


SOCIAL VALUE REPORT 19/20



NORTH STAR
Creating homes, building futures

A photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing sunglasses and a green shirt, smiling and holding a branch with white flowers and red berries. The photo is framed by a teal and green geometric design.

Creating homes, building futures

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INTRODUCTION



2019/20 has been another brilliant year for North Star's social value work, right across the organisation. We have continued to work to the goals set out in our vision to 2023 and to make our contribution to the UN's sustainable development goals specifically, Goal 1 – No Poverty, Goal 3 – Good Health and Well-being, Goal 4 – Quality Education and Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities.

We have continued to follow an asset based approach to our work, focussing on the strengths of the community to help them address the challenges they face.

We have continued to work with long-term partners such as Greggs Foundation, The Prince's Trust at Stockton Riverside College and Teesdale YMCA; as well as developing newer partnerships with fantastic organisations such as Little Sprouts CiC and UTASS.

As I write this, we still face considerable uncertainty following the initial wave of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown conditions it brought. Although the majority of the impact of Covid-19 was felt outside of the period that this report covers, it feels right to say now, just how proud I am of the support and help North Star and our partners were able to mobilise so quickly.

With that said, I don't think there has ever been a time at which the concepts of community and the social value that organisations are able to generate has been more important. Like other housing organisations across the country, we take our role as community anchor organisations very seriously. A recent report called ***Places after the Pandemic*** by Placeshapers and HACT demonstrates just how much impact we can have. We are committed to ensuring we keep fulfilling our responsibilities, both during these extraordinary times and beyond.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work we have done during 2019/20 and, as ever, if you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Peter Locke
Head of Communities
01642 796 217

WHAT'S IN THIS REPORT?

This report aims to capture the social value generated by North Star's activities in 2019/20. North Star generates social value from a wide variety of activities including tenant involvement, supporting community projects, working with our contractors, providing support for our tenants, building new homes and improving our properties. This report sets out what we achieved and what the impact of those achievements has been.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year North Star's activities have generated a total of £3.21m social value. You can find out how we calculate social value in the ***Added Value: Measuring Success*** section of this report on page 26.

Social value is delivered right across our organisation and our total is made up of:

Community projects	£2.05m	More info on page 18
Tenant Connections	£129k	More info on page 16
Positive move ons from supported accommodation	£321k	More info on page 15
Property improvements	£714k	More info on page 24

This year we invested £61.5k in 15 community projects that benefitted 2,502 people.

Tenants donated 1,325 hours to our involvement activities and this was worth around £19k based on the average salary for the North East.

Our Welfare Benefits Officers have helped 762 households and have helped tenants access £746k of extra income.

Our contractors have delivered £18k of work, £5k worth of materials and 31 days of labour as part of their social value commitments.

Whilst numbers are great, it's stories that really demonstrate the depth of the impact our work has had. Over the next few pages we have shared some stories that demonstrate just what these numbers mean to people's lives.

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*To support the fantastic efforts
of grass roots groups and
volunteers across the North East
region North Star made over*

£20,000
of funding available.

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In February and March 2020, Covid-19 caused huge amounts disruption and worry for communities across the country. According the British Red Cross' Covid Vulnerability Index the majority of communities that North Star works in were most likely to see significant impacts both from the virus itself and also, the impact of lockdown conditions on health and employment.

To support the fantastic efforts of grass roots groups and volunteers across the North East region North Star made over **£20,000** of funding available. These groups provided help in sourcing and delivering food, help to deliver prescriptions to those most at risk and to keeping vital local services such as Post Offices operating in rural locations.

In order to ensure groups were able to spend the maximum amount of their resources on providing this help, we simplified application processes, worked with groups to identify those who needed the help the most and also helped them to source vital equipment, supplies and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Here are just a few stories from organisations we supported:

We supported volunteers in Butterknowle, County Durham to provide help to residents of the village. One volunteer told us:

"Living in a rural village with no local shop, I wanted to provide support to those most in need. After approaching North Star Housing I was awarded funding to provide 'community wellness packs'. These packs consisted of essential foods and toiletries such as toilet roll, milk, bread, butter, veg, soup etc. The project then progressed to provide home cooked meals to the vulnerable people living in Butterknowle and the surrounding areas. At the very peak of the virus we were supporting **over 80** people in our small rural area, providing them with nutritious home cooked meals as well as other essential items and of course someone to regularly talk to.





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people in our small rural area, providing them with nutritious home cooked meals as well as other essential items and of course someone to regularly talk to.

"Just when I thought North Star Housing couldn't get any better, they offered, sourced and funded takeaway boxes to enable us to continue to safely distribute meals.

