



# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Covering the period from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025

**Children & Young People Now Awards 2023**

**Winner**

THE YOUTH WORK AWARD

**Children & Young People Now Awards 2023**

**Winner**

THE ADVICE AND GUIDANCE AWARD



*"A blueprint for supporting dads, the ambitions achieved in this niche field and the encouragement for dad workers far and wide to do more... Thanks team NEYDL!"*

(Errol Murray, Charity Manager, Leeds dads following attendance at 'A Natter with NEYDL' stakeholder event showcasing the charity's work)

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*"Hey Doug, hope all is well... I wanted to say a massive thank you! When I was living up north, honestly if it wasn't for you, I know genuinely I would have (taken my own life)... You was the only person who never judge me... You truly are an amazing person! An amazing dad and I never grew up with a dad myself, but you are what dads should aspire to be!"*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"I'm so glad we came. Meeting other mams and dads our age is so cool. Thanks for inviting us."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## FOREWORD

**Callum Fay, Trustee, Social Worker and former service beneficiary of NEYDL**

My name is Callum, and it is truly an honour to be asked to write the Foreword for this report, sharing the incredible work that NEYDL staff, volunteers and young dads in our region have done in the past year.

I am a young dad and former beneficiary of the charity, and now proudly a Trustee for NEYDL. I was 18 when I found out I was going to be a dad and 19 when my beautiful son was born. During my partner's early pregnancy, I felt scared, alone, confused and thought my dream of going to university and graduating as a Social Worker was derailed. My son was born in the January after beginning my first year at university and I can honestly say that it was one of the most difficult periods of my life, working an average of 70 hours per month, and balancing a difficult university course, as well as supporting my partner who at the time was experiencing post-natal depression. Most importantly, I was also caring for my son.

Often when you're supporting those around you, and are busy, you forget to take care of yourself, and I was guilty of that. I reached a critical point in my life where I was crying out for support myself but didn't know where or who to turn to.

I messaged my health visitor, and she put me in touch with Doug from NEYDL. I had never spoken to Doug before, but I finally felt like I was talking to someone who understood me and I opened-up. Within a week, I began working with Rob and he helped me to regain my confidence in life and made me realise that I was not on my own. I started attending the Stay and Play groups NEYDL offered and they were amazing! I went on bike rides with other young dads and families and was able to take my son with me on the trailer. Looking back, those early days working with Rob (Senior Young Dads Project Worker at NEYDL) and the other young dads, gave me a sense of belonging and hope, which in turn gave me the platform to keep going. I was given the opportunity to take part in the 'Reframing Young Fatherhood' photography project, and that gave me an immense sense of pride, looking at my son and me in the photos.

Although my life's direction had changed course, the support I received gave me a new motivation to give my son and my partner the life we wanted, and so giving up my university wasn't an option!



In my second year at university the laptop I used for my studies broke and without hesitation Rob gave me one from the charity. I also received stationary, giving me the tools I needed to continue to work towards my degree. Some days I was ready to give up, and take some time away from my course, but Rob was always just a phone call away, and he helped me to stay on course and continue working towards my goals.

NEYDL doesn't just provide you with a day out, NEYDL provides so much more. Friends, social networks, confidence, hope, a sense of identity and pride.

In summer 2025, I graduated from university, and I knew from that moment that I wanted to give something back to the charity that gave me so much. I am committed to working hard for other young dad's and families in the region both in my job as a Social Worker and as a Trustee of North East Young Dads and Lads. Without NEYDL, I don't know where I would be!

From the bottom of my heart, I can say that this charity means the world to me and so many other young dads in our region, providing a lifeline when they feel the world is against them. Young dads often face significant barriers and challenges and NEYDL provide them with an opportunity to shine and play proactive and meaningful roles in their children and family's lives. Many of the staff have been young dads themselves, and this shines through. They care, they understand, they root for you, and for many young dads, this is invaluable.

I have no doubt that the charity will continue to grow and thrive, supporting many more young dads in our region and beyond. Congratulations to the staff, volunteers, Trustees and young dads for another incredible year.

Thank you for reading, and I hope that you enjoy this report!

**Callum Fay**  
Trustee, Social Worker and former service beneficiary of NEYDL

***"If you're a young dad thinking about joining the NEYDL service, I would highly recommend it. Even if it's just to make friends with other local dads and their children, or if you're wanting someone to push you to your absolute limits and help mould yourself into the best version of yourself. The lads at NEYDL are the most patient, respectful and trusting people you'll ever come across, and they listen to everything you say and help you in every way they can. Massive thank you to everyone at NEYDL for helping me become the dad I've always wanted to be."***

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"I couldn't thank you all at NEYDL enough for all the hard work everyone has put in for me and how much everyone has backed me to get to where I am today."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)



## CHAIR'S REPORT

By Steven Bramwell

I am delighted to welcome you to this year's North East Young Dads and Lads Annual Report, my first since returning as Chair of Trustees. What a year it has been! NEYDL continues to make a profound difference to young dads, young lads and families across the region and this report will give you a flavour of the fantastic work we are involved in. It has not been an easy year. I am sure colleagues across the voluntary sector will share my view that these are incredibly challenging times. However, at NEYDL we have remained true to our mission, and I am proud to say that we have not only endured but truly thrived.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Professor Anna Tarrant for her outstanding contribution to NEYDL as outgoing chair. Anna has served as both the Chair of the Board and as a trustee, and her long-standing career to ensure young fathers flourish and are given every opportunity they deserve has been instrumental to our work. Her passion and dedication have helped shape our success, and on behalf of everyone at NEYDL, I extend a heartfelt thank you for her continued support.

As you read this report, I am confident you will agree that we do an incredible amount of work. We are no longer a small charity. Our growth in recent years has been significant, both in our physical presence and through our digital e-learning platform (DigiDAD). Despite this expansion, I am proud that we have stayed true to the mission we began many years ago: supporting young dads and lads with compassion, care, time and genuine understanding following youth work principles.

Reflecting on the past year, it is difficult to choose just one highlight. With so many projects, developments and achievements, narrowing it down feels almost impossible. However, one statistic truly stands out: 100% of the young dads we work with would recommend our service. For me that is the highlight. Being invited into young men's lives and trusted to support them is an honour and knowing that every young man we work with values our support so highly is deeply moving. Regardless of what we do or how we do it, knowing that we make a difference and have an impact is the highlight for me.

None of this would be possible without our supporters, funders, commissioners, partners, friends, our exceptional staff team, volunteers and our dedicated board of trustees. Thank you all. A special thank you goes to Kev for his leadership, humour and unwavering passion. Kev is an inspirational sector leader and it's a privilege to work alongside him.

Enjoy this report. I invite you to reach out to us, talk to us, link in with us. I really look forward to the year ahead and beyond, confident that even more exciting times lie ahead for NEYDL.

We hope you enjoy reading the charity's annual report for 2024-25.

Best wishes

Steven Bramwell

Chair of Trustees 15th June 2017 – July 2023

Vice chair of Trustees from 9th July 2024

Chair of Trustees from 1st July 2025

*"In my capacity as interim Chair of the Charity Commission for England and Wales, I spent this morning with Kevin Stoodley and the team at North East Young Dads and Lads. NEYDL's work with young dads is impressive: practical, impactful and driven by a belief in what's possible...Seeing really is believing and their DigiDAD project is taking that belief into the digital world with outstanding quality and creativity. It was a privilege to spend time with such a skilled and determined team. We spoke about trusteeship, skills and the challenge of finding them, but mostly about the resolve young men show once someone helps them see what's possible – not just what they've been told is inevitable. A unique project, one which I hope thrives and delivers the ambition we all have for dads everywhere."*

(Mark Simms OBE)

*"Kevin, I've been in awe of you and the team at NEYDL since I first heard about you and I was in the privileged position to support you with a grant. Watching you grow over the years and see the incredible impact you are having on not only the young dads and lads, but wider society does make me smile and excited me for your future!"*

(Jacqueline Robson, former Grants Officer, BBC Children in Need)



## CEO's Report

By Kevin Stoodley

Dear Friend,

A very warm welcome to this, our eighth Annual Report, covering the charities endeavours and achievements from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025. NEYDL is 8 years old, how did that happen?

I find myself writing this report on a frosty January morning in early 2026 at the start of what already promises to be our busiest and most exciting year yet. As a charity leader I rarely find the time to pause and look back on the year that was and so deeply value the opportunity to compile and edit our annual reports each winter in order to pause, reflect and appreciate all the accomplishments of the hardest working young dads charity in the universe.

What can I say about 2024/25? Well, we worked with more young dads than ever before, both in person (217) and online (603 registered DigiDAD users and a whopping 53,848 YouTube views), launched a dedicated service for young dads in Hartlepool, welcomed more young dads minoritised by ethnicity, sexuality and disability than ever before and delivered so many outstanding projects, including the awe-inspiring 'Source to Sea,' which empowered young dads to take on an epic 85 mile cycle ride from the Scottish Border (source of the River North Tyne) to North Shields (mouth of the River Tyne) to investigate the health of the river, its flora and fauna.

2025 was also the year that NEYDL returned to pre lockdown traditions and invited young dads, their children and families to join us for a series of awards ceremonies/celebration nights held in County Durham and Gateshead to recognise the outstanding achievements of all the young dads we support, culminating in the giving of a regional trophy recognising one very special young man who has gone above and beyond to support his peers and educate the public and professionals alike – congratulations to Dylan Peggs. Both events were extremely well attended, and it was evident from all the smiles, cheers and hugs I witnessed that these awards and this charity mean a great deal to the many young fathers and families we support. This observation was brought home to me by the father of a young dad we support, who shook my hand with tears in his eyes before announcing:

*"You know, the things you and your team have done for my son are lifechanging, lifechanging," he said, "(named young dad) is a completely different person now because of you lot and my wife and I are so proud of him. I really can't thank you enough!"*

Needless to say, we intend to continue to deliver events of this kind on a yearly basis going forward, welcoming an ever-expanding community of young dads from across the North East region and beyond, whose lives and relationships have been enriched by the incredible work delivered so effortlessly by the dedicated, determined, caring and compassionate team of skilled staff and volunteers who front the 'hardest working young dads charity in the universe'.

