



INTRODUCTION



Our strategy is to:

- **Make Byker an estate of choice**
- **Contribute to a thriving Byker**
- **Ensure that the Byker Community Trust (BCT) community ethos is sustained**

The Thriving Byker Strategy (TBS) provides a framework for strategic partnership working. Its objectives and priorities are based on what our customers asked for and how they will impact positively on customers in the Byker Estate. During 2024/25 the TBS was refreshed in collaboration with the BCT Committee and our strategic partners to ensure the themes remain relevant and align with their strategic priorities for the Byker Estate.

To achieve the TBS priorities and increase community activities, we work in collaboration with key strategic partners, stakeholders and more than 30 community and voluntary organisations.

Our strategic partners are:

- Newcastle City Council (NCC)
- Local Ward Councillors
- Northumbria Police
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Primary schools in Byker
- Byker Sands Family Centre

The TBS is widely influenced by the views of customers on the following key themes:



Pride and ownership in the area



Extending our reach



Health, wellbeing and mindfulness



Community training and employment



Income maximisation



Digital connectivity



A cleaner and greener Byker



A safe place to live



Children and young people

All projects and initiatives delivered through the TBS are subject to review, to understand the potential value for money from the investment, and the positive impact on our customers in delivering the TBS.

This supplement highlights our progress during 2024/2025, delivering against our key themes and highlights some of the fantastic outcomes achieved.

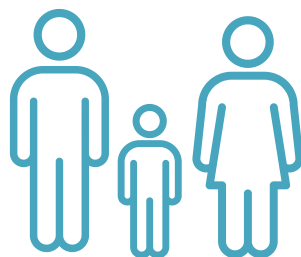
IN SUMMARY (2024/2025)

Place



33

community
events held
by BCT



533

Byker customers engaged
through these events

Customer



639

customers supported
through the Household
Support Fund



55

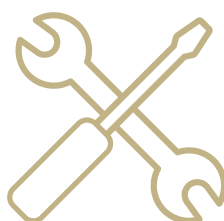
new sign ups to
the MyKarbon
portal

Costs



£202,753

additional benefit income
gained for customers



£4.1M

spent on improvements
to our homes and
neighbourhood

£127,800

secured from the NCC Household
Support Fund



£72,567

spent on community
activities and programmes,
and delivery of the TBS

Homes

RE:GEN continues to install new bathrooms, kitchens and internal doors to homes across the estate. Since 2021...



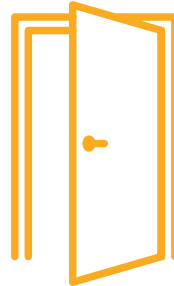
458

homes have benefitted from new kitchens



904

homes have received new bathrooms and electric showers



1,024

homes have been fitted with new internal doors

Our customer feedback:



69%

of customers are satisfied with the services they receive from Karbon

79%

of our customers are satisfied that we make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood

Creating sustainable tenancies:



99%

of our homes are occupied

with stock turnover at

7%

for 2024/25



645

customer visits were carried out throughout the year, which included a property inspection

Customer Scrutiny Panel

There are currently seven Byker customers who are members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel.

The panel gives them the opportunity to provide valuable feedback on the service we provide; this year has included our approach to allocations and lettings and tackling damp and mould.

Customer conference

Karbon held its first customer conference which brought together customers, colleagues and partners to provide insight into the organisation and encourage engagement.

Customers who are a part of our Resident Involvement Framework were invited to attend.

PRIDE AND OWNERSHIP



Empowering and enabling customers and community groups to take responsibility for the estate and be proud of the area.

Byker stock condition surveys were completed with

76% access to customers' homes

We're busy analysing the survey results to help us inform our future investment plans. We aim to complete the exercise in 2025/26.

Transformation of the environment



Planning permission was granted in May 2024 by NCC for the Dunn Terrace neighbourhood.

We appointed OS Ecology to undertake a tree survey across the full estate to better understand how we can manage the removal and planting of trees to meet biodiversity net gain requirements.

The fencing programme began in Dunn Terrace in March 2025, which saw the installation of new fencing to create consistency and privacy for customers, improving the appearance of the area and security for customers.

Grounds work began for new communal bin areas in Dunn Terrace and Headlam Green in March 2025, with a communications plan developed to inform and educate customers about their new bin and recycling services.

Work is expected to be complete in summer 2025.

Following a consultation event in January 2024, where customers provided feedback on the draft designs for our second neighbourhood, Ayton, we held a final consultation event in November at the BCT office and incorporated our customers' feedback into the final designs.

As part of the Ayton neighbourhood, the Brow consultation event took place in November 2024 in The Brow communal gardens. Ten customers attended and provided feedback which has been incorporated into the final design.

We expect work to begin on the Ayton Neighbourhood in the next 9-12 months.



Bolam Street

We began work on site in September 2024 with contractor NB Clark at Bolam Street, to build 24 affordable homes for rent.

As part of this contract we secured social value, which aims to increase the wellbeing of our community through activities and investment. Social value work with NB Clark included inviting pupils from St Lawrence's Primary School to the Bolam Street new build site.

The children took part in a project to draw what the homes will look like, and NB Clark visited the pupils in April to hand out Easter eggs.

Hobby rooms

Plans are in place to convert 66 Raby Street into a community space run by Byker Mutual Aid. Planning permission was submitted to NCC for the external shutters, new windows and a ramp to the entrance.

Straightline are the selected contractor to undertake the external work which will be funded by Karbon, and RE:GEN has agreed to renovate the internal areas as part of their social value work on the estate. Work will start in 2025/2026, once planning permission is granted.

We have received planning permission from NCC for 26A Raby Way to create a community archive space with Northern Cultural Projects (NCP).

