting for their checks to be completed.



# Opportunities for individuals

## Men without a Shed join the upcycling revolution

There are 'Men in Sheds' projects across the UK for older men who want to chat, connect, and come together. They offer a place to pursue practical interests at leisure, to practice skills and enjoy making and mending. They're about social connections and friendship building, sharing skills and knowledge, and having a good time.

This new project in Newbiggin doesn't have a shed - but the principles are the same.

Sheds are whatever the members (or Shedders) want them to be and so, working with a small pot of funding via Northumberland County Council, and building on the work of a previous group that concentrated on photography, we set about finding out what activities older men in Newbiggin would like to take part in. Eventually we brought together a small group to take part in regular sessions at a local community venue, the Elizabethan Hall.

Since the outset, participants have enjoyed sharing their skills and experiences. Joe, who has his own fully equipped workshop in Ellington, delivered a session to the group on woodturning, and over the past few months the project has provided the men with other sessions too on such subjects as poetry, IT and upcycling.

It has been the upcycling activities in particular that have been getting the men's creative juices flowing. One member, Phil, is new to the area and had previously delivered sessions where he used to live in crafting techniques for upcycling furniture. Now the project is able to engage him for sessional work and he takes great pleasure in passing on his skills. So far, he has talked to the group about what can and cannot be upcycled, and he has delivered sessions on decoupage and painting techniques to achieve a range of different effects.

The men have had the opportunity to upcycle old clocks and combine them with a range of other materials to create new decorative timepieces.

They have decorated boxes using the new skills they have learnt from Phil, and they are currently upcycling an old piece of furniture to use at the Elizabethan Hall in order to store their tools and

equipment securely.

The group is now taking a break over the summer holidays, with sessions due to restart in September - and some of the men tell us that the women in their lives would like a similar group of their own.



# Back office services

## Still wondering if outsourcing payroll is for you?



For employers, paying staff is one of their largest costs and takes time that could otherwise be dedicated to maintaining the services that bring in the money to pay the wages.

Many employers in the voluntary sector may not be aware that they can outsource their payroll and other accounting services, or may not have given serious thought to how outsourcing can help them

to save money.

Rachel Lewis, our experienced, qualified accountant provides a first class, low risk and cost effective payroll solution for voluntary organisations and small to medium enterprises that can help you to save money and get back to delivering the services that are your bread and butter.

Our Community Payroll package includes payroll calculation and the production of monthly/weekly pay slips, payroll reports, help with queries on payroll, PAYE, National Insurance and HMRC, year-end data, P60's and automatic enrolment, as well as support with any payroll issues, such as absence, SSP, SMP and record keeping.

Still not sure if this is for your organisation? Have a look at the pros and cons, below, and get in touch if you'd like to know more:

**Call:** Rachel Lewis: **01670 858688**

**Email:** [rachel.lewis@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:rachel.lewis@northumberlandcva.org.uk)

### PROS

**Peace of mind:** Using a trusted, reliable and professional provider like Northumberland CVA to process your payroll gives you and your staff confidence that your payroll responsibilities are being properly and efficiently discharged.

**Compliance:** It's difficult for smaller organisations to engage, train and retain suitably reliable, qualified or skilled staff, and inadequately trained staff can lead to expensive mistakes and penalties for non-compliance.

**Understanding of the way your organisation works:** Northumberland CVA has over thirty years of experience and an in-depth knowledge of voluntary and community organisations and the often intricate ways in which their finances work. We have a team of people who can offer support in any associated strategic and governance issues you may face.

**Freedom to do what you do best:** Why get involved with the ever increasing load of regulations that make payroll operation exceedingly complex and time-

consuming, when outsourcing can free up your time to focus on delivering your services and seizing new opportunities.

**Savings to your bottom line:** The overall cost of maintaining payroll in-house can be much more expensive than you might realise, what with initial acquisition and installation costs, annual updates (tax codes, rates, etc) and annual software support subscriptions. Then there are the costs of employing suitable trained staff, of maintaining computing and printing hardware, cartridges and specialised stationery, and not forgetting the hassle associated with regularly backing up the payroll data, along with the internal security issues relating to the handling of sensitive individual records.

**Support to local communities:** Northumberland CVA is a charity and any profits we make from our payroll service are ploughed back into our core work of providing support to voluntary and community groups and communities in Northumberland.

### CONS - only one

**Risk to confidential data:** Of course it is vital that you safeguard the personal data of your employees and the financial data of your organisation.

But rest assured that Northumberland CVA takes your

privacy and the security of your data very seriously. We have in place suitable physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard and secure the information we collect in order to prevent unauthorised access or disclosure, and we use fully HMRC approved software.

## Want to get in touch?

### SENIOR MANAGEMENT

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Located on the ground floor, our Conference Room can comfortably seat 16 people in a boardroom or classroom configuration. The room also has complete disabled

access and toilet facilities. Charges vary according to sector, with discounts for members and for block bookings.

Call: **01670 858688**

Visit [www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/room-hire](http://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/room-hire)

Email [enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk)



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