In addition, NEYDL and this report would not exist without the generosity, support and encouragement shown by our amazing funders, service commissioners, sponsors and organisational partners, the all too often unsung heroes that form the charity's board of trustees (45% of whom have lived experience of young fatherhood) and of course young dads and their families. It is because of you that we look forward to another highly productive and successful year in support of young dads, their children, and families.

Before I go, I will leave you with the words of a former trustee and long-term champion of NEYDL - Dr Phil Heslop:

*"NEYDL works with young men on the cusp of adulthood and fatherhood. Their futures are not yet written in stone, and we still don't know who or what these young men will become. Doctors, politicians, social workers, charity leaders? And that's what makes this charity so exciting."*

What more can I say... 'up the NEYDL' and enjoy this report.

Peace and love.

Kevin Stoodley (Founder and CEO)



*"Love your work Kevin and will always support it when I can. Up the NEYDL!"*

(David McCreedy, CEO, Youth Focus North East)

# IMPACT DATA

(Covering the period from 1st May 2024 to 30th April 2025)

### OUR VISION:

For young dads to be valued and supported in their role as parents.

### OUR MISSION:

To enable young dads to play a safe, active and meaningful role in their children's lives by supporting and connecting young dads and influencing wider practice.

Reason for referral	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	Individual contact time (hrs)	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Young father / expectant dad	208	139	105	68	63	46	Dads and Toddlers groups	158	142	32	12	0	106
Non birthing people	9	10	10	4	2	1	1:1 support (face to face)	1,849	960	850	408	440	350
<b>Total:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	1:1 support (telephone & social media)	933	650	572	234	450	140
<b>Engagement by young men</b>							Joint meetings with other professionals	450	370	350	460	250	190
New referral	164	111	48	25	33	25	Peer supported group work	1,150	586	480	202	850	959
Ongoing support	53	38	67	47	32	22	Training delivered to professionals	250	316	150	51	40	56
<b>Total:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	Research activities	300	265	400	451	254	134
<b>Locality</b>							Campaigning, media, and film-work	300	453	350	257	428	142
Sunderland	28	26	34	23	26	22	Community beekeeping	280	252	268	196	131	250
Gateshead	34	25	20	26	32	20	Peer mentoring & volunteering	3,145	3,086	2,625	1,491	280	230
South Tyneside	6	2	9	6	6	2	Training and education to young dads	980					
Newcastle upon Tyne	17	11	5	7	1	3	Other activities	45	72	50	17	20	36
North Tyneside	8	6	14	3	0	0	<b>Total:</b>	<b>9,840</b>	<b>7,152</b>	<b>6,127</b>	<b>3,779</b>	<b>3,143</b>	<b>2,593</b>
Durham	55	41	15	6	0	0	<b>Average individual contact time (hrs)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>55</b>
Northumberland	16	1	0	1	0	0	<b>Key outcomes</b>						
Middlesbrough	41	37	18	0	0	0	CP Plans downgraded or completed	35	22	22	18	9	5
Hartlepool	3	0	0	0	0	0	CIN plans downgraded or completed	7	5	9	10	3	3
Redcar & Cleveland	4	0	0	0	0	0	Progressed into full time work/study	38	22	18	9	10	5
Stockton on Tees	5	0	0	0	0	0	Accessed specialist medical help	62	52	45	15	2	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Age at entry point</b>							<b>Social Media Metrics</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>		
Under 16	4	3	16	4	8	4	<b>YouTube Channel</b> – launched 6th April 2021						
16-18	26	28	28	18	8	28	Views:	53,848	42,533	30,598	12,400		
19-25	182	118	71	50	49	15	Watch time (hours):	1,700	1,600	1,049	903		
Not given	5	0	0	0	0	0	Organic subscribers:	149	135	106	80		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>	Impressions:	202,000	174,167	97,700	41,600		
<b>Referral pathway</b>							<b>Facebook</b>						
Youth work charities	2	14	10	8	11	11	Followers:	1,448	1,191	806	624		
Social services	78	48	23	21	18	11	<b>Instagram</b>						
Early Help Teams	7	5	10	3	0	1	Followers	702	455				
Family Nurse Partnership	10	11	18	18	16	17	<b>DigiDAD E-learning Platform</b>						
Self-Referrals	44	20	5	6	5	4	Registered users:	603	266	110	43		
School & Education	7	0	8	1	2	1							
Housing	10	7	6	8	4	2							
Health	50	34	25	6	0	0							
Criminal Justice	4	2	0	1	0	0							
Other	5	8	10	0	9	0							
<b>Total:</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>47</b>							
<b>Individual help received</b>													
Child Protection proceedings	69	48	30	24	23	12							
Child/Team around the family	9	5	10	1	1	3							
Family law proceedings	10	8	5	5	5	0							
NEET status	180	80	30	17	14	13							
Career progression	20	22	15	11	5	4							
Housing, homelessness & benefits	101	50	25	16	9	4							
Completing essential paperwork	120	45	30	16	13	5							
Poverty & debt management	180	75	55	9	17	10							
Domestic abuse	32	25	15	21	12	7							
Offending behaviour	20	43	25	6	16	3							
Mental & emotional wellbeing	160	90	45	23	30	26							
Substance misuse & addiction	56	22	15	7	8	6							
Sexual health	45	23	18	5	3	5							
Other physical health conditions	27	10	10	6	4	4							
Learning difficulties	77	50	10	3	8	5							
Social isolation and loneliness	175	125	101	72	60	47							
Parenting skills	123	45	50	35	34	20							
Relationship skills	50	65	40	23	27	24							
Bereavement & loss	66	22	15	8	4	6							
Volunteering*	220	108	105	74	3	8							
School exclusion	6	7	8	6	5	3							
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>657</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>215</b>							

\*This figure represents the total number of young men who volunteered at NEYDL this year.

*"I don't think I'd be at the stage I am now without North East Young Dads and Lads."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"Without the service [NEYDL] we would have nowhere to get help for the dads we work with."*

(Social Worker)



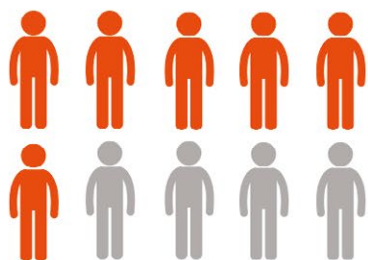
## NEYDL IMPACT REPORT MAY 2024-APR 2025

**208**  
young dads  
reached



### DIVERSITY

3.3% ethnically diverse  
35.6% disabled including  
mental distress/mental health  
problems for 12+ months  
1.9% LGBTQ+



**62%**

had improved mental  
wellbeing compared to  
baseline (Adapted version  
of Warwick-Edinburgh  
Mental Wellbeing Scale)

**41%**



had improved their  
relationship with the mother(s)  
of their child(ren) compared to  
baseline (Modified version of  
the ENRICH scale)



**59%**

had reduced anxiety compared to  
baseline as measured by the  
Generalised Anxiety Disorder scale  
(GAD-7)

**88%**



self reported a reduction in  
loneliness



**90%**  
felt closer to their child



**100%**

would recommend NEYDL  
to other young dads

Data sources: GAD-7 & UCLA Survey, completed at first session (baseline) and post-intervention (at least 4 weeks), n=39;  
Outcome Tree distance travelled tool completed at baseline, mid-intervention and post-intervention (at least 4 weeks), n=37;  
Satisfaction survey (post-intervention), n=59; and Point in Time survey, n=43; NEYDL Database for equalities data.

*"My observation has been that NEYDL's just been really innovative and got this group of lads...meeting each other, talking with each other about wellbeing without saying, 'right, you've got to come here and talk about your feelings'."*

(Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Perinatal Community Mental Health Team)

*"If I ask the question and then they can give me the answer and I'll say right, okay, that's what I need to do and that's what I need to be aware of, and then that's me, like me stress, like, calms down. I say right, there's nothing to stress about. I need to just look at the texts just in case I forget, so I know what I'm doing. So that's the best thing about it."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## EXAMPLES OF PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### OBJECTIVE 1.

**Provide individual support to young dads to address their issues and achieve personal outcomes.**

#### Supporting young dads in the Family Hubs: A profile of Middlesbrough Young Dads Service

(part of Middlesbrough's Family Hub and Start for Life programme)

By Paula Davidson (Senior Young Dads Worker)

Over the past year, 49 young dad beneficiaries have engaged in the Middlesbrough service. I'm pleased to report that self-referrals accounted for nearly 1 in 5 referrals (9) in Middlesbrough, demonstrating our high visibility and credibility within communities.

Our hugely popular peer supported group work offers to young dads, their children and families included:

- Stay and play sessions at Thorntree Family Hub.
- Fortnightly and daytime young dads' drop-in sessions at the Boro Bar, including pool, darts, soft drinks and snacks.
- Monthly twilight young dad's drop-in at Park End Family Hub.
- Weekly gym sessions coached by qualified and experienced NEYDL staff members.
- Bi-monthly whole family events, including visits to Tweddle Farm and Stewarts Park.
- Improving social networks when new dads sign up with NEYDL through introductory events including Go-karting, paintball and Level X.
- Birds Bees Bikes and Trees (BBBT) activities including a walk to the top of Roseberry topping Guisborough Woods cycling sessions and Forest School sessions.
- Paediatric first aid training has been offered to all young dads.
- Mental health and masculinity workshops have also been delivered to 7 young dads.

We have also provided intensive, face to face and one to one support to young dads to address their self-identified support needs. Over the last 12 months this support has included:

- Parenting skills
- Relationships skills and support
- Support to navigate Private and Public Family Court proceedings
- Support in statutory meetings (including Public Law Outline, Child Protection and Child in Need proceedings)
- Job searches and preparing for interviews
- Budgeting and access to emergency food and care packages
- Housing support
- Mental health support and signposting.

In addition, 5 of our young dads became members of the charity's AmbassaDADS programme, 1 young dad and 1 young Mam from Middlesbrough are now trustees of the charity and 3 young dads actively volunteer as peer befrienders.