Karbon has already provided £27,612 in funding for the hobby room and a £240,000 bid to Heritage Lottery Fund for the refurbishment of 26A Raby Way has been successful. This work will begin this financial year.

Brasilia of the North

A feature length documentary called 'Brasilia of the North' has been directed by Newcastle University with a section on the Byker Estate history, promoting the diverse makeup of the estate and experience of current residents.

The documentary included interviews with one of the local ward councillors, the Avondale House Chief Executive, ACANE and photographer Sirkka Liisa-Konttinen. Clips from the film were screened at the Farrell Centre during September 2024.

The Big Issue

The Big Issue featured a positive article highlighting the good work carried out by community partners across the Byker Estate.

This included the fantastic work undertaken by Foundation Futures in Byker, and the work on St Michael's Church. The Lighthouse Project also featured in the article along with interviews with local ward councillors and customers.



The Karbon Homes Place Team worked with Elements Street Art Festival to install a street art board on Commercial Road.

Artist Nocciola the Drawer worked with young people actively involved with youth charity Foundation Futures in Byker to design a vibrant 'welcome' mural. As part of the festival, the Foundation Futures minibus was also spray painted. Karbon provided **£2,600** to fund the mural and workshops.

For phase two of the Street Art Project, the team has worked with Foundation Futures and Byker Primary School to design and paint eight window boards on the front of Northern Stage rehearsal studios.

A workshop was held in October with children and young people to design the new windows. We held a launch event in November, with 30 customers and stakeholders attending including the local MP Mary Glindon. We provided **£2,350** in funding for this phase.

Phase three of the Street Art Project began with a Historic England grant of **£14,500**, awarded as part of the 'History in the Making' Programme.

Partners Foundation Futures, Mark Shields (street artist), The Farrell Centre and Northern Cultural Projects (NCP CIC) designed two workshops for local young people to

understand the heritage of the estate and celebrate their vision for the future.

In phase three of the Street Art Project 'History in the Making', we worked with planning consultants Lichfields to apply for planning permission for street art to be added to two of the large hobby rooms.

Two workshops were delivered at the Farrell Centre and in the estate, plus a series of hands-on painting workshops with young people. This will culminate in art to feature on the gable end of the Northern Stage studios and inside the hobby rooms being developed with NCP CIC and Byker Mutual Aid.

We're working closely with NCC to discuss plans to improve the Raby Cross area and have toured the estate to create a shared vision for the area.

NCC is supportive of our Raby Cross street art plans and is conducting a rent review on Raby Cross units to diversify the tenants and increase active use of the units.

Scan the here to see community street art unveiled, celebrating life in Byker – YouTube



Prof Richard Batley



Prof Richard Batley was given a tour of the Byker Estate by community partner and Byker resident Silvie Fisch in October. Prof Richard Batley was part of the Byker study group in the 1960s that lobbied the council to ensure people stayed in Byker and were involved in plans for the estate.

ITVX

ITVX visited the estate on 15 October to make a film about the history and community of Byker.

The documentary is now live on ITVX and is a great feature, highlighting the estate and the communities who live here.

The Byker Wall: Life inside Tyneside's architectural phenomenon – Latest From ITV News



Byker Archive handling sessions

Byker Archive handling sessions, which were run by Byker resident and committee member Silvie Fisch at the Farrell Centre, provided unique access to original photographs, plans and documents relating to the Byker redevelopment for the general public. We advertised the sessions to customers in the spring newsletter.

Concrete Dreams

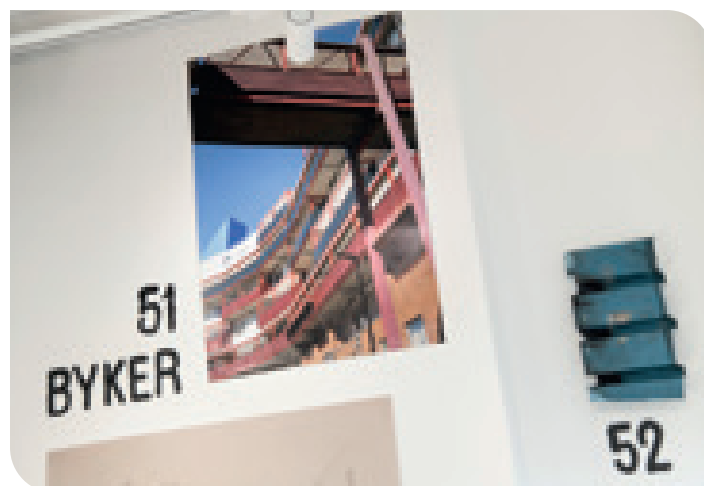
The Farrell Centre, located in Newcastle University, held a 'Concrete Dreams' event about the history and landscape of Byker, and customers were invited to attend.

The Farrell Centre also has an ongoing display called 'The Fight for Byker and Other Stories', which explores the 1960s work of the Byker Study Group in shaping the development of the Byker Estate. The exhibit focuses on the 'pre-redevelopment' period in Byker's history through photographs, artefacts and voices of those from the heart of the transformation.

We provided transport for **14** residents to attend, with lunch provided.

This display ran until June 2025.

We also commissioned an information board for the exhibition to showcase the work and investment going on in and around Byker, to educate the wider public. A duplicate of the board will also be displayed in the Community Archive space.



HEALTH, WELLBEING AND MINDFULNESS



Addressing the links between housing and health, both physical and mental. This theme will address food poverty, and promote the value of a healthy lifestyle and improved physical and mental wellbeing.

Foundation Futures

Foundation Futures is a youth charity that is partly based in The Chevron on the Byker Estate.



They hold six sessions every week for family support and guidance, which have been funded for three years by The National Lottery Community Fund's Reaching Communities Programme, starting September 2024.