"The team at North Star have been beyond amazing, always going the extra mile to support those in need. Without North Star this project wouldn't have been possible.

"It is a great comfort to know that North Star is committed to supporting our rural communities and they have done a grand job at showing this support, particularly over the last few months when we have needed them most."

North Star have also supported a group of organisations in Stockton, including Little Sprouts CiC, Groundwork North East and Stockton Borough Council to provide a range services to the local residents. We supported this project with funding and making the Community Hub building available to use.



"The project was delivered by Staff and up to three volunteers making up 26 food packs which were delivered with school lunches for children on free school meals who are isolating.

"The Hub stayed open for the local community to collect the pack lunches and surplus food that has been donated/collected from partners, and craft items for children.

"We have delivered provision to children and families 5 days a week to cater for the food insecurity in this community. This hub has emerged as an essential service supporting families who would otherwise be overlooked, and many of these families would not refer into any agencies for support.

The service has extended beyond food. We now additionally offer help and advice to the community utilising laptops and mobile phones to help people reach services they need to but can't access due to lack of technology and no face to face contact available to them."

WELFARE BENEFITS 19/20

Tenants are at the heart of everything we do at North Star. This year we saw another sharp rise in demand for the services of our Welfare Benefits Officers.

This year we have...



Received
927
referrals to
the Welfare
Benefits Team



Carried out
1,132
appointments,
57% more than
last year



Supported
762
households
42% more than
last year



Delivered
benefit gains of
£746k
£142k of which
has supported
tenants to pay
rent and clear
arrears¹

¹includes Housing Benefit, Housing Benefit arrears/backdating and Discretionary Housing Payment



CASE STUDIES

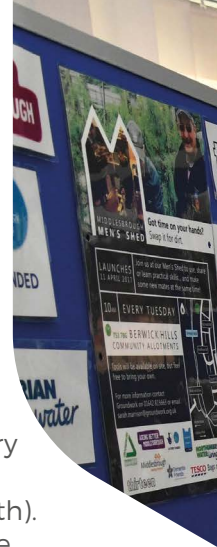
Hannah and Pete

- ◆ A routine Universal Credit follow up check identified that Hannah's Universal Credit did not include a housing cost element due to an error when making the claim. She was not aware that her monthly payment was not paid at the correct rate and was struggling badly to try and meet her rent and other bills. This was exacerbated by other deductions from her Universal Credit payment for a new claim advance and the receiver of a budgeting loan.
- ◆ Her husband, Pete is unwell and unable to work and waiting on a decision to assess his capability for work which if successful would provide additional monthly income.
- ◆ Hannah was supported to add the housing costs to her claim and request that this was backdated to the start of her claim (£624).
- ◆ An arrangement was also made to defer the recovery of the new claim advance of £142 for 3 months. The recovery of the budgeting loan was reduced from £56 per month to £15 p/mth for 6 months allowing some time to get their finances in order.
- ◆ Pete was subsequently found to have Limited Capability for Work and Work Related Activity (LCWRA) which increased their monthly Universal Credit payment by an additional £341.92 per month.

CASE STUDIES

Gina

- ◆ Gina is a lone parent working a zero hours contract. Most weeks she was able to work full time hours but hours were increasingly reduced to 20 per week. At the time of the visit she expected that work would pick up over the Christmas period but was struggling.
- ◆ Her Child Tax Credit had been reduced to £42.09 per week due to increased earned income over the last year and the overpayment was being recovered at £182.39 per month.
- ◆ A benefit check identified that she would be significantly better off in these circumstances by migrating to Universal Credit. Based on working an average of 30 hours per week over the month, she would be eligible to £633.35 per month (better off by £450.96 per month prior to tax credit o/p recovery)
- ◆ We advised Gina that maximum recovery rate for any deductions on UC would be 30% of standard allowance, (£95.35 p/mth). On that basis a new claim was made the same day. (Hence she was better off by £355.61 per month)
- ◆ We were able to support her from our Hardship Budget for immediate gas and electricity needs. She is also working with CAB to address outstanding priority and non priority debt.





Through Universal Credit
Gina was better off by

£355.61

per month



HELPING PEOPLE TO BUILD THEIR FUTURES: SHORT TERM SUPPORT SERVICES

North Star has a number of supported housing temporary accommodation schemes in the Tees Valley.

We offer housing and support solutions for people who need a little extra help to gain vital skills and confidence to live independently.

We have purpose built accommodation with on-site support staff, as well as the site support staff, there is the option for a support worker to visit you in your own home or in accommodation not directly provided by us.

During 2019/20, North Star has supported 40 tenants to move from temporary accommodation to successfully manage their general needs tenancy.