#### Case study of a Sunderland young dad: supported by NEYDL as part of Sunderland's Family Hub and Start for Life programme

By Jonny Conn (Senior Young Dads Worker)

Kyle (not his real name) was referred to NEYDL by his social worker shortly after completing a positive parenting assessment. At the time, his paternal child was in the care of the maternal grandmother, and Kyle was preparing to attend court in the hope of being awarded full custody. From the very beginning, it was clear that Kyle was a confident and attentive young father who always puts his child's needs first. He consistently demonstrated commitment, patience, and care throughout what was a very challenging period.

NEYDL supported Kyle every step of the way through court proceedings, providing travel assistance, attending court proceedings with Kyle and offering time to talk (pre brief and debrief) each day. After an intense week in court, Kyle was awarded full custody of his child as recommended both by social services and CAFCASS, pending suitable housing.

Following this ruling, NEYDL has provided over 100 hours of individual support to Kyle, including advocacy and guidance, emotional reassurance and practical help. Kyle secured suitable housing and now cares for his child on a full-time basis.

Father and child now regularly attend NEYDL's stay and play sessions and other father and child focused activities.

Most recently Kyle has become a member of the charity's AmbassaDADS programme, informing national research into social work practice and acting as a positive role model for other young dads.



*"Since I started working with Jonny, he has supported me throughout the court process and I won custody of (named child), even though I initially thought the outcome would be different...I've also gained a lot more confidence since collaborating with him. It's reassuring to know that he is always just a phone call away if I need advice. I couldn't put into words how thankful I am."*

(Young dad featured in this case study)

## Supporting minoritised young dads in our region

By Fred Suadwa (Minoritised Young Dads Officer)

Over the last year, I have travelled from Berwick to Teesside, introducing myself to professionals, community leaders and minoritised communities. This introduction has taken the form of explaining my job role, getting involved in community events, doing presentations, speaking at team meetings and community gatherings. Alongside the delivery of presentations at 'A Taste of Africa' annual event in Middlesbrough, North East African & Caribbean Association in Newcastle and Ethnic Minority Forums in Sunderland and Middlesbrough, I have also linked in with a Nigerian Church in Sunderland, Newcastle Central Mosque, Middlesbrough Mosque, HAREF, the Sunderland Bangladeshi Association and Ghana Union North East.

The approach I have adopted is 'Being Local', a youth work term, popularised by the well-known Youth Work Theorist Mark Smith. The 'Being Local' method sees me being around minoritised communities, so they get used to me as a trusted person. This is so that all the people within the communities that I am targeting young and old, understand what my role is, and helps me to become part of the 'fixtures and fittings'.



“

*"I think the work you have done for me has helped me a huge amount. It's brought me out of my shell a lot...and it has made me feel comfortable talking to you about stuff I wouldn't normally share with people. It has made me make some friends, especially with all the groups and events you have been putting on. I have met some interesting people and some people who are funny and easy to get along with, and you have helped me through some tough times of my life."*

(A minoritised young dad supported by NEYDL)

”

*"Fred has been professional, supportive, and understanding, helping me build confidence and focus on making positive changes in my life...I've taken part in activities like badminton, jiu jitsu, and the Youth Works program, which have helped me improve my wellbeing, discipline, and teamwork skills. These sessions have also given me the chance to meet other young dads and share experiences in a safe, encouraging environment. I've learned a lot about communication, responsibility and personal growth, and I feel more motivated to keep moving forward. Overall, the program has been a valuable step in helping me build stability and make better choices for myself and my family."*

(A minoritised young dad supported by NEYDL)

Whilst early identification and referral of minoritised young dads into NEYDL by professional stakeholders and community leaders was initially slow, new referrals have improved significantly over the last 12 months, with 74 young dads (36%) now identifying as disabled, 7 (3.3%) identifying as minoritised by ethnicity, 4 (1.9%) identifying as LGBTQIA, and 1 (0.5%) identifying as gender queer / non binary.

The afore mentioned minoritised young dads have benefitted from engagement in a diverse range of peer supported group work sessions, including emergency first aid, paediatric first aid, rock climbing, youth work practice, father and child focused stay and play, dedicated young dads drop-ins, mountain biking, forest schools, jiu-jitsu, football, Thai boxing, boxing, fitness sessions and weight training.



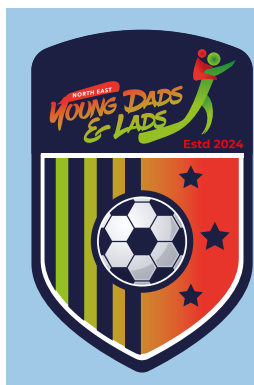
In addition to the provision of peer supported group work, the dads are offered regular one to one sessions, creating opportunities to talk about their lives and provide direct support in a solution focussed way. In the past year, my support to young dads has covered a range of themes including help to find work, racial identity, racism, housing, court appearances, gang culture, domestic violence, mental health, neurodiversity, education, social services involvement, religion, relationships, immigration, form filling, parental rights and custody. NEYDL has also given the Minoritised young dads a safe environment to talk about current events such as the recent riots.

As a result of the support provided, two of the dads have chosen to play a more active role within NEYDL through participation in the Ambassadors community leader's programme. In addition, two young dads have co-created a forthcoming father inclusive toolkit for professionals focusing on Minoritised young dads. Minoritised young dads have also contributed to national research focusing on social work practice and hosted information stalls at professional and community stakeholder events.

”

*"I have learnt a lot from Fred. He has made me reflect on my practice and I will share it with the Team."*

(Social Worker)



*"Honestly, without the support from the guys here I don't want to know where I probably would've ended up."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"I loved going to Baltic with NEYDL to watch the England match and meeting young dads. They've invited me out to a snooker club which is nice as I don't have any friends."*

(A minoritised young dad supported by NEYDL)

## OBJECTIVE 2.

Enable young dads to engage in activities:

(i) where they can share experiences and support with other young dads.

### DigiDAD Gaming: A safeguarded, peer-led digital community for young dads

By Dr Nick Williams (DigiDAD Project Manager)

While DigiDAD's digital content helps inform and reassure young dads, we have also prioritised creating spaces for connection, belonging and peer support. DigiDAD Gaming – an online video gaming service, has grown into a safe, moderated online community of over 90 young dads from across the North East, offering regular opportunities for connection on Discord, a platform already familiar to and widely used by participants.

This work is ambitious and reflects a conscious decision to engage young dads in the digital spaces they already use. At a time when there is widespread concern about young men meeting and socialising online, DigiDAD Gaming takes a careful and evidence-informed approach. This approach recognises the risks inherent in digital environments, while also acknowledging that online spaces can offer meaningful connection, particularly for young dads who may be isolated, time-poor, or unable or reluctant to access in-person support, including those who lack confidence or feel unwelcome in traditional service settings.

From the outset, DigiDAD Gaming has been designed with safeguarding at its core. The initiative operates through a safeguarding-first model supported by a trained senior moderation team, clear policies and protocols, and an on-call system involving members of the charity's staff team, who actively support moderators throughout gaming drop-ins. Alongside this formal structure, a strong culture of shared responsibility has developed within the community itself, with young dads looking out for one another and actively contributing to a respectful, supportive environment. These safeguarding arrangements are continually reviewed and refined, recognising that safeguarding in digital spaces is complex and evolving.

During 2025, DigiDAD Gaming developed into a structured and reliable offer, with sessions now taking place five days a week. Within this framework, the emphasis is on creating a calm, inclusive and pressure-free space where young dads can socialise safely, talk openly and build trust with peers who share similar experiences of fatherhood. Moderation records highlight recurring peer-to-peer discussion around parenting challenges, employment and financial pressures, mental health and wellbeing, housing and navigating family relationships. Alongside moments of difficulty, the community also regularly shares positive milestones – from celebrating new pregnancies and



births to supporting one another through difficult days and recognising the value of simply having a place to unwind and be understood.

Building on this strong foundation, we are now onboarding our first young dad volunteer moderators from within DigiDAD Gaming itself. This marks an important step in strengthening peer leadership and enabling young dads to take greater ownership of the community they have helped shape. Volunteer moderators are supported through clearly defined roles, supervision and ongoing safeguarding oversight, ensuring responsibility is shared safely and appropriately. This progression also creates meaningful development opportunities, allowing young dads to contribute positively while building confidence and employability skills.

Alongside video gaming sessions, *Dungeons & Dads* has emerged as a popular and creative peer-led offer within DigiDAD Gaming. These sessions combine collaborative storytelling, problem-solving and structured play (think *Dungeons and Dragons*) and are moderated and facilitated by a trained external volunteer moderator. The sessions further strengthen confidence, communication skills and a sense of belonging, while maintaining the same safeguarding standards that underpin all DigiDAD Gaming activity.

DigiDAD Gaming demonstrates how digital spaces – when intentionally designed, robustly safeguarded and shaped by participants – can play a vital role in peer support and community building for young dads.

### Putting the peer in the pool: Peer support for young dads in Hartlepool

By Andrea Waterson (Senior Young Dads Worker)

*"My case worker is Andrea from Hartlepool. She is possibly the best worker there is. She's supportive but also keeps us on the straight and narrow as well, as she's the first to jump to action when help is needed. My opinion she needs employee of the year."* (A young dad supported by NEYDL).

*"Since becoming a dad, my friends have dwindled."* Sadly, this is a phrase I hear all too often from young dads in Hartlepool. To address the challenges of social isolation, loneliness and stigma felt by young dads, we now offer a weekly drop-in, from various locations across the town on a Wednesday evening – anecdotally, when NEYDL started in 2017, Kev ran the first ever young dads' group on the same night of the week in Gateshead.

Featuring a raft of activities from pool, darts, ten-pin bowling, gym sessions, cycling excursions to paediatric first aid and mental health first aid training, we regularly welcome a core group of 6 young dads, who organise and plan the programme of activities we run, accumulating in 442 hours of peer supported group work activities in the past year.



Delivered in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, we offer a non-judgmental space where young dads can share stories, offer encouragement, gain self-confidence and ultimately develop a strong sense of belonging. Where necessary, transport support can also be offered to ensure that no one is left out.

Oh, I forgot to mention food! In keeping with the original Gateshead group, cooking and eating together has become a mainstay of the Hartlepool drop-in, uniting people, breaking cultural barriers and creating lasting friendships. What better way to celebrate parenthood...now, can someone please pass me the ketchup?