They also provide a wellbeing drop-in session, funded for over two years by the Health Lottery Foundation which ended in 2024.

The sessions have supported 12 customers per week across 10 individual families with:

- employment support
- benefits
- matters relating to social services
- youth justice

Customers also visit The Chevron for refreshments and a chat, and activities are led by them. Most recently they held a 'Come Dine With Me' event.

National Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme has provided **£95,000** in total to support Foundation Futures wellbeing work, as well as the Health Lottery Foundation which provided **£35,000**.

Hat-Trick

Hat-Trick is a charitable organisation based in the West End of Newcastle. It delivers a range of different multi sports to young people aged 5-15 and 16+ working in areas of Newcastle and Gateshead and provides outreach work to support our Byker customers.

BCT Community Partnership Funding (CPF) provided **£830** to Hat-Trick to provide sports sessions running between April and July 2024.

The sessions supported

20

young people from Byker Primary School including 13 boys and seven girls.

St Thomas Church

CPF provided **£435** to St Thomas' Church to run a football club between April and July 2024, supporting 10-15 adults per week in Byker.

NE14.TV

NE14.TV has provided furniture to Byker customers as part of a home makeover series on YouTube, using leftover production and prop items.

50

households have benefitted from the scheme.



Northern Cultural Projects

Northern Cultural Projects is running a planting volunteer group working on an allotment close to the estate to support mental health.

Ten customers support the scheme and take the opportunity to talk with friends whilst volunteering on the plot.

Defibrillator

We will be taking over the monitoring of the defibrillator located outside the Byker Sands Family Centre.

Two volunteers from our team will receive training to use the defibrillator.

The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT)

TBBT continues to run weekly sessions offering low-cost food provision to Byker customers.

On average **40-50** customers use the service every week and 15 volunteers support the programme.

The CPF supported a one-off cleaning bill of **£198** to clean the St Michael's Centre, which is used as part of TBBT project on Fridays.

Tenancy Sustainment and Welfare Reform Officer

Our Tenancy Sustainment and Welfare Reform Officer makes referrals on behalf of customers who are struggling financially.

Throughout the year:

175 food provision referrals were made.

50 shopping vouchers were given to customers.

Food and toiletry boxes

Food and toiletry boxes (separate toiletry bags for males and females) are now available from the BCT Office for customers who need them.

Throughout the year, a total of **25** boxes were handed out.



Byker Pantry

Operating from Raby Cross, the Pantry has been providing the Byker community with affordable food shopping since 2016.

It operates on a points-based system, where customers can exchange money for points, and those points can be used to purchase food, but for at least half the usual high street cost.

We provided **£1000** CPF for frozen items at the Byker Pantry as an additional service to support our Byker customers.

Byker Mutual Aid

Byker Mutual Aid requested CPF to supply food items to customers during the October half term and over the Christmas period.

The programme supported around **150** customers struggling financially over the Christmas period.

We provided

£500 CPF

Feeding Families

We have joined the Feeding Families distribution list for direct deliveries to our Byker Office, offering essential and Halal food parcels.

Nourish Food School

Nourish Food School requested CPF to run education and cooking skills workshops and £500 CPF was allocated.

Throughout the year, the sessions reached around **75** customers.

Connect25 and St Silas Church

Connect25 and St Silas Church provide free food provision for Byker customers.

IDOS Health

IDOS Health delivered several informal drop-in sessions to customers of The Byker Pantry. Feedback from IDOS was that the sessions were popular, with people engaging in informal conversation about their health. IDOS plans to run more of these sessions.

Six informal drop-in sessions were held in February and March 2025 at The Pantry where **20** people attended. Sessions focused on subjects like nutrition and mental health.

We supported the sessions with **£150** CPF.

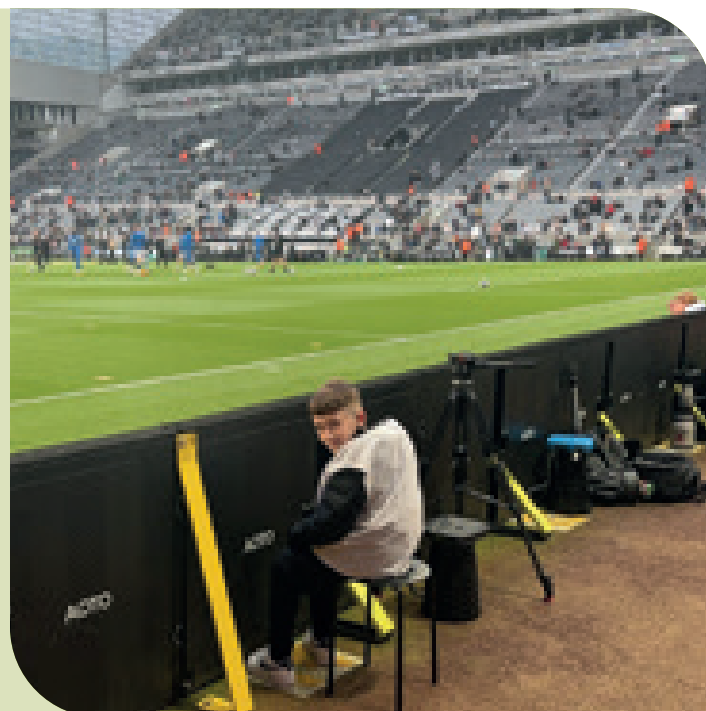
Eden Project Football Sessions



Eden Project ran weekly football sessions at Walker Dome between April and September 2024, including transport for Byker customers to and from Walker. We provided **£435** CPF.

Newcastle United match tickets

The Newcastle United Foundation donated tickets to Byker Primary and St Lawrence's school for two football matches.