Supporting 40 tenants into more secure accommodation generated £321k of social value in 2019/20.

[CLICK HERE](#)



TENANT CONNECTIONS

North Star believes that genuine, meaningful engagement with our tenants makes our business stronger and gives those that choose to work with us, personal fulfilment and development opportunities.

We are proud of our reputation as a landlord that listens and responds to its tenants.

This year we were awarded TPAS Pro Accreditation. We are extremely proud to have achieved this and want to thank all the staff, board members and most importantly tenants, who played such an important part in the process.

Along with some helpful recommendations for improvement, the report picked out North Star's culture of transformation and co-creation, our tenants' work to set up a North East Scrutiny Network and the strength of our relationships with the community as particular strengths.

We recognise and value enormously the hours our involved tenants give us and that now more than ever connecting tenants to our business is vital.

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

At the time of writing, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the way in which we are able to deliver our tenant connection activity. However, both North Star and the tenants we connect with have embraced new ways of doing this, utilising a number of digital and online tools.

TENANTS' VOICE SCRUTINY PANEL (TVSP)

TVSP is a group of North Star tenants who take a detailed look at the services we provide. They present their findings and recommendations directly to our Board and are able to make real change happen at North Star. TVSP are now meeting entirely online and are always looking for new members to support their work.

NORTH STAR KNOWLEDGE

North Star Knowledge is our database of over 500 tenants who have signed up to engage with us online. This could be through online surveys, focus groups or feedback by email.





TENANT ADVISORS

Tenant Advisors is a group of tenants focused on practical methods of providing feedback on North Star's services. Although they aren't able to carry out their normal duties including visiting void properties and mystery shopping services, they play a key role in supporting the implementation of recommendations and work done by TVSP.

THIS YEAR OUR INVOLVED TENANTS HAVE...

- ✔ Organised and delivered three Money Saving Roadshows attended by 70 tenants
- ✔ Stress tested and provided feedback on the implementation of the My North Star portal
- ✔ Reviewed and updated the content of the tenant handbook

In 2019/20 our involved tenants donated over 1325 hours of their time to help improve our services.

This equates to over £19,212 worth of work².

Tenant Connection activities generated £129,540 of social value in 2019/20.

²Based on average North East salary of £24,594. Info sourced from Total Jobs - <https://www.totaljobs.com/>

TOGETHER WITH TENANTS

In March 2019, North Star signed up as early adopters of the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants four point plan.

During 2019/20 we consulted with 108 tenants and worked with staff, board and representatives from Tenants' Voice Scrutiny Panel (TVSP), North Star Link and Tenant Advisors to co-create our customer promises.

The promises are designed to ensure our tenants can hold us to account on what is most important for them.

They are:

- 1. We will build open and honest relationships that respect your individuality and make sure you have access to the information that matters to you.**
- 2. We will work with you to improve what we do and make sure we keep improving. We will tell you how we are performing and make it easy for you to tell us if it's good enough.**
- 3. We will provide you with a safe home that is in good repair and that you can be proud of. If we don't, we will make it easy for you to tell us and make sure you understand how we will make it right.**

If you would like to talk to us about these promises and how you think we are performing against them, please contact us on **communities@northstarhg.co.uk** or **01642 796 217**.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Connecting and developing communities is right at the heart of what North Star do.

We work with the assets in communities to work towards self-reliance, resilience and positive equal relationships with local service providers.

We recognise our responsibility to the communities we operate in and we want to ensure that the impact we have on them is as positive as possible.



In 2018/19 North Star invested

£62k

in 15 local community projects



For every £1 invested,

£16.34

was returned in social value



Projects levered in an additional

£90k



Projects benefitted

2,502

people



OUR COMMUNITY PROJECTS

This year, in line with North Star's overall vision to 2023, we have focussed on projects that address four of the United Nations Sustainability Goals:

GOAL ONE: NO POVERTY

6 projects supported

£14,461 invested

£1:£32.54 social value ratio

333 people supported

GOAL TWO: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 Projects supported

£8,149 invested

£1:£85.05 social value ratio

288 people supported

GOAL FOUR: QUALITY EDUCATION

4 projects supported

£6,250 invested

£1:£6.91 social value ratio

154 people supported

GOAL ELEVEN: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

3 projects supported

£10,750 invested

£1:£12.69 social value ratio

234 people supported

We spent £6,661 on running costs for our community house on Wellgarth Estate in Evenwood and £7,425 on running costs and refurbishment of the Community Hub in Thornaby.

We spent £6,853 supporting one-off community events and purchases to support projects, £500 sponsoring charity events and £503 on miscellaneous expenses and costs.