*"It's been nice to have a good feeling and no judgement from anyone, which is a change."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## OBJECTIVE 2.

Enable young dads to engage in activities: (ii) where they can spend time with mother and child.

### Why Mams matter too

By Paula Davidson (Senior Young Dads Worker)

Whilst NEYDL is first and foremost a young dad's charity, we have always adopted a whole family approach which actively encourages estranged dads to seek and maintain positive relationships with the mother/Mam of their children. In the words of NEYDL's CEO Kev, "NEYDL is not an angry man's charity".

Our commitment to young Mothers is evident in the make-up of the charity's board, which welcomed our second young Mam (Lillie) this year, following the departure of Destiny Greenwood – welcome Lillie and thank you for your support, Destiny. In addition, I was a young Mam myself and draw on this lived experience in supporting young dads to play an active and meaningful role in the lives of their children.

Beyond trusteeship, staff make-up (29% of the charities Senior Young Dads Workers are women) and attendance at our hugely popular annual awards and celebration events for young dads, NEYDL recognised the importance of involving both young Mams and maternal family members in our 'stay and play' sessions early in the charity's evolution, both to address their fears and concerns and enable young dads to progress towards meaningful and crucially independent parenting. In response, our Friday afternoon 'stay and play' sessions delivered from Thorntree Family Hub, Middlesbrough continue to welcome young Mams alongside dads and children as part of an induction process which ultimately seeks to build trust and reduce anxiety.

Moreover, in response to requests from young parents for more 'whole family' opportunities to address the sense of social isolation experienced by both parents, NEYDL hosts a series of family outings which this year has included trips to Newham Grange Farm, the SeaLife Centre (Tynemouth), Kielder Bird of Prey Centre, alongside pumpkin picking and picnics in the park. Let's be honest, a family day out can be expensive, and this offer provides young families with opportunities to both meet and mix with other families and share their experiences of parenthood.

Here is some feedback from the young Mams we meet, who have benefitted from our whole family service offer:

*"My partner has been with NEYDL for almost a year now and it has made a big difference to his life. He would always stay indoors and keep away from other people because he wasn't comfortable or confident enough to speak to others. NEYDL has changed all of that and made him a better dad. I am*



*very grateful to young dads and lads (NEYDL) for helping him be the man he always should have been."*

*"When it comes to me as a Mam, I have found all staff nice, friendly and welcoming to everyone."*

*"They have included me as needed about the path (named young dad) has gone on with them."*

*"My kids love family events and weekly 'stay and play' is a big thing for my kids. They really enjoy coming. Paula and Andy are really loved in my family."*

*"I wish we had known about NEYDL a long time ago. You help so many young men and it's nice to see something out there for young dads to help them when they need it."*

*"Thank you for being there for my family but mostly thank you for all the work you do in helping young dads feel that they belong somewhere."*

*"NEYDL has been a very important and very beneficial part of my and my partners life."*



*"Because of lads and dads (NEYDL), I can finally start taking my children alone to Family Hubs, which I am so grateful and excited for. I know Jonny is always a phone call away if I need him and is the person I can openly speak to no matter how I feel."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"We were watching the (DigiDAD) videos together not too long ago and it was quite funny, and then obviously I had a reminder of the examples and the answers of things, like what the things obviously you can do, or you can't do. And I still watch them still, just obviously to get reminded."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

### OBJECTIVE 3.

**Provide opportunities to improve knowledge, skills, confidence and self-esteem through training and information resources.**



*"The (DigiDAD) courses...they helped me very much and I got more active and got more, like, very comfortable with what I'm doing as a dad."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## DigiDAD by dads for dads Building a national online community, with and for young dads.

By Dr Nick Williams (DigiDAD Project Manager)

During 2024-25, DigiDAD entered an important new phase, expanding delivery beyond the region and strengthening its digital offer. Representing the first of a 3-year grant funded project supported by The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities, DigiDAD has demonstrated strong progress across content creation, digital infrastructure, community-building and professional engagement – exceeding overall participation targets and laying robust foundations for future growth.

At the heart of DigiDAD's success is co-creation with young dads. This year, young Dad volunteers continued to play a central role in shaping DigiDAD content, DigiDAD Gaming, outreach activity and platform development. This included the first inter-regional and multi-agency e-course production with young dads in the North East, Cumbria, Salford, and Southeast London. These film making workshops enabled dads in each region to co-produce the course content, shaping scripts, visuals, animation assets and voiceovers to ensure it reflected lived experience in tone, content and delivery.



Scan the QR code to watch a short film made by young dads introducing DigiDAD.



Alongside this work, we produced a range of additional films and series that further amplify young dads' voices and experiences. These include 'What I Wish You Knew', a series developed in partnership with Following Young Fathers Further and now available on DigiDAD; 'Liam's Story'; and the forthcoming 'Grief & Loss and Birthing Trauma' series.

While this content helps inform and reassure young dads, we have also prioritised the co-creation of spaces where young dads can build connections, a stronger sense of belonging and peer support, most notably through DigiDAD Gaming and 'Dungeons & Dads'.

As participation and peer-led activity grew, we also strengthened how DigiDAD is shared, represented and amplified across our social channels. Social media capacity was significantly strengthened

through the onboarding of Digital Media Officer Lucy Curry, resulting in increased output and steady growth across all channels.

Behind the scenes, major progress was made in data and evaluation. For the first time, data from DigiDAD and DigiDAD Gaming now flows into NEYDL's Data Management System, improving insight into participation, engagement and safeguarding oversight across the organisation.



DigiDAD film-making workshop • Gateshead



Salford



Sunderland



*"The videos (DigiDAD) were fun and made me feel more confident that I can do all the things that new dads need to do."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

DigiDAD has also continued to build its profile with professionals through presentations and events including a DigiDAD 'takeover' of the Sunderland Expo, a presentation to volunteers at Game of Two Halves, and numerous sessions with health, social care and family services – often co-delivered with young dads themselves.

Looking ahead to Year 2, we will deepen inter-regional collaboration through a new e-course and expand in-person video gaming (DigiDAD Gaming) and outreach activity across the North East and our partner regions. We will also formalise volunteer moderator training, launch the DigiDAD podcast, further optimise platform accessibility and UX, and continue to strengthen data integration, ensuring that young dads remain at the helm of this groundbreaking platform.

## Birds, Bikes, Bees and Trees.

By Jonah York (BBBT Project Manager) with Tom Jamieson (Community Beekeeper) and Jordan Pike (Cycling and Beekeeping Project Worker)

Through environmental play, action and training, this year the Birds, Bees, Bikes and Trees project (BBBT) has provided an extensive range of opportunities for young fathers and their families to engage, learn, and enhance their skills, resulting in engagement by over 40% of the charity's total service beneficiaries in 2025.

The BBBT staff team which includes young dads has actively showcased their learning and achievements through presentations, engagement events and

activities involving other organisations (including Gateshead Food Partnership, Northumberland National Park and Tees Wildlife Trust), voluntary and community groups and members of the public.

Further, we have focused on upskilling and empowering young dads to facilitate activities that help to reclaim and enhance the environment. For example, young dad Jordan has now completed Level 3 Forest School training and is finalising his coursework through the facilitation of sessions with young dads and families. Other young fathers have completed training as bike-ride leaders, community beekeepers, conservationists and tree planters. One project that truly embodies the ambition and potential of BBBT is the Source to Sea project described in greater detail opposite.

This project is delivered in partnership with the Baltic.



*"I just want to say a big thank you for supporting (named young dad), one of my clients. He really enjoys working with you all, and I believe he is doing extremely well"*

(Housing Support Officer)

*"It gets me out of the house and doing stuff... Sometimes I bring (named daughter) and (named partner) as well, if she's not working. I like meeting new people, playing football, talking to the other lads about what it's like for them and what they do, and I tell them about me."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## From Source to Sea.

By Jonah York (BBBT Project Manager)

*"It was an experience I never thought I'd get. Testing the water and seeing the changes made me realise how important this river is, and how much we need to look after it."* (Young dad, Wheelie Good Dad and Source participant).

**Day 1** – It's early morning at Deadwater, source of the River North Tyne, tucked away in Kielder Forest, Northumberland, a stone's throw from the Scottish Border. A group of young dads are preparing to embark on a gruelling 85-mile journey following the course of the river to the coast at North Shields. Combining cycling, environmental education, artistic expression and community spirit, the lads will seek to explore and understand the mighty River Tyne.



Before delving into the journey itself, it's important to understand how this project came about. Jordan, a young dad and employee of NEYDL became interested in the quality of the river after attending a Climate Club session with The Anglers Society. They discussed the importance of testing the water quality to understand how pollutants can affect its health and the wildlife that depends on it. Inspired, we brought in experts from the Tyne Rivers Trust who taught us how to test the river water for phosphates and nitrates and gave us vital information about the habitats and species that live in, on and along its banks. They also encouraged us to think about our own relationships with the Tyne, helping us to personalise our journey. We continued this work with artist Dr Michelle Allen, attending three artistic workshops exploring ways to capture our journey through film and photos. The project quickly grew, as did the ambitions of the young dads who chose to complete the gruelling journey in 2 days by pedal power alone.

And what a journey it proved to be! On the border of England and Scotland, we embarked in bright sunshine, trekking up a boggy hill to where the North Tyne begins. It would be fair to say that the source of the River Tyne is underwhelming. Just a trickle of water that flows into the ground. We took the opportunity to bottle and test the water quality at the source - not a hint of any phosphates or nitrates.

After a flying start from Deadwater to Kielder Water, our intrepid cyclists fought their way along 13 miles of hilly tracks through Kielder Forest, before resting at the Dam for a picnic lunch and our second water test. From there we made our way through the undulating hills of Northumberland, completed another test 10 miles later where the water quality remained exceptionally good, before heading to Bellingham. Interestingly we found that the levels of pollution had increased at Bellingham, most probably due to farm run-off. After recording our data and slurping our ice creams, we returned to the saddle. Before we reached our bunkhouse 20 miles away, we stopped at Chollerford near Hexham where the quality of the water had improved somewhat. A final hill to our Bunkhouse and by 9pm the sound of snoring filled the dorms.