The Newcastle United Foundation supports the delivery of a Primary Learning package at Byker and St Lawrence's RC primary schools, with

£23,500 CPF

Primary Learning allows pupils to enjoy more physical education and helps with knowledge, skills and confidence in P.E.

The weekly session includes physical activity, health and wellbeing and PSHE provision. The sessions engage with over 100 children every week. The Foundation also provides after school physical activity sessions for children in the Byker community. Attended by **16** pupils a week, all sessions were highly engaged and tailored to the pupils' ability, special

educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and interests.

During school holidays, the Foundation held free physical activity sessions for children from Byker Primary School with lunch included.

The Foundation held two weeks of summer camp, where **32** hours of activities were delivered across four days, over two weeks. On average, **27** children took part each day.

Two children from the summer camp (and their guardians) were given tickets to the NUFC v Southampton match for their engagement at the summer camps.

INCOME MAXIMISATION



Providing opportunities for customers to access training and employment as well as increasing the range of financial products and services available, which will improve the economic activity of customers and the community.

Aneta, our Tenancy Sustainment and Welfare Reform Officer



Furniture packs

At the start of the year, we provided **203** customers with a furniture pack, with a further **16** referrals made throughout the year.

Pre-tenancy affordability checks

138 pre-tenancy affordability checks were carried out to ensure customers are in a stable financial position to afford their home.

Other charity payments and grants

£2,316

additional charity payments and grants were secured to support our customers.

Through working with our customers on a one-to-one basis, we achieved additional benefit income for our customers including:

Backdated benefits: **£2,496**

Additional benefit income: **£202,753**

Backdated housing costs: **£6159**

Additional housing costs: **£508,061**

Additional housing costs: **£222,436**

Household Support Fund

639

successful applications were made to the Household Support Fund, totalling

£127,800

in extra income for customers, provided by NCC.



Foundations for Life Employability Team

25 customers have since moved into work, education or training and the remaining customers continue to be supported by our dedicated advisor on their employment journey.

We created **16** New Start placements in Byker, with host employers such as Ouseburn Farm, Action Foundation, JET, Seven Stories, Tyne Housing and BCT.

6 Byker customers were successful in securing a New Start placement.

Meet the employer events, CV Writing Workshops and interviews all took place at our Byker office.

We have offered several drop-in surgeries and appointments at our Byker Office and at TBBT, giving enhanced visibility and access to Byker residents.

Our Write Turn programme, an innovative digital and literacy course supporting people to pass their driving theory test, has been delivered at our Byker office.

We have delivered **3** courses in total, with **16** customers accessing the course, and **11** completing it. Those taking part gain a provisional driving licence and, after successful completion of the course, a paid for driving theory test.

A total of 52 customers engaged with our Foundations for Life dedicated Employment and Skills Officer for Byker, Hannah.



A CLEANER AND GREENER BYKER



Educating and enabling customers to take responsibility and support waste management improvements to ensure the results are meaningful and have a lasting impact on our community.



Litter picks

We hold regular litter picks throughout the estate and customers are encouraged to join in. Litter picks were held in April, May, July, August and September. We plan to run these monthly over the next year, encouraging community and school participation.

Launchpad

Veterans' charity Launchpad arranged community clean-up days throughout the year.

Volunteers from Newcastle Building Society, Community Payback and AstraZeneca all took part.

Siemens

Siemens held its team building day on the Byker Estate on 20 August and got involved in an estate litter pick and garden tidy at Mount Pleasant House.

15 Siemens staff, our Grounds Maintenance Team Lead and our Community Engagement Officer all took part.



Planting

Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Kids Kabin held planting sessions at Felton Walk with 20 young people taking part in the restoration of neglected planters and introducing pollinator-friendly plants to improve the space for nature and the community.

We provided **£499** CPF to support the sessions.

Fly tipping

A joint approach to working with NCC has been developed, acting on illegal fly tipping perpetrators across the Byker Estate.

In partnership with NCC we have jointly funded 34 temporary cameras to tackle priority fly tipping hotspots and illegal fly tipping. These cameras will remain in place until October 2025.

In total, NCC and Karbon has invested £53k in CCTV to help tackle illegal waste and fly tipping.

Byker in Bloom

The annual Byker in Bloom competition ran over the summer with **18** customers taking part.

The celebration event was held at the Civic Centre on 20 November with the Sheriff, Lord Mayor and Ward Councillors attending to award the winners.

We contributed **£362.20** CPF along with **£625.30** of funding from NCC.



Estate walkabouts

We regularly hold walkabouts with customers to discuss issues affecting them in person.

Customers can engage with their Neighbourhood Housing Officer face to face and voice any concerns.

During 2024/2025, 12 walkabouts were held across four patches and 11 customers attended in total.



Day of action



BCT and NCC developed a joint newsletter for all Byker customers with essential waste removal guidance and information and advertised a 'Day of Action' litter pick. Eight skips were also placed across the estate for customers to get rid of bulky items.

The Day of Action took place on 18 September with colleagues from Karbon and NCC as well as Byker customers and community partners getting involved. Around **50** volunteers collected **24** tonnes of waste.

Along with NCC, we provided **£3,200** CPF to support the event.

Skips

Skip days are regularly scheduled across the estate at different locations and advertised in our newsletter and social media for customers to get rid of bulky household items.

During April, five skips were provided at Felton Walk Car Park, Chirton Wynd, Ayton Rise, Clive Place and Raby Street.

During July, four skips were provided at Shipley Rise, Garmondsway, Dalton Crescent car park and Raby Street.

During October, four skips were provided at Tom Collins House, Gordon Road, Byker Crescent and Ayton Rise

During January, four skips were provided at Northumberland Terrace, Ayton Rise, Spires Lane and Gordon Road.