A further 1,493 people attended one-off events we provided funding for.





STORIES FROM OUR PROJECTS

Please see below some examples of the projects we have funded in 2019/20. These are just some of the stories. Please get in touch if you would like to hear more: communities@northstarhg.co.uk

Gresham Community Associates Project

North Star has been working with a number of different partners in Gresham in Middlesbrough on a project designed to build community infrastructure and involvement.

Activity over this year built steadily as the Community Associates got to work. The fourth Associate joined part way through the year bringing extra activity and a new network.

By way of indicating the growing momentum, during 2019/20 there were 156 activities, involving 1341 attendances.

The focus of these activities was to build a sense of cohesion, resilience and agency amongst folks living in the Gresham area. There were six categories of public-facing activity:

- Community Arts
- Community Clean Up
- Eating Together
- Community Food Growing
- Bringing People Together
- Whole Person Activism

Together, these accounted for 121 regular activities and were organised via an additional 35 planning and organising sessions.

To give a flavour of what was offered, this year included:

- Painting a mural on an alley wall involving 18 local residents
- A litter pick with 20 local refugees and asylum seekers
- The launch of a gardening club at a local school involving 48 children and parents
- An alley summer party for 31 neighbours.

The breakdown of activities was as follows:



Community Food Growing

32 sessions

283 people attending

Weekly growers clubs, allotment work, children's gardening club



Community Arts

25 sessions

209 people attending

Children's art sessions, alley murals, textiles group



FOUNDATION OF LIGHT FAMILY LEARNING AT EVENWOOD SCHOOL

North Star have supported the Foundation of Light to deliver family learning and sports sessions at Evenwood School since 2017.

This year the project has worked with 31 children and 7 families generating £147k in social value.

Rachel Stevens from Evenwood School said:

“The Foundation of light have recently started another round of family learning and coaching with the children and families. Jordon comes into school every Monday, the family learning has 7 families taking part on the 10 week programme around healthy eating and lifestyles.

The yr 3/4 children are enjoying the SAMSON shoes project and can't wait to attend the big presentation with other schools soon.”

GREGGS BREAKFAST CLUBS

North Star have supported Greggs Breakfast Clubs in our priority communities since 2012. We began by supporting two. One at Evenwood School in County Durham and another at Ayresome Primary School in Middlesbrough. Over the years we have also began support a breakfast club at Whitecliffe Primary School in Carlin How, East Cleveland and also St Cuthbert's Primary School in Hartlepool.



Community Clean Up

8 sessions

81 people attending

Alley make-overs, litter picks



Eating Together

11 sessions

89 people attending

Community meals, Food Fusion school project



Bringing People Together

23 sessions

238 people attending

Film nights, Public Living Rooms



Whole Person Activism

22 sessions

213 people attending

Community Organising training, meditation group, youth work



We have always prioritised the funding of these breakfast clubs because as research by Durham University shows they provide the following benefits:

- ◆ Children have improved health and nutrition.
- ◆ Children have improved attendance and punctuality.
- ◆ Children are able to socialise and make friends.
- ◆ Children have better relations with school staff.
- ◆ Parents are less wary of school and are more likely to attend parents evenings.
- ◆ Children are able to concentrate better and results are improved.

Whitecliffe Primary School told us:

"The breakfast clubs include activities other educational games and reading activities so that children have an active start to the morning, increased opportunities to access physical activity and promotion of healthy eating. The breakfast club also contributes towards other local priorities such as Health and Well-Being to improve health and fitness levels and support national priorities to address health inequalities and reduce obesity.

Families in this community face multiple disadvantages of complex personal and family difficulties as well as local issues such as economic deprivation, unemployment, crime and substance misuse.

Many children in these communities do not get the opportunity to have breakfast at home and often come to school hungry and lethargic. This impacts on children's behaviour and also their ability to engage at school. For some children the school lunch is the only meal they get. It is essential that children eat a healthy breakfast before they start school so that they are ready for the day ahead".

SAFE IN TEES VALLEY - SUMMER YOUTH ACTIVITY PROJECT

We worked with Safe in Tees Valley to deliver a programme of activity for young people in the Newport ward of Middlesbrough. Around 100 young people regularly attended the sessions that included sports and workshops run by other agencies from the town.

Middlesbrough Borough Council told us: "The sessions were really successful and we worked with the young people to work out what it was they wanted us to provide. The sessions were definitely a success, not only did the young people enjoy them but, reports of anti-social behaviour fell significantly whilst the session were running."