**Day 2** – Leaving Newbrough before 9am with stiff legs, sore bottoms and high spirits, thanks in part to a hearty full English breakfast prepared by young dad Dylan, we took to the bikes once more, leaving the untamed beauty of scenic Northumberland behind and entering busy towns and villages.



Our first water test of the day was a magical experience, venturing onto the banks where the North River meets the South. It was a beautiful spot, and we took a moment to reflect on the transformation of the river from its unassuming source to this vast expanse of water. Hearts full, we set off on the unpaved tracks to Hexham.

As the river widened and the human population increased, our water tests

revealed rising levels of nitrates and phosphates, a clear sign of pollution. Artist Michelle joined the convoy at Wylam. Our water test, just upstream of Wylam bridge, showed a slight increase in pollutants, but the river was still healthy. Beyond the bridge the river tumbles to its tidal and salt-water reach. From Wylam, we travelled to the Baltic, crossing the Millennium Bridge to conduct a water test on Newcastle's quayside. A sharp rise in phosphates and nitrates was recorded and then we were off on our final leg.

Arriving at North Shields 13 miles later, the salty sea air and Mr Whippy ice cream were a welcome reward. For the young dads who completed the journey, Source to Sea was more than just a cycling challenge - it was a voyage of discovery, learning and camaraderie. A quick paddle in the sea for a final water test – probably not the best place to take a dip given the high levels of pollution we recorded, and our epic journey was over.

**Legacy** – Featuring photography, collage, mapping and video, the young dads worked with Baltic staff and Michelle to curate an exhibition which presents our findings, maps the route and test sites, features creative collages of the changing landscape and even includes a family-friendly reading and sensory pit for visitors to enjoy. Highlighting the power of community climate activism, the Source to Sea exhibition has been a resounding success and will be immortalised within the BalticS online Archive for posterity. Flow well, great river, flow well!

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners who made this epic journey possible: **Jenny Alderson, Dr. Michelle Allen, The Tyne Rivers Trust, Earthwatch UK, The Anglers Society, Baltic** and most importantly, the **young dads** who completed this remarkable journey and those that helped to make the impossible possible.

Scan the QR code to watch a short film about the Source to Sea project.



## Celebrating their success: The NEYDL Awards.

By Kevin Stoodley (Founder and CEO)

Five years on from our inaugural awards ceremony for young dads and their children and three years since we last came together to celebrate the outstanding achievements of young dads – blame Covid, in November 2024 we shined our shoes, brushed the cobwebs from our suits and took to the stage once more for a series of evening events held at County Durham Cricket Club and Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts.

Featuring balloon artists, magicians, bubble artists, food and refreshments, the two events welcomed 161 guests, including 44 young dads, 20 children, 38 partners/family members and 59 professionals and local dignitaries.

Alongside a rich and varied supply of certificates, qualifications, framed photos, medals and trophies which culminated in a regional award for young dad and new trustee Dylan Peggs in recognition of his outstanding contribution to young fatherhood – the first of many I hope, the events featured two new photography exhibitions (Portrait Youth and Reframing Young Fatherhood) featuring images and words captured and share by the AmbassaDADS.

It was great to see so many young Mams there too. Here's my favourite feedback from one of the Mams in attendance:

*"North East Young Dads and Lads Awards Night 2024...if you're a young Dad under the age of 25 definitely get yourself involved. I'm not even a dad and I've met some of the most loveliest people ever and the opportunities you get with them are endless. Can't recommend them enough."*



*"I couldn't thank the lads and dads (NEYDL) service enough for everything they've helped me with, from the end of the pregnancy with my daughter where I was very nervous and unsure, to now where I feel so confident and reassured."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"I myself am part of a minority ethnic community and being able to give people like me a voice about what kind of support we would like to see... This project is a great way for me to do so."*

(A minoritised young dad supported by NEYDL)

## OBJECTIVE 4.

### Empower young dads to have a voice and influence father inclusive practice.

By Kevin Stoodley

#### Meet the AmbassaDADS

By the AmbassaDADS supported by Jonah York and Kevin Stoodley

This year has marked a significant period of growth and visibility for the 28 former service beneficiaries of NEYDL who form our community leaders programme (AmbassaDADS). Representing the different communities of identity and geography supported by the charity, the AmbassaDADS draw on their own lived experiences to advocate for a more father-inclusive society, as defined by the following manifesto ambitions:

1. Challenge stigma about young fatherhood
2. Showcase positive young fatherhood
3. Influence positive social change for young dads
4. Promote inclusivity, equality and equity, for young dads
5. Share and inform best practice for supporting young dads



In line with these ambitions, over the past 12 months the AmbassaDADS have achieved the following:

#### Challenge stigma about young fatherhood

The AmbassaDADS have contributed to 3 national research studies in the past year, including Following Young Fathers Further (FYFF) at The University of Lincoln, Evaluation of Multi-agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) led by Newcastle University and the University of Central London and INCLUDE: Understanding and Developing Father-Inclusive Practice in Children's Social Care led by Newcastle University with co-applicants including University of Lincoln and Northumbria University. In addition, the AmbassaDADS have contributed to a range of local and national news stories via TV, Radio, social media and print media and supported the dissemination of the Reframing Young Fatherhood poster pack to all Family Hubs within our region. Featuring photos and stories shared by the AmbassaDADS, the posters and postcards serve a dual purpose of being thought provoking to professionals and the public whilst welcoming to young dads and young parents.

#### Showcase positive young fatherhood

The AmbassaDADS co-developed and delivered 2 awards ceremonies in November 2024 to recognise and celebrate the achievements of young dads in our region, also attended by children and families, professional stakeholders and local dignitaries. Through the delivery of conference plenaries, presentations and information stands/stalls held at wider workforce and community events, the AmbassaDADS have effectively represented young fathers in a positive light.

#### Influence positive social change for young dads

As detailed earlier in this report, members of the AmbassaDADS community were involved in the planning and delivery of a climate action project (Source to Sea), culminating in the launch of a family-focused exhibition at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts. Moreover, the AmbassaDADS have worked closely with external experts in policy and campaigning to develop an ambitious 10-year Social Action and Systems Change Strategy to be launched next year.

#### Promote inclusivity, equality and equity for young dads

After completing cultural competencies training focusing on neurodiversity and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic cultural competencies, the AmbassaDADS worked closely with Founder of the North East Anti Racism Alliance and EDI expert Ngozi Lyn Cole to develop a young father-friendly leaflet given to all young dads, which outlines the charity's commitment to EDI.



**Our Values Statements:**  
Supporting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Young Dads, Lads and Families.



In addition, the AmbassaDADS have worked closely with the University of Roehampton and NEYDL's Minoritised Young Dads Officer Fred to develop a new 'Think Dad toolkit' providing practical resources and insights to professionals seeking to improve support for minoritised young fathers.

#### Share and inform best practice for supporting young dads

Alongside our delivery partners at the North East Youth Alliance, the AmbassaDADS were actively involved in the planning and delivery of the 'Let's Hear it For the Boys' conference for professionals held at Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts. Through presentations and workshop facilitation, the AmbassaDADS raised awareness of the stigma and challenges faced by young dads, whilst showcasing and defining father inclusive best practice. Further, AmbassaDADS have actively supported Family Hub and Start for Life programmes in County Durham and Middlesbrough through their participation in Parent and Carer panels as experts by experience.

In addition, we are grateful to Youth Focus North East for providing training in youthwork practice to the AmbassaDADS.

*"I feel really proud that these films will help other young dads too and I want to be involved in making more DigiDAD films."*

(A young dad content co-creator for DigiDAD, supported by NEYDL)

*"Your team are amazing Kevin."*  
(Dianne Mackay, Trustee for LGA Foundation)

## OBJECTIVE 5.

### Ensure NEYDL has the resources required to achieve the above objectives, maintaining high quality, authenticity, and effectiveness.

This year NEYDL said goodbye to staff member and former service beneficiary Nathan Noble, who left the charity on good terms to pursue his other work interests. Nathan was replaced by young dad Josh Wiborg, who stepped down from his role as a charity trustee to take on the role of Peer Enabler on a full-time basis. As a result of this appointment, NEYDL continues to employ 4 young dads. In response to new 3-year voluntary grant funding, NEYDL appointed Dr Nick Williams as DigiDAD Project Manager with additional digital media support provided on a freelance basis by Lucy Curry. Finally, NEYDL welcomed Andrea Waterson as Senior Young Dads Worker for Hartlepool in response to additional voluntary grant funding over 3 years. New staff and freelancers brought significant expertise in family support, criminal justice, youth and community work, local geographic knowledge, social media and co-creation in the use of digital technologies and have quite literally 'hit the ground running', closely supported by our existing and highly dedicated staff members.

In addition to annual safeguarding training, professional training attended by all staff in the current year has included:

- Trauma Informed Practice Training
- Autism Awareness Training
- ADHD Awareness Training

Moreover, responding to the need for greater safeguarding oversight relevant both to DigiDAD and the charities regional service expansion, Senior Young Dads Workers Andrea Waterson and Fred Suadwa were appointed as Duty Safeguarding Leads, closely supported by Doug Laidlaw (Regional Programme Manager and Safeguarding Lead) and Sarah Oliver (Trustee and Safeguarding Advisor).

Other key achievements relevant to this charitable objective have included:

- Production of a young father-friendly leaflet given to all young dads which outlines the charity's commitment to EDI, led by the AmbassaDADS with support from topic expert Ngozi Lyn Cole (named in the 2016 New View 50 list as one of the top 50 most influential Black and Minority Ethnic people working in the public sector).



**Our Values Statements:**  
Supporting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for Young Dads, Lads and Families.



- Continued refinement of the charity's cloud-based data management system in line with our Evaluation Framework and with greater DigiDAD integration, supported by Throneware.
- Completion of an Organisational Health Check supported by KEDA Consulting, covering the following elements:
  - Service delivery
  - Learning and evaluation
  - Fundraising
  - Finance and HR
  - IT
  - Governance
- In addition, we continue to support and learn from external academic evaluations of the charity's work and projects. In the current charity year this has led to the production of the following reports;

**Young-Father Inclusive Support**  
Commissioned by the County Durham Family Hubs, University of Lincoln, 2025.  
View online:

The National Lottery Community Fund  
**Dad2Dad Peer Support**  
independent evaluation report, University of Lincoln, 2024.  
View online:

- Congratulations to the team of runners (including our CEO Key, Trustee Anna and young dad Rob who raised essential funds for the charity by completing the 2024 Great North Run and Kev who went one step further, completing the London Marathon (April 2025) in the very respectable time of 4 hours and 40 minutes, raising over £1,500 for NEYDL in the process.

