



# NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

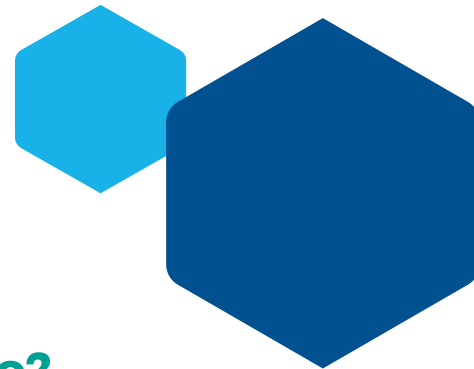
## Social Value Report 2015/16

# Social Value at North Star

At North Star we do all we can to provide good quality, safe and secure homes to customers. We also aim to do a lot more than this by working with people and communities to improve the quality of their lives more broadly. This might be funding for community projects, free advice about how to reduce energy bills, working with contractors to offer apprenticeships to local people and providing free access to advice and support for those wanting to improve their chances of getting a job.

We do this because a home is only one of the things that makes for a good life. All of us also need neighbourhoods that work well, open spaces and greenery, places where we can meet other people and opportunities for jobs and training if we need them.

This is what we mean by Social Value; the value to our customers and communities of what we do alongside a good quality, safe and secure home.



## Why do we measure Social Value?

We need to know that we are focusing and targeting our resources where they are needed most and we want to show our customers, communities and partners that we are doing so.

To do this is not easy or an exact science. The value of a community garden to a customer or of a breakfast club at their child's school cannot be fully captured in words or numbers. The impact on someone's life of a new home, or better insulation goes way beyond the financial cost.

Helping someone reduce their debts can significantly lower levels of stress, which is difficult to pin down in a figure. We provide Social Value to our customers and communities and measure this through a mix of facts, figures, stories and case studies.

We aim to do so much more than simply provide a home and we hope this report demonstrates that.

# Adding Value: Measuring Success

**North Star has an impact measurement system which is simple, proportionate, meaningful and flexible.**

It includes clear measures and targets, a toolkit of methods depending on the type, size, and scope of projects and a comprehensive range of outcomes.

The outcomes are usually a mix of the qualitative (views and opinions) and quantitative (facts and figures). Where possible, the outcomes are given a monetary value based on the Social Value Bank (SVB), a Treasury approved set of values which provides figures for qualitative experience. It is important to note that not all outcomes are available as part of the SVB so not all will have a monetary value, although new ones are being added regularly.

## We recognise and work with some limitations to the system:

- The Social Value Bank doesn't have values for all outcomes; further ones are being developed.
- The values are not the only/main measurement; outcomes without current values are equally important.
- Projects that are funded towards the end of the financial year may not be complete or even started when we do the impact measurement analysis and report for the previous year so cannot be included.

# Our customers

Customers are at the heart of everything we do at North Star. This year, we have offered a number of services to support customers, including the support of a Welfare Benefits Officer, a Customer Hardship Fund, and opportunities to work alongside staff to ensure the services we buy are value for money.

## Welfare Benefits 2015/16

This year we have trialled the HACT Social Value Bank Financial Inclusion Impact Measurement tool on a small sample of the households the Welfare Benefits Officer has visited in 2015/16.

30 households (approximately 6% of those visited) were surveyed using this toolkit. From this small sample of residents they have evidenced that since their support from the welfare benefits officer they are debt free/able to save regularly/able to pay for housing/have financial comfort/relief from being heavily burdened with debt.

The results show that £52,255 of social value has been generated. We can safely assume that the remaining 94% would also generate a significant amount of social value.

Increased  
customers'  
income by  
£35,959.29

Case Study:  
Miss M

Miss M is currently on maternity leave. A routine benefit check identified that she had not added her youngest child to her Tax Credits claim and was missing out on Child Tax Credit at £62.89 per week.

## The Hardship Fund

**Hardship fund - £10,000** - Housing Officers can access this fund at any time to provide one off emergency assistance to households in crisis. Examples of how this can be used include gas and electric payments, food, bedding, school uniform for children etc.

A tenant in Middlesbrough was living in a terrace property and was struggling with the stairs. He was in hospital 'bed blocking' as he was unable to manage in the property.

Case Study:  
Mr M

He had been self neglecting and all his belongings were in poor condition. We moved him into a ground floor flat and ordered a fridge freezer, cooker & washer (£472.80) from East Durham Partnership for him and he now has a care package and loves his new flat.