We provided **£4,000** CPF to this project to support improvements to the environment, reduce fly-tipping and encourage customers to dispose of household items free of charge.

District Heating System

Work to replace heating pipework set in concrete in occupied homes is ongoing and is being planned to a timescale that meets the needs of our customers. Of the **33** properties identified, **11** have now been completed.

We continue to work in collaboration with NCC to develop sustainable options for the future ownership, decarbonisation and upgrade of the Byker District Heating System. We have commissioned WSP, who provide advisory engineering and design services globally, to produce a set of practical options for the future provision of heating and hot water across the Byker Estate. The WSP project is ongoing with recommendations expected summer 2025.

Customer feedback

April to June

91%

Satisfaction with grounds maintenance service overall

76%

Satisfaction communal areas are kept clean

80%

Satisfaction with Byker Wall cleaning contract

July to September

81%

Satisfaction with grounds maintenance service overall

63%

Satisfaction communal areas are kept clean

93%

Satisfaction with Byker Wall cleaning contract

October to December

86%

Satisfaction with grounds maintenance service overall

100%

Satisfaction communal areas are kept clean

77%

Satisfaction with Byker Wall cleaning contract

January to March

86%

Satisfaction with grounds maintenance service overall

100%

Satisfaction communal areas are kept clean

100%

Satisfaction with Byker Wall cleaning contract

A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE



Working with customers, the police and partners to tackle crime and the fear of crime in Byker. BCT will take a preventative approach to antisocial behaviour, working in partnership through education, diversion and empowerment.

We're improving the safety of neighbourhoods as part of the external environmental upgrade project.

All external CCTV cameras have been upgraded on the estate. There are now eight external cameras owned by Karbon that provide 360-degree coverage, including additional cameras at Raby Cross to monitor antisocial behaviour issues.

We have commissioned a feasibility study on stilt blocks and we are now awaiting solutions and designs to take forward in 2025/26.

Fencing improvement works started on site in March 2025 and will improve customer privacy and safety, starting in the Dunn Terrace neighbourhood.

Improved controlled access to the Byker Wall

The controlled fob entry system to the Byker Wall and link blocks has been upgraded throughout the year to allow blocks to be isolated, restricting access and improving security. Every customer has been reissued with a new fob, and this will overcome the challenges of managing the existing system and allow colleagues to effectively manage all fobs moving forward. Fobs that have been lost or stolen can be cancelled and fobs can be removed from the system at the end of a tenancy, providing peace of mind and improved security to our customers.

Installation of new fire safety measures in the Byker Wall

New building safety recommendations have been implemented to comply with the Building Safety Act.

We have commissioned structural and external wall surveys on the Byker Wall and link blocks. The results are now being reviewed by an external consultant.

A consultant was also commissioned to prepare a retrospective fire strategy incorporating fire safety recommendations for the Byker Wall and link blocks.

We have engaged with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services and NCC on proposed options for building safety remediation, including from a building conservation viewpoint.

Positive discussions were held with both stakeholders, along with a site visit with NCC to inspect a sample of upper floor maisonettes.

Fire engineers were commissioned to carry out a peer review of external wall surveys for the Byker Wall and present all possible options for mitigation of risks and reduction to a tolerable level.

The peer review is expected to be completed in around spring 2026. This will inform proposals to be presented to key stakeholders for agreement and allow development of proposed costs and timescales.

Working in partnership with Northumbria Police



Craig



Cameron

There has been a significant reduction in antisocial behaviour in comparison to previous years. There were 70 ongoing cases during July to September (Q2) 2022/2023 and 57 in Q2 2023/2024 in comparison to 50 during Q2 2024/25.

The Safer Communities Officers continue to meet with the police monthly to support each other including preparing court statements and collaborating on any antisocial activity across the estate.

Safer Communities Officers support the police and share information to help keep the area in and around the Byker estate safe. Working in partnership with the police ensures information sharing protocols are established that support sustainable property allocations.

There was a slight increase in ASB cases throughout January – March 2025 in comparison to January – March 2024 with noise and drugs being a recurring issue.

A joint approach to tackling and reducing youth antisocial behaviour has been established by working with community, police and voluntary partners to address intervention measures and diversionary activities.

We continue to have strong partnership links with Northumbria Police, with regular engagement in place to discuss high risk cases and antisocial behaviour hotspots across the Byker Estate. We use the meetings to share information and agree actions for effective partnership working and decide the most appropriate intervention.

- Q1** One acceptable behaviour agreement and one injunction was issued.
- Q2** Two acceptable behaviour agreements were issued and three injunctions.
- Q3** One acceptable behaviour agreement was issued.
- Q4** Five acceptable behaviour agreements were issued.



Customer feedback

Year to date:

The number of ASB cases opened per 1000 homes for 2024/25 was

112

Our customer satisfaction of their landlord's approach to handling ASB was

64%

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Working with partners to create opportunities for the young people of Byker to widen their educational attainment and raise aspirations. We aim to create meaningful experiences which will enhance their outlook on life and encourage them to be the best they can be.

Trips

We regularly organise and fund community trips.