TEESDALE YMCA - EVENWOOD YOUTH CLUB PROJECT

We have worked with Teesdale YMCA for a number of years on youth and community provision in Evenwood and Cockfield in County Durham. This year we supported them to deliver an after school youth club with young people in Evenwood.

The young people came together on the first Thursday of each new school term to discuss and plan what sessions they would like to do for the upcoming school term and the next school holidays. Staff are there to facilitate this.

The young people have discussed, organised and carried out fundraising events to be able to have trips outside of the local village. This has enabled them to enjoy trips to a trampoline park and a swimming trip.

The young people have also been working with Durham Wildlife Trust and Lyons Court Care home. Once a month young people with youth workers attend Lyons Court with Durham Wildlife Trust and carry out a craft with the residents of the home. The young people assist the residents in carrying out the craft. The staff of the home have commented how much the residents look forward to their monthly visit and how polite and well behaved the young people are.

The young people now have an achievement board in which they receive a star sticker for each task they have achieved. This could be anything from tidying up after a session, helping a friend, behaving in the community, being polite and respectful to residents of the community and so on. Once they have reached ten stars they receive a prize. Each young person had achieved at least three prizes each within the first few months of implementing the board.

Below is a case study showing the impact of the club on of the young people:

“Olivia aged 8 struggled with confidence, being one of the youngest of the group and having an older sister who also attended she would shy away from talking to residents at the local care home on our monthly visits or speaking to anyone who was not a regular attendee or staff member on outings. Over this time, we have worked with Olivia on confidence building and carrying out sessions around this. On the last outing to a leisure centre for a swimming trip we stopped off for McDonalds on the way back to the youth club. Each young person was given their own money to order and spend (shared out equally from funds raised). Olivia started to become very apprehensive about ordering her food and speaking to the person on the till, we encouraged Olivia saying we would stand with her and if she got anything wrong we would help, we spent some time watching her friends ordering and then Olivia took her turn, she ordered her food and paid for it and she was so pleased with herself she spoke about this for the rest of the time at McDonalds.”

OUR HOMES

North Star recognises that building and improving homes can have huge social impacts both for communities and individuals.

We utilise HACT Social Value Bank methods and also Institute for Public Policy Research figures to quantify this impact.

In 2019/20 North Star made improvements to 1,020 properties. This included improvements to heating systems and windows that improved the properties energy efficiency. Improvements to our properties this year generated £714,244 of social value.

In 2019/20 we completed 59 new homes at a cost of £7,264,311 of which £1,603,048 was grant support from Homes England.



These improvements generated

£714k

of Social Value.



OUR CONTRACTORS

This year our social value work with our contractors has focussed on the fantastic refurbishment of the Community Hub in Thornaby. Located right at the heart of the Old Thornaby community, the Hub has been a meeting place and delivery location for a number of projects over the years. The refurbishment and remodel of the interior space has given the building a brand new lease of life and, will ensure it is fit for purpose for many years to come.

The project was a fantastic example of the brilliant partnership and joint working that North Star and its contractors are known for. The refurbishment received support from **23** contractors and suppliers. They donated **31** community labour days, over **£5,100** worth of materials, equipment and other gifts in kind and completed over **£13,000** worth of work.

The Hub has received fantastic feedback from the community and was even able to become a distribution centre for local food and support projects during the Covid-19 pandemic.

[CLICK HERE](#)



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.

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.

WHY DO WE MEASURE SOCIAL VALUE?

It is often difficult to measure the impacts community work can have. For example, how do you accurately measure the value of the increased confidence someone feels after attending a youth work session?

With a fixed amount of resource to invest, it is important that we are able understand how projects are performing and where our support can generate the most benefit.

By measuring the amount of Social Value we generate we can give an accurate and easily understandable picture of the benefits our activities are contributing to the communities we operate in.





North Star has an impact measurement system which is

**simple,
proportionate,
meaningful
and flexible.**

North Star

North Star brings together the skills, resources and values of Endeavour, Teesdale and Darlington Housing Associations.

We are a strong organisation with a clear vision of what we want to achieve for the people who live in our region – creating homes, building futures.

GET IN TOUCH



customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk



www.northstarhg.co.uk



@northstarhg



/NorthStarHG



03000 11 00 11

Access Services Online

www.mynorthstar.online

Write:

Endeavour House, St Marks Court, Thornaby,
Stockton-on-Tees, TS17 6QN

14a Redwell Court, Harmire Enterprise Park, Harmire Road,
Barnard Castle, County Durham, DL12 8BN

Please note that all calls to our Customer Services Team are monitored and recorded.

Please note our Teesdale office in Barnard Castle is by appointment only.

Collaboration

Flexibility

Integrity

Professionalism

Ambition