This case study has not only had a positive impact on the tenant, but also saves the NHS costs for 'bed blocking'. Hospital bed-blocking 'costs' NHS England £900m a year (BBC News, February 2016).

Andrea Peacock, Welfare Benefits Officer





**Local Support allowance – £40,000** - to support tenants who may be at risk of losing their tenancy or by incentivising prospective tenants to move into one of our difficult to let properties.

Case Study:  
Miss L

**A tenant living in Redcar was struggling to pay the under occupation charge with all the other expenses she had. Redcar Council would not pay as she could not provide proof of her household expenses as it was the first tenancy she had held.**

**We covered the under occupation charge on her rent for six weeks until her baby was born (£83.90).**

**This tenant was able to prepare for her baby, removing the financial pressure off the tenant, giving her financial comfort.**

The SVB Value of someone feeling financial comfort is £8,898. However we cannot use this figure as we do not have the completed survey to evidence this.



North Star engages consistently, continuously and meaningfully with customers, providing opportunities to shape services to reflect local priorities. Customers have the ability to scrutinise the performance of services and hold us to account, provide healthy challenge as necessary, identify areas for improvement and influence future service provision.

**There are many ways customers can get involved:**

North Star customers who review our services and make recommendations for improvement.

Tenants Voice  
Scrutiny Panel



4U

A group of customers who arrange local events and day trips for over 55s and disabled people.



North Star  
LINK

North Star customers who meet with staff monthly. The Panel represents the views, and promotes the interests of, all customers by influencing our services.



Tenant  
Advisors

Customers who test out our services and make recommendations for improvement. They take part in activities including mystery shopping, surveys, visits, work shadowing and interviews with staff and customers.

**“We work hard at being a great landlord by involving people and working hard together. We listen, learn and do better. We place people and communities at the centre of all we do.”**

## Involved customers directly influence North Star's services in a number of ways:

Influenced how North Star can save money over the next four years due to Government Policy changes. Tenants suggested how we save money by reducing the responsive repair and lettable standard with least detriment to the tenants. This proposal will save North Star £175k.

Created the North Star App for tenants to report repairs and get in touch with North Star anytime, anywhere.

Involved in procurement; writing questions for the tender documents, influencing specifications, scoring contractor answers and interviewing potential new contractors. This procurement activity has saved North Star over £1,000,000 over five years!

Improved the way North Star deals with anti-social behaviour.

Involved in the content, the design and the naming of the tenant magazine!



Organised the bi-annual tenant event.

Raised nearly £500 in an event for elderly and disabled people, which was then spent on day trips for residents to help reduce social isolation.



## TVSP and LINK:

- North Star LINK and Tenants Voice Scrutiny Panel (TVSP) volunteered 789 hours of their time in 2015/16
- If TVSP and LINK members were paid, their total wages would have been £8,572.38\*
- 15 customers attended meetings regularly
- North Star invested £16,500 per year in LINK and TVSP, and achieved a Social Return of £62,799\*\*
- For every £1 spent, £3.81 returned in social impact

\* Average wage in Stockton-On-Tees and County Durham - neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

\*\* Social Value Bank

## Tenant Advisors:

### Tenant Advisors and Procurement 2015/16

Tenant Advisors have worked alongside staff in the assessment of tenders, interviewing contractors and monitoring their work.

They have been involved in the following contracts:

- External Decoration
- Electrical Servicing
- Damp Proof
- Grounds Maintenance
- Fire, Safety and Security

The total savings in these procurement processes is **£1,028,108** over the lifetime of the contracts.



# Community Investment activity

Community Investment is about helping to create, support and develop self-reliant communities which have a positive and equal relationship with local service providers and have a measure of control over their own neighbourhoods. Community Investment is a priority for North Star and we want it to be embedded across the organisation. We measure it to identify its value and impact in relationship to people, the places they live and our performance as a business.

## Community-led investment

The approach is to support the grass-roots development and delivery of projects that will contribute to strengthening the community. We follow a process that begins in the neighbourhood, making sure that projects come from the ground up and are not imposed.

**We do  
most in the  
neighbourhoods  
where it matters  
most.**



## Priority neighbourhoods

In recognition of the fact that we cannot do everything, everywhere, Community Investment takes a targeted approach, based on the outcomes of rigorous research and a balance of need and opportunity.