In conclusion, we remain deeply grateful to the staff, volunteers, trustees, project partners and passionate supporters who work so tirelessly on behalf of the charity, leading to the outstanding achievements and outcomes detailed in this report.

## Future plans

By Kevin Stoodley (Founder and CEO)

Over the next year, the charity will continue to work to our strategic objectives as defined in our 3-year strategic plan (2024-2027) and set out below.

1. Provide individual support to young dads to address their issues and achieve personal outcomes.
2. Enable young dads to engage in activities (i) where they can share experience and support with other young dads and (ii) where they can spend time with mother and child.
3. Provide opportunities to improve knowledge, skills, confidence and self-esteem through training and information resources.
4. Empower young dads to have a voice and influence father inclusive practice.
5. Ensure NEYDL has the resources required to achieve the above objectives, maintaining high quality, authenticity, and effectiveness.

Relevant to Objective 5, the charity is currently:

- Revising its charitable objects to provide greater support to young fathers, fathers-to-be and male caregivers under the age of 26, both within our region and UK wide,
- Reviewing and refining the charity's overarching 3-year strategy (which currently ends in 2027) and DigiDAD strategy (last updated June 2023) supported by KEDA Consulting.
- Developing an ambitious 10-year Social Action and Systems Change Strategy supported both by the AmbassaDADS and external experts in policy and campaigning.
- Conducting a comprehensive cloud migration project across the organisation to:
  1. Improve data security and compliance (GDPR, safeguarding)
  2. Enable remote access to email, files and Teams collaboration tools
  3. Simplify user management, backups and device control

We look forward to updating you on our progress in future editions.

*"Thank you all for the brilliant welcome and conversations during my visit to NEYDL last week. The honesty, integrity, and humour, along with your clear sense of purpose are so powerful – making an enormous difference to young men to build stronger, healthier lives. DigiDAD's and the future you've got planned is really exciting... you're doing amazing work!"*

(Mark Simms OBE, interim Chair of the Charity Commission for England and Wales)

*"Where do you think you'd be right now if it wasn't for this charity?" Joe Swash (TV Presenter and young father)*  
*"I wouldn't want to answer that because I don't know where I'd be." Young dad supported by NEYDL*

# NEYDL IN THE NEWS

**Mirror**  
 NEWS CELEBS FOOTBALL LIFESTYLE  
 Jeff Brazier makes fan cry as he describes being young dad after having kids with Jade Goody

**The Northern Echo**  
 News Sport Nostalgia BUSINESSIQ Opinion  
 County Durham dad to appear in Joe Swash BBC documentary

**Sunderland Echo**  
 THE CONVERSATION  
 I'm in Joe Swash's new documentary the realities of young fatherhood



**BBC NEWS**  
 Young dad stereotypes tackled by postcard campaign

**Mirror**  
 EXCLUSIVE: Dad who is tackling toxic masculinity nominated for Pride of Britain award



**BBC NEWS**  
 Spotlight on young men: First 'Let's Hear it for the Boys' conference held in Gateshead

The first-ever Let's Hear it for the Boys conference took place at the Baltic in Gateshead, marking a significant moment for youth-focused organisations in the North East. The inspiring day of sharing and learning was hosted by North East Youth Alliance and North East Young Dads and Lads (NEYDL). It was created to highlight the pressing issues facing young men and boys in the region. It also served to celebrate and connect the dedicated individuals and organisations working tirelessly to support them. The conversation around masculinity, identity, and youth engagement had been recently reignited by the Netflix show Adolescence, which brought mainstream attention to the rise of the 'manosphere', incel culture, and influencers such as Andrew Tate who promote misogyny, 'red pill' ideology, and a culture of violence and hostility towards women and girls. The conference featured thought-provoking keynote talks by Dr Michael Richardson and Mark Libby, a candid expert panel discussion, and a series of practical, targeted workshops. Attendees left with deeper insight, lived experiences, and actionable knowledge that will empower them to guide young men through these complex social challenges—and help them transition confidently from adolescence into adulthood. Over 100 delegates took part with a real energy to listen and learn. Ongoing collaboration remains essential to making a lasting difference and ensuring better outcomes for both current and future generations of young men.

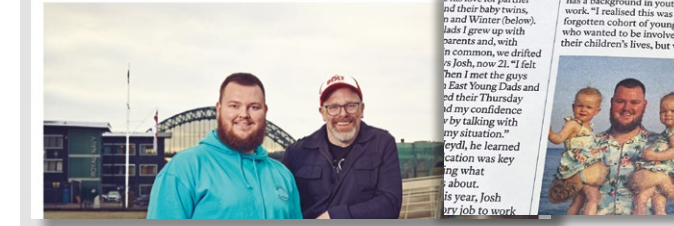
## BBC Factual announces Joe Swash: Britain's Young Dads (w/t) for BBC Three and iPlayer

As Joe meets young dads across the UK, he will reflect fatherhood and spark a wider conversation about male role models and why it's time for young dads to be celebrated



## 'It changed my life': North East charity unites young dads to gain skills

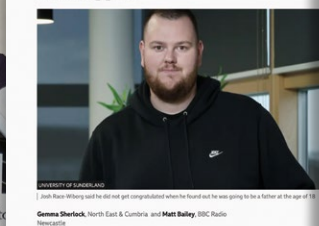
Josh found having twins at 18 isolating – connecting with other local young dads helped build confidence and fun



## Father figures

A charity in the North East brings young dads together to gain skills and confidence and help them embrace their role as fathers. Josh Wilson, becoming a father at 18 was an often lonely experience. He felt isolated, and his love for partner and their baby twins, and Winter (below), led him to find support. "I grew up with parents and, with a common, we drifted apart. I felt then I met the guys at North East Young Dads and Lads (NEYDL) on Thursday and my confidence grew by talking with them about my situation. I learned what was going on about. This year, Josh Wilson is starting a new job to work

**BBC NEWS**  
 Becoming dad at 18 'felt like world had stopped'



**BBC NEWS**  
 'I felt really lonely': Joe Swash on being a young dad



**Newcastle University Press Office**  
 Top theatre award for play based on Newcastle academic's research

A play based on research by a Newcastle University academic has won a prestigious theatre award for the way it tackles young fatherhood. 'Father Unknown' tells the story of Alfie who finds out he's going to be a dad during his GCSEs and follows him as he juggles exams and fatherhood. It was co-created

**BBC NEWS**  
 Shared parental leave skewed against lower earning families, analysis shows



*"Good morning, Kev and Doug. We hope you enjoyed the show. It's been so well received, and we've had lots of positive feedback from viewers. Once again, thank you so much for all the help and assistance you gave us during the production."*

(Sue Agyeman, Series Producer, BBC Studios, 'Joe Swash: Forgotten Young Dads')



*"This group of staff and young dads humble me. Working alongside you since its inception and seeing the growth, the impact and some outstanding young dads who months earlier had no confidence and self-esteem and now have support and a purpose. Well done to everyone of you."*  
 (Carole Hewison, Director for Child Safety UK)



Description: In 2025, NEYDL took over the Durham Centre for a professional stakeholders event to showcase the incredible work of our now 14 strong staff team and 28 strong community of young dad volunteers (AmbassaDADS) in supporting a staggering 217 young dads and families across the North East region and many more beyond.

Description: 5 years on from her first 'awards night', Claire joined us for a much grander evening of celebrations in the company of 58 young dads plus children and family members. Over the course of 3 hours, we welcomed every young dad to the stage for applause, praise, certificates, medals, trophies and treats, whilst their families enjoyed a raft of festive entertainment from magicians to fire artists, face painters to balloon sculptures, plus the sight of Doug in an inflatable snowman costume. Happy days!



*"The hospital provided information about NEYDL. It took me a few weeks to like reach out, but I'm stoked to be able to be a part of it now."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"You were the only one that I could ask for help and you were always there for me."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## MEET THE TEAM



**Andy Appleyard**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker –  
Middlesbrough)



**Amy Bowman**  
(Finance Officer)



**Jonny Conn**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker –  
Gateshead and Sunderland)



**Colin Cowings**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker  
– County Durham and  
Northumberland)



**Lucy Curry**  
(Digital Media Officer)



**Paula Davidson**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker –  
Middlesbrough and Sunderland)



**Tom Jamieson**  
(Community Beekeeper)



**Doug Laidlaw**  
(Programme Manager and  
Safeguarding Lead)



**Robert Oughton**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker-  
County Durham)



**Will Patterson**  
(Young Dads Support Worker –  
Tyne & Wear)



**Jordan Pike**  
(Cycling and Beekeeping  
Project Worker)



**Nikki Rummer**  
(Fundraiser)



**Kevin Stoodley**  
(Founder and CEO)



**Fred Suadwa**  
(Minoritised Young Dads Officer  
and Deputy Safeguarding Lead)



**Andrea Waterson**  
(Senior Young Dads Worker  
– Hartlepool and Deputy  
Safeguarding Lead)



**Josh Wiborg**  
(Peer Enabler)



**Dr Nick Williams**  
(DigiDAD Project Manager)



**Jonah York**  
(Birds, Bees, Bikes and Trees  
Project Officer)

*"Thank you for that! I think you're the only person he's (named young dad) met, and he's said you're alright and he's happy to do different things with you which is a massive thing for him. Really appreciate it."*

(A young mam and partner to a young dad supported by NEYDL)

*"I don't know how I'm going to feel when I'm 26 and can't come here anymore... it's the first time in my life I've had stability."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

None of the outcomes or achievements detailed in this report would have been possible without the continued support, kindness, encouragement, friendship, and generosity offered by so many people, groups, projects, organisations, services, foundations and institutions, who have given NEYDL so much and asked for so little in return. Though far from exhaustive, we believe the following individuals and organisations deserve an extra special thank you for their huge contribution to NEYDL over the past 12 months. Up the NEYDL!