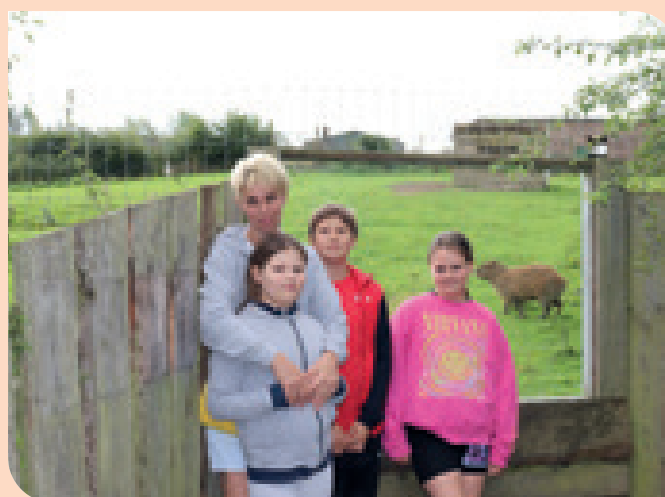
67 customers were taken to Northumberland Zoo, **64** customers attended a trip to Hall Hill Farm and **59** customers were taken to Beamish Museum throughout the summer holidays.

There were two trips to Holmside Park arranged for customers in the October half term.

68 customers were taken to Diggerland and **54** customers were taken to Beamish Museum during the Easter holidays.

The Beamish trip was available for all residents with several customers from our sheltered blocks in attendance.

In total **£11,667** CPF was allocated to these trips.



Northern Stage Christmas Show

Both primary schools in the Byker Estate were invited to attend the Northern Stage Christmas show. Transport for Byker Primary and tickets for St Lawrence's were funded by CPF.

In total, 58 children were transported, and 33 tickets were provided with **£710** of CPF.

Foundation Futures

Foundation Futures supported five young people aged 11 to 14 to hold a stall at the Ouseburn Festival, where they made and sold sweets, keyrings and raffle tickets.

They raised funds for 10 young people to go away to the Lake District.

St Lawrence's Primary School

St Lawrence's Primary School requested CPF to develop an outdoor space for year one pupils.

Over the summer, **£1,457** of CPF was provided to complete the year one outdoor area.

The children have been using the area since September 2024 and it has had a positive effect on their learning environment.

MINE YOUTH

MINE Youth Club requested CPF to keep a longstanding youth club from closing.

£1,140 of funding was provided and the project continued to support 15 young people per weekly session during June and November.



Bug hunt

In May, we hosted a bug hunt for children in Byker with several natural history societies around the North East.

The children were educated on wildlife habitats in the areas surrounding their homes. There were also potting and pot painting activities along with snack bags for the children.

Kings Castle

Kings Castle requested **£500** of CPF to run a fun day for children and families, which reached 100 attendees.

Kids Kabin

Kids Kabin requested **£850** of CPF for young people to learn how to carry out bike repairs.

There were 134 attendees over 23 sessions.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Northumberland Wildlife Trust delivered sessions with young people in Byker, engaging them around environmental issues. They established an Eco Mentors project, working with ACANE and other groups in the Byker Estate.

Christmas Cards

Pupils from Byker Primary School got into the festive spirit by designing Christmas cards.

Pupils from nursery through to year six were involved and our judges selected a winner from each year group, who received a Christmas selection box.

Launchpad

Veterans' charity Launchpad hosted its annual Remembrance Day Service at St. Lawrence's Church in November 2024. Children from both primary schools in the Byker Estate were involved in the event.



Christmas present appeal

In a partnership between Karbon, community partners and contractors, Christmas toys were delivered to 177 children throughout the Byker Estate.

Byker Futures Youth Group

Foundation Futures also hold a weekly Byker Futures Youth Group. These sessions are open to young people but can be signposted to a targeted group for extra support. The programme has been funded by **£10,000** from Badur.

The sessions involve arts and crafts, and the group of 12 young people were involved with the recent street art project creating the welcome sign on Commercial Road.

Phoenix Projects

St Lawrence's School received funding through Phoenix Projects, to work with children who may become known to blue light services as they get older (year five to six students).

Students learned how to be a firefighter over six days whilst also teaching resilience and respect for elders.

Newcastle East High Street Project

Newcastle East High Street Project put on a winter circus in December 2024. There were circus workshops, fire shows and a festive cabaret featuring the music group 'The Baghdaddies'.

From neighbours for neighbours

Byker Mutual Aid has created a series of activities 'from neighbours for neighbours', including yoga, knitting, crochet and chess.

Young people enjoyed making lanterns for Halloween through arts and crafts sessions over half term, and there'll be more arts and crafts activities in time for Christmas.

These groups engaged 50 customers in total.

African Community Advice North East (ACANE)

£1,250 of CPF was provided for activities and food for children and young people for events in October delivered by ACANE.

Hattrick

£490 of CPF was provided for sports sessions at Byker Primary School between October and December, working with 20 young people.

Byker REAL

Foundation Futures provide Byker REAL targeted youth group sessions twice a week from The Chevron. These sessions target young people at risk of or involved with knife crime and the programme has been funded by **£10,000** from the William Charitable Trust until May 2025.

The sessions involve games, minibus trips out of the estate and safety workshops. Ten young people aged between 14 and 20 living on the estate are actively involved.

Ayton neighbourhood

Engagement will be carried out as part of the Ayton Rise customer consultation to inform options for Ayton Park.

EXTENDING OUR REACH



To understand our community and the people within it by identifying and extending our reach to work with underrepresented groups, ensuring everyone's voice in the community is heard.

Free trips

During the Easter holiday, we provided a free trip to Woodhorn Museum for ten customers over 55, including a lunch voucher.

During the summer school holiday, we provided a free trip to Beamish Museum for families, with several spaces allocated to customers living in Tom Collins House. The trip included a free packed lunch. Six of the 59 customers were from Tom Collins House and four from Mount Pleasant. **£1,000** of CPF supported these trips.



Launchpad's royal visit

Launchpad is a charity which provides a home and individually tailored wraparound support packages to help veterans rebuild their lives. We're proud to be a strategic partner of Launchpad, which has leased one of our Byker Estate properties, Avondale House, since 2013.