Impact measurement

Our bespoke model enables us to conduct impact measurement on a number of levels - project, theme and neighbourhood - and requires both quantitative information (i.e. facts, figures and data, which include cost, levered funding, volunteer time and number of beneficiaries) as well as qualitative information (specific case studies).



The table below illustrates, in more detail, spend and levered funding attracted in 2015/16.

Objective	No. of projects	Amount NS invested	Other funding	No. of people benefitting	Social return ratio
Employment and skills	4	£2,150	£300	48	£1: £10.44
Financial inclusion	1	£7,500		62	£1: £2.97
Children and young people	11	£33,362	£12,146	710	£1: £2.92
Community strengthening	9	£12,268.19	£19,535	1,625	£1: £2.56
Health and wellbeing	8	£11,493.43	£4,701.20	220	£1: £22.49
TOTAL	33	£66,773.62	£36,682.20	2,665	£1: £6.05





# Case study

## Youth development and targeted support

To provide high quality and accessible youth development work and positive opportunities to 72 young people living in Cockfield, Evenwood and the surrounding areas. North Star funded £10,000, with the project attracting a further £550.

### The outcomes are:

- Young people who are too old to attend the youth club have returned as young volunteers.
- Four young people are volunteering on the Intergen project (working with the elderly) and four young people are volunteering at the youth club or community café. SVB Value of £9,468.
- The young people planned and organised a graffiti workshop and a trashion show project work (young people from Cockfield have made their own clothes using trash and modelled them in March 2016).
- 25 young people regularly attend the weekly youth development sessions. SVB Value of £49,902.
- Christmas trip to the life centre in Newcastle to have a go at Ice skating (the majority of young people who attended had never been ice skating before).
- 32 people received 1 on 1 support in the Cockfield or Evenwood area on a variety of issues including information on volunteering, employment, drugs and alcohol.

**Project Input = £10,550, Social Return = £59,371**  
**For every £1 spent, £5.63 Social Return**

# Our homes

We work in partnership with local developers, councils and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to create high quality affordable new homes for our communities. We also continue to invest in our existing housing, ensuring we provide high quality homes for our customers

## Property improvements

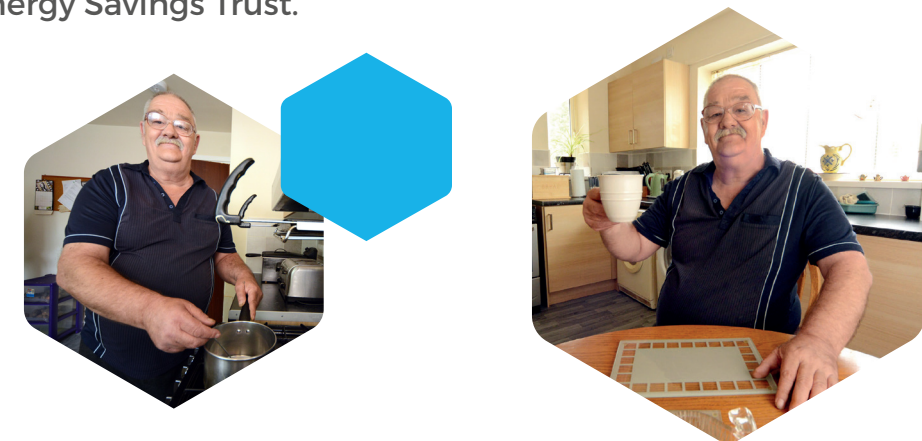
- 37 Heating Upgrades to “A” Rated Boilers:  
Potential energy cost savings to the residents of up to £2,795\*
- 19 Properties fitted with External Wall Insulation and 1 with internal wall insulation:  
Potential energy cost savings to the residents of up to £5,200\*
- 39 Properties fitted with roof insulation:  
Potential energy cost savings to the residents of £5,310\*
- 3 Air Source Pumps fitted:  
Potential energy cost savings to the residents of up to £960\*

\*Savings based on figures from the Energy Savings Trust.

## Case study

### Planned works

A tenant in Norton was fitted with a new kitchen to his property. He was elderly and struggled to get around to cook. He was unable to use the tumble dryer and couldn't do his ironing as he didn't have the space in the old kitchen. The new kitchen plan has more room for Mr Stoddart to get around, and he is now able to use the kitchen to its full potential. Mr Stoddart has stated he is much happier and less reliant on others with his new kitchen. 'It is smashing, I am much happier and it has made my life easier'.