### Board of Trustees

Olusola Adebiji  
appointed 27th October 2025

Steven Bramwell (Chair)  
appointed 9th July 2024

Callum Fay (young dad)  
appointed 8th April 2025

Jenny Goldstein (Treasurer)  
appointed 9th July 2020

Destiny Greenwood  
retired 9th July 2024

Lillie Hebborn (young Mam)  
appointed 1st July 2025

Chris Humba (EDI Advisor)  
appointed 13th December 2023

Mark Hutchinson (Secretary)  
appointed 11th July 2023

Sarah Oliver (Safeguarding Advisor)  
appointed 9th July 2020

Dylan Peggs (young dad)  
appointed 19th August 2025

Jordan Pike (young dad)  
retired 9th July 2024

Tyler Reed (young dad)  
retired 9th July 2024

Professor Anna Tarrant (Chair)  
retired 20th August 2025

Joshua Wiborg (young dad)  
retired 1st July 2025

James Withycombe  
appointed 9th July 2024

Colin Workman (GDPR Compliance Advisor)  
appointed 11th July 2023

### DigiDAD Advisory Group

Amy Berry  
Colin Cowings  
Ella Fielding  
Jenny Goldstein  
Chris Humba  
Mark Hutchinson  
Adam Johnson  
Doug Laidlaw  
Sarah Oliver  
Robert Oughton  
Jan Rigby  
Margherita Rovida  
Kevin Stoodley  
Angela Ward  
Dr Nick Williams (Chair)

### DigiDAD Delivery Partners

Tom Cole, Salford Young Fathers Project  
Lyndsey Smith, Cumberland Council  
Owen Thomas, Future Men  
Paige Thomason, Cumberland Council

### DigiDAD Gaming Steering Group

Jon Goddard - Volunteer Moderator  
Doug Laidlaw – Safeguarding Lead  
Gareth Malcolm - Volunteer Moderator  
Robert Oughton – Senior Moderator  
Will Patterson – Senior Moderator  
Fred Suadwa – Safeguarding Officer  
Andrea Waterson – Safeguarding Officer  
Josh Wiborg – Senior Moderator  
James Withycombe - Volunteer Moderator

### AmbassaDADS;

Petra Bowes  
Callum Brown  
Marshall Brown  
Callum Clarkson  
Alfie Cox  
Cameron Davison  
Ethan Dolan  
Owyn Dunn  
Callum Fay  
John Goddard  
Anthony Hopgood  
Ben Horniman  
Elliott Hunter  
Trystan Jackson  
James Jones  
Samuel Leone  
Andrew (Drew) McNally  
Robert Oughton  
Will Patterson  
Dylan Peggs  
Jordan Pike  
Bradley Sayers  
Leslie Smith  
Alex Tarling  
Josh Wiborg  
Joe Willis  
Robert Wilson  
James Withycombe

### Our volunteer beekeepers

Adam Johnson  
Dylan Peggs  
Dr Michael Richardson  
Mark Ridden  
Josh Wiborg

### Our friends and project partners, some of whom are listed below:

Dr Andrew Richardson – gambling related harms advisor  
Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art  
Benjamin Michael Smith (film maker)  
Brown March and Bowman Ltd Accountants  
Chopwell Officials Club  
Chopwell Regeneration Group

Durham Family Hubs  
Following Young Fathers Further at The University of Lincoln  
Forestry England  
Gateshead Family Hubs  
Gateshead Food Partnerships  
KEDA Consulting  
Kingsmeadow Community Comprehensive School  
Middlesbrough Family Hubs  
Motif Pictures  
NE Youth  
North East Anti-Racism Alliance  
North East Youth Alliance  
Northumberland Family Hubs  
Northumberland National Park  
Ngozi Lyn Cole  
Pixel Buddy  
Staithes Café  
Sunderland Family Hubs  
Tees Wildlife Trust  
The Comfrey Project  
The Family Nurse Partnership (Sunderland and Gateshead)  
Thread Media  
Throneware Ltd  
Youth Focus North East

### Our current funders and sponsors

BBC Children in Need  
Ballinger Charitable Trust  
Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust  
Community Foundation North East  
Cycling UK  
Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project  
Henry Smith Foundation  
John Armitage Charitable Trust  
LGA Foundation  
North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East  
OurGateshead The Borough Council of Gateshead  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
ShareGift  
Sir James Knott Trust  
Sunderland City Council  
The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by The National Lottery Climate Action Fund  
The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough  
The County Council of the County of Durham  
The Henry Smith Foundation  
The Imagine Foundation  
The National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All  
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities  
The Netherton Park Trust  
The Tudor Trust  
The William Leech Charity  
Warburtons Project Grant

### Our Inspiration

Last but not least, thank you, thank you, thank you to all the utterly brilliant young men and families we have met so far and those we have yet to meet. This charity and this report exist because of you! Up the NEYDL!

*"I've been working with a dad... He said he had really enjoyed the DigiDAD parenting course. He sent me two certificates, appeared really proud of achieving them, which supported raising his confidence around parenting... He said, 'the courses were amazing!' Thanks, and thought you needed to be aware of the lovely, positive feedback you've been given."*

(Senior Resource Worker, Middlesbrough Council)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

At the year end, the board of trustees considered the charity to be in a healthy financial position with approximately six months of operating costs being held within unrestricted reserves. At the 30th April 2025, the board of trustees identified no uncertainties relating to the charity ability to continue as a going concern. The board of trustees' review and update their financial controls on a regular basis.

### Principal funds

The charities principal source of funds is made up of voluntary grants from trusts and foundations and statutory grants and service commissioning.

In the year ended 30th April 2025, North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO continued to work on projects, which during the current year were funded largely by the following foundations and organisations with our deepest gratitude and heartfelt thanks:

- BBC Children in Need
- Ballinger Charitable Trust
- Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust
- Community Foundation North East
- Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project | OurGateshead
- Henry Smith Foundation
- John Armitage Charitable Trust
- LGA Foundation
- North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- ShareGift
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Sunderland City Council
- The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by The National Lottery Climate Action Fund
- The Borough Council of Gateshead
- The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough
- The County Council of the County of Durham
- The Imagine Foundation
- The National Lottery Community Fund Awards For All
- The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities
- The Netherton Park Trust
- The Tudor Trust
- William Leech Charity
- Warburtons Project Grant

The North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO will carry forward £395,316 of restricted funds to be spent in the 2025-2026 financial year and £224,482 of unrestricted funds.

### Financial reserves policy

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that the North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO can meet its contractual obligations and finance the planned future growth of the organisation. The level of free reserves (excluding restricted funds) is reviewed annually by the Trustees. The Trustees consider that the most appropriate level of reserves on 30th April 2025 would be between £152,081 and £304,161 which is equivalent to between three to six months operating costs.

The general reserves on 30th April 2025 amounted to £224,482, which are considered as free reserves.

### Fundraising Policy

The North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO engages fundraising consultants to support the charity's CEO to develop strategic plans of activities relevant to voluntary and statutory grant fundraising and service commissioning opportunities. The charity does not purchase external lists of potential individual donors or undertake Direct Mail appeals to such lists.

The charity adheres to the Fundraising Code of Practice issued by the

Fundraising Regulator and does not approach or pressure vulnerable people to support its work.

Any fundraising events carried out on behalf of the charity that we are aware of are supported and monitored by the CEO. Any marketing materials and approaches are scrutinised to ensure compliance with the Fundraising Code of Practice and details of income and expenditure are carefully recorded by the Finance Manager. Income is acknowledged and grateful thanks are sent, typically with a letter.

### Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 30 April 2025

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report alongside the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 April 2025. The trustees have adopted the provision of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

#### Charity Name

North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

**Registered Company number:** CE009920 (England and Wales)

**Registered Charity number:** 1172924

#### Registered office

c/o Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts  
South Shore Road  
Gateshead  
NE8 3BA

#### Trustees

Steven Bramwell (Chair) (Appointed 09/07/2024)

Olusola Adebisi (Appointed 27/10/2025)

Dylan Peggs (Appointed 19/08/2025)

Lillie Hebborn (Appointed 01/07/2025)

Callum Fay (Appointed 08/04/2025)

James Withycombe (Appointed 09/07/2024)

Chris Humba (Appointed 13/12/2023)

Colin Workman (Appointed 11/07/2023)

Mark Hutchinson (Secretary) (Appointed 11/07/2023)

Jennifer Goldstein (Treasurer) (Appointed 09/07/2020)

Sarah Oliver (Appointed 09/07/2020)

Destiny Greenwood (Retired 09/07/2024)

Jordan Pike (Retired 09/07/2024)

Tyler Reed (Retired 09/07/2024)

Professor Anna Tarrant (Former Chair) (Retired 20/08/2025)

Joshua Wiborg (Retired 01/07/2025)

#### Chief Executive Officer

Kevin Stoodley

#### Independent examiner

PA Brown & Company Ltd  
16 Abbey Meadows  
Morpeth  
NE61 2BD

#### Bankers

The Co-operative Bank, P.O Box 101, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester, M60 4EP

*"[I'm now] embracing being a young dad and feeling proud of my little boy. There's no better feeling in the world."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### INCORPORATION

The charitable company was incorporated on 9 May 2017 and commenced trading on the same date.

### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

#### Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust, and constitutes a limited company, limited by guarantee, as defined by the Companies Act 2006.

#### Trustee Recruitment

The charity is governed by an elected board of trustees, who meet regularly for quarterly board meetings and an annual public AGM with the CEO of the charity. At these meetings, the opportunity arises for new trustees to be nominated, carefully considered by the board, and approved. All trustees are required to hold a valid enhanced DBS certificate which is reviewed every 3 years.

### OBJECTIVES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

NEYDL is a unique youth support service that is dedicated to helping young men and young fathers to play an active and meaningful role in the lives of their children, within families and wider society.

#### Mission and Vision

- Our vision is for young dads to be valued and supported in their role as parents.
- Our mission is to enable young dads to play a safe, active and meaningful role in their children's lives, by supporting and connecting young dads and influencing wider practice.

### PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Over the next year, the charity will continue to work to our strategic objectives as defined below.

