



NORTH STAR

Creating homes, building futures

Social Value Report 2021/22



Introduction

Welcome to North Star's Social Value Report for the financial year 2021/22. When I sat down to write the introduction for last year's report, I reflected on just how well the communities we work in had responded to the challenges of Covid-19. As I write this introduction, we are facing a cost-of-living crisis that whilst, it will have lasting effects for the entire country, threatens to have the greatest impact in the communities we work in. Whether that be through rising energy costs for households that are already struggling to make ends meet or the increasing cost of a food shop, this will be a challenging period.

Despite this, I remain positive because I am fortunate enough to see first-hand the amazing work and resilience in communities across the North East. I am proud to work for an organisation that, facing its own rising costs, has committed to supporting this work and the fantastic people who deliver it.

This report will shine a spotlight on the work and efforts of our partners and the countless stories of selfless commitment to providing help where, and when it is needed most.



Peter Locke
Head of Communities
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What's in this report

This report sets out the social value generated by North Star's activities in 2021/22. 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 **£4.3m** of social value. You can find out how we calculate social value in the *Adding value: measuring success* section of this report on the next page.

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

Community projects	£3.04m	more info on page 11
Tenant involvement	£228k	more info on page 7
Positive move-on's from supported accommodation	£297k	more info on page 6
Property improvements	£767k	more info on page 17

This year we invested **£53k** in community projects that benefitted **950** people.

Tenants took part in **66** separate involvement activities and donated **800** hours to our involvement activities and this generated **£228k** of social value.

Our Welfare Benefits Officers have helped **657** households and have helped tenants access **£586k** of extra income.

Numbers can only tell a small part of the story of the impact a project has made. Over the next few pages of this report, we have shared, wherever possible, the stories of the people who have benefitted from North Star's community investment work in



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 HACT Social Value Bank, 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.

Welfare Benefit Team

This year our Welfare Benefit team's work has been as vital as ever. They have ensured our tenants have been able to access extra income in extremely challenging circumstances.

In 2021/22 we reviewed the work of our Welfare Benefits Officers and added a Tenant Support Worker to the team. This role has been designed to ensure tenants have access to a wide range of support should they need it.

This year we have...

Received 589 referrals to the Welfare Benefits Team.

Carried out 657 appointments, including 517 new household enquiries and 140 that had accessed the service before.

Supported 16% more households than last year

Delivered financial awards of £586k to tenants



Natalie Bird
Welfare Benefits Officer



Andrea Peacock
Welfare Benefits Officer



Deborah Bolam
Tenancy Support Officer

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 option for a support worker to visit tenants in their own home or accommodation that is not directly provided by us.

During 2021/22, North Star has supported **37** tenants to move from temporary accommodation to successfully manage their general needs tenancy.

Supporting **37** tenants into more secure accommodation generated **£297k** of social value in 2021/22.



Tenant Connections

We have worked hard over the past two years to completely revamp our tenant connection activity. Using the principles set out in the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants plan, we have worked with tenants to design activities that reward people for being involved, offer the opportunity to be involved in consultations that directly impact upon them and make it easy for them to take part.

Below are examples of how tenants connect with North Star.

Tenants Voice Scrutiny Panel

This is a dedicated group of involved tenants that identify areas for scrutiny, carry out that scrutiny and report their findings to the board.

The group is looking at North Star Customer Commitments, and consulting with the wider tenant base, to ensure the subject they choose to scrutinise is relevant to as many tenants as possible and will help to ensure we are making improvements for all tenants.

The incentive of being entered into a draw for High Street Vouchers will be offered to all tenants who take part in any consultation that is carried out by the TVSP.

Each piece of work could take up to three months commitment.



Policy Review Group

Tenants can dip in and out of this group depending on their interests and time available to commit. They will look at company policies when they are due for review to ensure they are up to date and are clear for tenants to understand. We will review up to four policies each year.

Each policy review will take up to six weeks, will include two or three meetings and consultation with staff and the wider involved tenant base.

They will look at company policies when they are due for review, to ensure they are up to date and are clear for tenants to understand.

The incentive of being entered into a draw for High Street Vouchers will be offered to all tenants who take part in any consultation that is carried out during this piece of work.

Involved tenants who form the temporary group, and carry out the work needed review the policy, will be offered £30 each for participating.

Each policy review will take up to six weeks.



Consumer Standards Assurance

Tenants can engage with this group depending on their interests and time available to commit. The group look at services North Star provides to tenants to give assurance to the Board that we are compliant with the Consumer Standards. They will carry out checks such as mystery shopping, website checks, telephone calls etc. and consult with the wider tenant base if/when necessary.

Involved tenants who form the temporary group, and carry out the work needed to provide assurance to the Board, will be offered £50 each for participating.

The incentive of being entered into a draw for High Street Vouchers will be offered to all tenants who take part in any consultation that is carried out during this piece of work.

Performance Group

Performance Group receives all North Star's performance and monitoring information (e.g. repairs performance, complaints, and customer service statistics). The group work with the business improvement team and the communities team to challenge North Star when targets are not met and help us learn from successful performance.



Task and Finish

Occasionally we review subjects at short notice and will invite tenants to take part in a Task and Finish group. Tenants can dip in and out of this group depending on their interests and time available to commit. Time commitment for each Task and Finish subject review will vary depending on the subject and the amount of time/number of meetings will be agreed at the beginning of each subject review.