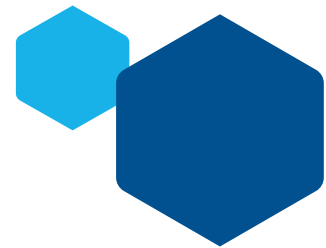
# New developments

53 high quality new homes were built in 2015/16, including 9 major refurbishments in Gresham, Middlesbrough.

For every £1 of spending on construction a further £2.60 in gross output will be generated across the economy as a whole.\*

North Star invested £5.17m on the 53 new developments, generating £13.442m in the wider economy.

\*Figures from the Institute for Public Policy Research, 2014



## Our contractors

### Social Value in procurement

As part of their successful submissions all of our contractors commit to contributing to North Star's Community Investment activity, adding Social Value to their delivery.

We are committed to capturing social value in procurement in the form of apprenticeships, work placements, school visits, community labour or cash donations from all of our procurement activities where possible.

This has generated £44,439.50 worth of social value, and the delivery of the following:

- 8 work placements – SVB Value of £10,302
- 13 Apprentices employed on our contracts – SVB Value of £24,255
- £1,730 cash donated to local groups and charities
- 2 Community labour days
- £8,152.50 of work in-kind



## Sunter's community labour day

Skinningrove Village Hall is well used community asset in a small somewhat isolated coastal village in East Cleveland. The hall was in desperate need of a new, workable kitchen for the various groups using the building to utilise. Sunter have fitted a brand new kitchen to allow the volunteers to cater for those using the hall in a much cleaner and more professional environment. The hall now looks much smarter and volunteers have already commented on the huge difference the work has made.

## Our partners

North Star prides itself on building partnerships with a wide range of organisations which are active at a grass roots level in our communities.

We also seek to develop key strategic partnerships with organisations which can provide high quality services to our tenants.

The Princes Trust is just one example of a strong partner we have worked with directly.

### Prince's Trust

We work closely with the Prince's Trust, Stockton to deliver 12 week employability programmes to 16-24 year olds.

In 2015-16, the Prince's Trust achieved the following outcomes:

- Each young person was provided with a social worker, providing support with managing and maintaining a tenancy, independent living skills, managing money, physical health and drug and alcohol use.
- Young people have enhanced their teamwork, employability and transferable skills within the community.



- 12 students participated in the 12 week course, gaining qualifications, establishing each individuals next steps into employment, eucation or training – SVB Value of £25,569.
- Students were involved in two weeks work experience, with local organisations.

**Project Input = £850, Social Return = £25,569**  
**For every £1 spent, £30.08 Social Return**

## Our people

### Staff volunteering

Our People at North Star believe that the wellbeing of staff is important to us all. We have adult to adult relationships that strengthen our commitment to fairness, honesty, transparency and personal responsibility.

North Star staff may be granted up to ten days per annum paid special leave to undertake unpaid voluntary public service activity. Staff are also encouraged to contribute to community involvement and engagement and up to five days paid leave may be granted for voluntary activities that will benefit and encourage participation in local community projects.



### In 2015/16:

- 37 members of staff volunteered/public service activity in 15/16 (40% of all staff)
- 390 Hours / 55.7 working days
- North Star has invested £5,905.89 in staff volunteering (based on the average salary)
- Six members of staff regularly volunteer, and there is a social value of £11,210

Staff have volunteered in a variety of different activities. Examples include volunteering at local community fairs, being involved in the Princes Trust employability programme for young people, helping out at school breakfast clubs and reading groups, and school governors.

### Direct employment

Employed 2  
apprentices –  
SVB value of  
**£2,985**

Work  
experience for  
4 people – SVB  
value of  
**£5,151**

Volunteering within  
Supported housing – 2  
people – SVB value of  
**£3,737**



### Staff fundraising

£1,004 raised through staff events and fundraising initiatives for our chosen charity of the year, Macmillan and for the Great North Air Ambulance. We have had dress down days, sold homemade goods, competitions, sweepstakes and a number of raffles.



# What's next?

We aim to expand the activities we measure each year, using North Star's bespoke impact measurement approach. We will learn from new, innovative measurement tools, from other organisations and from our own experience.

## Priorities for 2016/2017:

- Increase customer involvement and influence in strategic planning to increase social value customers
- Focus community investment activity to support residents into Employment and Training
- Extending and developing long-term partnerships to diversify services, share costs and reduce risk
- Embedding social value across the business to increase and extend the impact of our services on communities

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