- Provide individual support to young dads to address their issues and achieve personal outcomes.
- Enable young dads to engage in activities (i) where they can share experience and support with other young dads and (ii) where they can spend time with mother and child.
- Provide opportunities to improve knowledge, skills, confidence and self-esteem through training and information resources.
- Influence policy and practice to be more inclusive and supportive of young dads.
- Ensure NEYDL has the resources required to achieve the above objectives, maintaining high quality, authenticity, and effectiveness.

### STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland."

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to,

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity SORP.
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### In so far as the trustees are aware:

- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's independent examiners are unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the relevant examiners are aware of that information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 27th January 2026 and signed on its behalf by:



S Bramwell – Chair to Trustees



J Goldstein – Treasurer

### Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

#### Independent examiner's report to the trustees of North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO ("the Company")

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 30 April 2025.

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the 2011 Act"). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

#### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Paul Brown  
PA Brown & Company Ltd  
16 Abbey Meadows  
Morpeth  
NE61 2BD

*"I'm becoming a more positive dad."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 30 April 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>			
Public Donations	7,640		7,640
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Henry Smith Foundation		30,000	30,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation		50,000	50,000
ShareGift	12,500		12,500
Ballinger Charitable Trust	20,000		20,000
BBC Children in Need		25,295	25,295
The Netherton Park Trust		7,500	7,500
The Imagine Foundation	15,000		15,000
Sir James Knott Trust	7,000		7,000
The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough		32,784	32,784
Sunderland City Council		52,434	52,434
North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East		2,100	2,100
LGA Foundation	5,000		5,000
John Armitage Charitable Trust		65,000	65,000
William Leech Charity		5,000	5,000
The Tudor Trust	40,000		40,000
Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project   OurGateshead		9,441	9,441
The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund		57,402	57,402
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (DigiDAD)		70,117	70,117
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (Dad2Dad)		46,440	46,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,140</b>	<b>453,513</b>	<b>560,653</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE ON</b>			
Marketing and Advertising	4,249	3,744	7,993
Raising Funds	4,800	16,000	20,800
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Other	20,818	558,712	579,530
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,867</b>	<b>578,456</b>	<b>608,323</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>77,273</b>	<b>(124,944)</b>	<b>(47,670)</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS BROUGHT FORWARD</b>	<b>147,209</b>	<b>520,260</b>	<b>667,469</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>224,482</b>	<b>395,316</b>	<b>619,798</b>

### CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure have arisen from continuing activities.

*"I'm able to trust people more than I could before. Not having to keep things bottled up."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

### North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

Balance Sheet  
At 30 April 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash at bank	224,482	395,316	619,798
Cash in hand	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<hr/> 224,482	<hr/> 395,316	<hr/> 619,798
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<hr/> 224,482	<hr/> 395,316	<hr/> 619,798
<b>FUNDS</b>			
Unrestricted funds			224,482
Restricted funds			395,316
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<hr/> <hr/> 619,798

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the period ended 30 April 2025.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the period ended 30 April 2025 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for

- (a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006 and
- (b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company as at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to charitable small companies.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 27th January 2026 and were signed on its behalf by:



S Bramwell – Chair of Trustees

The notes form part of these financial statements.

*"I've been able to get out of bed and do more with my life, meeting new people and gaining an excellent support network from excellent people. Cannot wait to see what the future holds."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

## North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

Balance Sheet

30/04/2025

**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES****Basis of preparing the financial statements**

The financial statements of the charitable company, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

**Income**

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the charity has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

**Expenditure**

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

**Taxation**

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

**Fund accounting**

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

**2. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS**

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 30 April 2025.

**Trustees' expenses**

There were no trustees' expenses paid for the year ended 30 April 2025.

**3. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS**

	At 30.4.24 £	Net movement in funds £	At 30.4.25 £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	147,209	77,273	224,482
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project   OurGateshead	-	7,695	7,695
The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund	30,628	(14,766)	15,862
The Council of the County of Durham	220,256	(83,535)	136,721
The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough	103,486	(77,771)	25,715
Sunderland City Council	11,628	15,579	27,207
The Borough Council of Gateshead	79,280	(53,360)	25,920
Henry Smith Foundation	10,355	(4,928)	5,427
John Armitage Charitable Trust	-	53,635	53,635
William Leech Charity	-	5,000	5,000
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (DigiDAD)	-	63,148	63,148
The Netherton Park Trust	-	7,102	7,102
The National Lottery (Awards for All)	11,016	(11,016)	-
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	26,191	(13,007)	13,184
Warburtons Project Grant	267	(267)	-
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (Dad2Dad)	6,413	(6,193)	220
Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust	500	(500)	-
North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East	-	1,100	1,100
Community Foundation North East	9,917	(9,917)	-
BBC Children in Need	10,323	(2,943)	7,380
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>667,469</b>	<b>(47,670)</b>	<b>619,798</b>

*"Great to get this work started and to collaborate with long time colleagues at NEYDL and DigiDAD."*

(Owen Thomas, Head of Programmes at Future Men)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Movement in funds £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	107,140	(29,867)	77,273
<b>Restricted funds</b>			
Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project   OurGateshead	9,441	(1,746)	7,695
The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund	57,402	(72,168)	(14,766)
The County Council of Durham	-	(83,535)	(83,535)
The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough	32,784	(110,555)	(77,771)
Sunderland City Council	52,434	(36,855)	15,579
The Borough Council of Gateshead	-	(53,360)	(53,360)
Henry Smith Foundation	30,000	(34,928)	(4,928)
North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East	2,100	(1,000)	1,100
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (DigiDAD)	70,117	(6,969)	63,148
John Armitage Charitable Trust	65,000	(11,365)	53,635
The National Lottery Community Fund Awards for All	-	(11,016)	(11,016)
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	50,000	(63,007)	(13,007)
Warburtons Project Grant	-	(267)	(267)
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (Dad2Dad)	46,440	(52,633)	(6,193)
The Netherton Park Trust	7,500	(398)	7,102
The William Leech Charity	5,000	-	5,000
Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust	-	(500)	(500)
Community Foundation North East	-	(9,917)	(9,917)
BBC Children In Need	25,295	(28,237)	(2,942)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>560,653</b>	<b>(608,323)</b>	<b>(47,670)</b>

#### 4. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions for the period ended 30 April 2025 other than those disclosed in note 2.

*"I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to you guys for all your help and support last year. We love having you guys at Wrekenton Family Hub. I also wanted to thank Josh from your team. What an amazing young man, who is truly a credit to your service."*

(Kelly Goring, Parent Outreach Worker, Gateshead Family Hubs)

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

## North East Young Dads and Lads Project CIO

Statement of Financial Activities  
for the Year Ended 30 April 2025

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM</b>			
Public Donations	7,640	-	7,640
<b>Charitable activities</b>			
Henry Smith Foundation	-	30,000	30,000
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	-	50,000	50,000
ShareGift	12,500	-	12,500
Ballinger Charitable Trust	20,000	-	20,000
BBC Children in Need	-	25,295	25,295
The Netherton Park Trust	-	7,500	7,500
The Imagine Foundation	15,000	-	15,000
Sir James Knott Trust	7,000	-	7,000
The Council of the Borough of Middlesbrough	-	32,784	32,784
Sunderland City Council	-	52,424	52,424
North East Youth Alliance c/o Youth Focus North East	-	2,100	2,100
LGA Foundation	5,000	-	5,000
John Amitage Charitable Trust	-	65,000	65,000
William Leech Charity	-	5,000	5,000
The Tudor Trust	40,000	-	40,000
Gateshead Council: Small Grants Project   OurGateshead	-	9,441	9,441
The Baltic Centre of Contemporary Arts supported by the National Lottery Climate Action Fund	-	57,402	57,402
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (DigiDAD)	-	70,117	70,117
The National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities (Dad2Dad)	-	46,440	46,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,140</b>	<b>453,513</b>	<b>560,653</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
<b>Raising donations and legacies</b>	<b>4,249</b>	<b>3,744</b>	<b>7,993</b>
Marketing and advertising	4,800	16,000	20,800
Raising Funds			
<b>Support costs</b>			
Wages, ER NI & ER Pension	325	383,931	384,256
Independent Evaluations	1,200	11,300	12,500
Cycling Equipment	-	2,937	2,937
Staff Training & Welfare	227	9,624	9,851
Governance Costs	88	882	970
Event Costs	2,100	7,407	9,507
Group work & Project Expenditure	1,567	59,791	61,358
Postage & stationery	-	416	416
Consultancy fees	-	18,970	18,970
Telephone	-	1,120	1,120
Client & staff travel	-	31,684	31,684
Accountancy/Finance Officer	8,300	11,176	19,476
Insurance	-	2,270	2,270
Subscriptions	693	301	994
Office/Admin Expenses	4,758	5,354	10,112
Recruitment Costs	-	1,071	1,071
Repairs & Renewals	1,560	6,480	8,040
Rent	-	3,998	3,998
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>29,867</b>	<b>578,456</b>	<b>608,323</b>
<b>Net income</b>	<b>77,273</b>	<b>(124,943)</b>	<b>(47,670)</b>

*"I always talk to people who ask me about my son about how 'Young Dads and Lads (NEYDL) helped me grow into more of a father figure and seeing other dads do the same."*

(A young dad supported by NEYDL)



## THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS OUR EIGHTH ANNUAL REPORT

For further information, please visit our website and social media feeds, or just send us an email.

Email: info@neydl.uk  
 Charity website: www.neydl.uk  
 DigiDAD e-learning platform: www.digidad.uk  
 Facebook: facebook.com/the.neydl  
 X (formerly Twitter): @NEYDandL  
 Instagram: neyoungdadsandlads  
 Instagram: digidaduk  
 YouTube: @DigiDAD

**PayPal**  
 Giving Fund

To donate to NEYDL and help us to improve the lives and prospects of many more young dads, children and families, please use the weblink and QR code provided below.

Thank you for your support.

<https://www.paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3617049>

**PayPal**



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**NORTH EAST YOUNG DADS & LADS**  
 Baltic Centre for Contemporary Arts  
 South Shore Road  
 Gateshead  
 NE8 3BA

Tel: Kevin Stoodley,  
 07846 989750

Registered in England  
 Charity No: 1172924  
 Company No: CE009920



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