Involved tenants who form the temporary group, and carry out the work needed review the subject, will be offered £30 each for participating.

The incentive of being entered into a draw for High Street Vouchers will be offered to all involved tenants taking part in any consultation carried out by this group.



This year our tenants have...

- ✓ Reviewed policies, including our Access to Housing, Neighbourhood Management and Repairs and Maintenance policies.
- ✓ Assessed our compliance with the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Consumer Standard.
- ✓ Consulted with tenants on our performance against our 3 customer commitments.
- ✓ Provided recommendations to our Board to improve communication with tenants based on what over 200 tenants told us.

Our tenants contributed over 800 hours of their time to help improve our services.

This equates to over £12k worth of work. (based on UK average wage of £15.15 in 2020)

Tenant Connection activities generated £227,990 of social value in 2021/22.



Community Connections

North Star is proud of its reputation as a genuine partner in communities. We work hard to build relationships with amazing organisations doing equally amazing work across the North East.

Below is a summary of the work we have supported in 2021/22

- ✓ In 2021/22 North Star invested £53k in local community projects.
- ✓ For every £1 invested, £35.11 was returned in social value.
- ✓ Projects levered in an additional £21k of external funding.
- ✓ Projects benefitted 950 people.



Community Connections

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

Goal One: No Poverty

Projects supported - 7

£27,637 invested

£1:£64.59 social value ratio

410 people supported



Goal Two: Good Health and Well-being

Projects supported - 13

£19,068 invested

£1:£49.26 social value ratio

470 people supported



Community Connections ctd.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Goal Four: Quality Education

Projects supported - 2

£3,432 invested

£1:£126.50 social value ratio

58 people supported

Goal Eleven: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Projects supported - 4

£2,226 invested

90 people supported

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



We spent £11,756 on running costs for our community house on Wellgarth Estate in Evenwood and the Community Hub in Thornaby.

Stories from the projects...

This year we gave Sprouts CiC a grant of £11,000 to continue their work in Thornaby. Here's what they had to say about their work this year:

"Sprouts Thornaby Community Project has evolved since March 2020. From an initial emergency response to Covid, we have built on relationships and partnerships established during the pandemic, to embed ourselves at the heart of the community to understand, empathise and action, the issues, problems and needs of the community. As restrictions lifted, we anticipated reducing the community shop element, returning back to our roots of cooking in the community. However, it was, and still is, apparent that the need to offer affordable, quality food to help people experiencing financial difficulties will continue indefinitely, and may in fact worsen over the coming months given increases in the cost of living.

"With funding, we have doubled our workload to continue the community shop and also restart community cooking, afterschool workshops, lunch clubs, family pop-up in the park events and the community garden.

"We truly believe that The Community Hub, Havelock Street, (and now the container at Arlington Park), is the epitome of a hub. We continue to use food and cooking as an engagement tool. The hub is the centre, with spokes extending in all directions, that address most other socio economic, cultural and demographic issues of the local community and surrounding areas."



Stories from the projects...

We gave Roseberry Community Consortium a grant of £1,500 for their Activity Hub project. Here's what they told us the project had achieved:

"The aim of the project is to help and support disadvantaged youngsters across the Teesside region. We used the funding to create engaging videos highlighting what activities we do for various projects delivered in the charity. In April, we delivered a Holiday Activities program for young people. We produced a video involving young people and charity trustees. The video was showcased in Arc. We also run a neurodiverse choir every Monday, and run regular podcasting sessions. We ran classes in anti-bullying techniques, movement and co-ordination and job search and CV writing.

"One dyspraxic adult took part in a podcasting session. He is a long-term member of Dyspraxia Support Group Teesside since 2016. He volunteered to do a video to express how he feels being part of the group. The group has helped to reduce the stigma he faces as a neurodiverse person. He has grown in confidence and made new friends.

A young person we work with has many complex issues including autism. They have built up their confidence and we have helped them socialise and make new friends. They also found the anti-bullying classes useful for dealing with school issues."



Stories from the projects...

We gave Dimensions a grant of £500 for their Exercise Bootcamp Sessions. Here's what they said about the project's outcomes:

"Dimensions wanted to provide some exercise outside so that the people we support had something positive to focus on but, also followed the COVID rules. The people we support have learning disabilities and additional needs and we needed to make sure that we created a specific exercise group which would meet their needs without creating anxieties for them by not being able to take part due to it being too high ability for individuals.

"We started off as a group wearing what we had in our wardrobes and then progressed to deciding on a colour and then having orange fitness tops, hoodies and hats for the cold weather but all wearing the same like a proper team!

"Bootcamp has given the people we support more confidence to try new things and join in. It has also given people the opportunity to see what attending group exercises classes can be like and then attend community ones also like the classes at Hartlepool Dodgeball centre."



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 to quantify this impact.

In 2021/22 North Star made planned improvements to properties. This included improvements to heating systems and windows that improved the properties energy efficiency. There were over 1,500 separate improvements carried out.

These improvements generated **£765k** of Social Value.

In 2020/21 North Star delivered **32** high quality new homes, investing **£4.3m** to develop them.





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