In May 2024, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester visited Avondale House to learn more about the charity. They met with residents and staff who benefit from and deliver this invaluable support.



Launchpad's North East Armed Forces Charity Dinner

On 10 October 2024, Launchpad hosted its annual dinner to raise important funds to support homeless veterans. We were delighted to join many of their partners and supporters at the event, where we sponsored a table (£1,000) for the evening and invited some Byker Estate customers to join us. Thanks to everyone's generosity, the dinner raised over £14,000.

We're pleased to be joining them for the 2025 charity dinner on 9 October. Launchpad is also welcoming donations for its charity raffle on the night, please get in touch with them via enquiries@veteranslaunchpad.org.uk if you would like to contribute a prize to support homeless veterans in the area.



Language learning group

Byker Mutual Aid has started a language learning group, where several Ukrainian customers meet to learn English.

Polish community group

A Polish community group is looking for space to meet. The Community Engagement Officer is supporting the group and looking at St Michaels Centre as a potential venue.

Fire station tour

Tom Collins House residents were invited to Byker Fire Station for a tour, refreshments and a talk on fire safety.

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue confirmed the success of the event with engagement from customers, who are also involved with the Karbon's Building Safety Group, influencing building safety in our Byker high rise blocks.

Award win

We received an award for our work and investment in Byker from the 'Purpose Coalition', a network of organisations aimed at tackling barriers to social mobility. This was in recognition of the amazing projects and initiatives we all deliver in Byker as part of our TBS.

ITVX

BCT supported an event at ACANE to run alongside the ITVX documentary (see page 9). The £500 CPF paid for food, music and a creative activity looking at African Heritage.

COMMUNITY TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



Working with our contractors and partners to maximise opportunities for customers and their families to access meaningful training and employment support.

Byker Best Life employability and support

Foundation Futures hold weekly Byker Best Life employability support sessions, funded by £18,000 for one year from CABWI, the awarding body promoting learning and development that enables young people and adults to gain additional skills and confidence to enter the labour market.

Customers are supported with CV writing, training, travel expenses, PPE and interview clothes. We have supported 10 young people between the ages of 16-25.

Careers fair

Benfield School held a careers fair in March 2025 for employers to attend and meet their pupils, showcase their careers offer and promote their organisation. Karbon had a stall.

Employment and Skills Advisor

Since October 2024, there has been a full time Employment Advisor based at BCT.

New Start

The New Start programme provides real work experience in career starter roles for people aged 18+.

Whether customers are looking for their first job, or want to change their career path, New Start is designed to get their foot in the door.

Working with local employers, customers can obtain five-month, paid placements including ongoing employment wraparound support.

Overall, 16 New Start placements were created in the Byker area. Host employers included Tyne Housing, Ouseburn Farm, Seven Stories, JET and Action Foundation. We also hosted placements in our Grounds Maintenance, Housing, Reception and Welfare Teams.

We ran a series of events at our Byker office including CV and cover letter workshops, 'meet the employer' and interviews.

Six Byker customers were successful in securing a New Start placement, at Tyne Housing, Crafty Jacks, NE14.TV, BCT and Karbon Homes.

The candidate working as our Housing Assistant has been successful in their application for a permanent Housing Assistant role in BCT.

We held a New Start celebration event in January, which brought everyone together who engaged in the programme.

The Write Turn

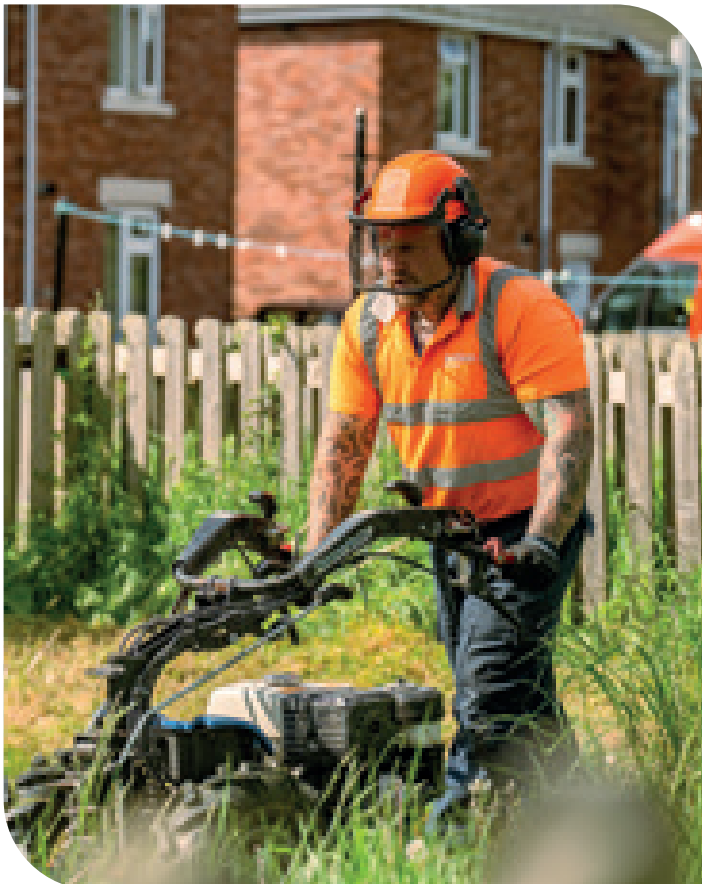
During April 2024, Karbon provided a four-week trial course called 'The Write Turn' for customers who lacked confidence with reading, writing, maths and digital skills, in order to work towards passing their driving theory test. Additionally, Karbon offered to cover the fee for a provisional license and theory test.

Two customers passed their theory test first time and one of those customers has received funding for 10 hours of driving lessons (£330). The other customer is currently part of the paid work experience New Start programme and plans are in place to fund 10 hours of driving lessons if they are successful, so they could then be considered for full-time employment at their placement.

Following the success of 'The Write Turn' course between April and June 2024, it has been made a permanent training session and will take place every six weeks. Six Byker customers have been referred to the course so far.

In total, three courses have been delivered, with 16 customers accessing the course and 11 completing it. Three provisional licences have been funded. Two customers have passed, two customers have tests booked, and four customers are currently on the course and will have tests booked and completed by June 2025. £103 of funding was provided to support this.

The Foundations for Life tutor who runs 'The Write Turn' course will now be available each week to provide Maths and English support. Three customers have been referred for one to one support.



Green Start

In addition to the New Start programme, Housing Employment Network North East (HENNE) has also introduced the Green Start programme, which is accessible to all residents living in the North of Tyne area – Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. Similar to New Start, successful customers undertake fully paid six-month placements in organisations and roles within the green and lower carbon sector. They also gain a qualification in retrofit.

Karbon is providing funding to recruit grounds maintenance seasonal workers as part of the Green Start programme. Three Byker customers were referred for a role, two were interviewed and one was appointable, which could lead to a successful long-term role.

New Start case study

Alla, NE14.tv General Assistant

Before applying for New Start, Alla had been searching for work as a photographer, but wasn't able to find many opportunities, so took a different path and became a dog sitter while continuing to look for photography jobs.

"I found out about New Start during a visit from my Housing Officer, Yoyo. We were talking about my job search, and she suggested that Karbon had a programme called New Start." Alla worked with Hannah, our Byker Employment Advisor, who helped her with her application.

"Hannah is amazing! She's very approachable and easy to talk to. She asked me about my dreams, my experience and helped me with my CV. Hannah sent me lots of different opportunities, and we completed my

applications together. I felt cared about and encouraged to pursue my goals.

"Before my first interview, I also had a training session where we explored how to conduct yourself during an interview, including which questions to ask and which to avoid."

Through New Start, Alla has secured a role at NE14.TV as a General Assistant. "This was my first experience with video shooting, and I think I will continue to study videography and video editing.

"Getting this job has made me feel more confident and, most importantly, needed. I highly recommend this programme because of the support you will receive, which is very important during a job search."

"Getting this job has made me feel more confident and, most importantly, needed"



Overall progress up until end of year



Total number of BCT customers engaged

52

Total number of customers moved into work, education or training (progressions)

25

Percentage of customers moved into work, education or training

48%

The Foundations for Life Team was awarded the Matrix Standard which demonstrates the high standard and quality of Information, Advice and Guidance. One customer was referred to the Communications Lead for Byker to gain experience in videography and photography. A DBS check has been funded as part of this. Foundations for Life will also provide funding for some software.



Working to improve community access to digital services.

Digital device access at the Pantry

The Pantry has four Chromebooks available for customers to access.

Fibre broadband provision

Discussions have commenced with Openreach to understand the complexities of rolling out fibre broadband across the Byker Estate, in particular the Byker Wall.

Virgin Media has carried out work during the course of the year to connect the majority of the low rise properties to fibre broadband. We are working with NCC to engage providers to complete the fibre roll out to the remaining sections of low rise properties across the estate.

Getting to Know You

The customer data project, "Getting to Know You", is ongoing.

We produced a new 'getting to know you' questionnaire detailing the information Karbon needs to collect. Gaps in customer data are being analysed including development of a customer campaign to collect data using various accessible routes. A questionnaire portal is in testing with collection of missing data commencing in 2025/26.

As of January 2025, Karbon Homes has a better understanding of what customer data we hold and what we need to do to improve the data. Teams have been collaborating to develop a digital form to start collecting new customer data.

There were

584

customers signed up to the MyKarbon portal at the end of the financial year.



Next Steps

As we continue to deliver our Community Pledge to our customers and support Karbon's refreshed approach to place shaping, our next steps in offering long term growth and prosperity to our communities in Byker are:

- Continuing to work with and support our community and voluntary partners to deliver projects and initiatives aligned to the TBS.
- Supporting our community partner, The Lighthouse Project, which has converted St Michael's Church into a state-of-the-art youth and community hub. Opening this year, it will provide a safe and central meeting place for young people and the wider community, alongside a reimagined worship space, and will offer a broad range of sessions and activities, along with access to vital services for our community.
- Continued delivery of investment in our customers' homes to modernise and complete the kitchen, bathroom and internal door replacements.
- Completing our new development of 24 new homes at Bolam Street and working alongside NCC to develop a pipeline of new build proposals for our remaining three land development sites, aligned to housing need for the area and to achieve our overall target of 150 new homes.
- Work in collaboration with NCC to develop sustainable options for the future ownership, decarbonisation and upgrade of the Byker District Heating System.
- Completing our environmental works in the Dunn Terrace neighbourhood and progressing consultation/designs and a delivery programme for the remaining 10 neighbourhoods in the Byker Estate.
- Completing works to bring hobby rooms at Raby Street and Raby Way back into use as essential community assets and a living archive for the estate. Exploring sustainable uses with our community and partners for future hobby room conversions, maximising grant funding where applicable to create sustainable uses for any under-utilised assets.
- Continuing to work with NCC to support the High Street Project.
- Continuing our work in collaboration with NCC to tackle the ongoing litter, waste and fly tipping challenges in Byker, providing education around waste and recycling, and instilling pride in our community.





Call: **0800 533 5442**

✉ enquiries@bykerct.co.uk

💻 www.bykercommunitytrust.org

📘 [bykercommunitytrust](https://www.facebook.com/bykercommunitytrust)

17 Raby Cross, Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2FF

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