

NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Newcastle-under-Lyme

A Legacy of Success
through the UK Shared
Prosperity Fund (**UKSPF**)



INTRODUCTION

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has provided Newcastle-under-Lyme with the opportunity to tackle long-standing economic challenges and lay the foundation for sustainable growth.

Our vision is to create a sustainable, vibrant community where innovation, skills, and aspirations are encouraged. This will bring lasting, positive change for all who live, work, and visit Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The UKSPF is based on three core themes- **Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills.**

In Newcastle-under-Lyme, this approach has supported the development of local businesses, whilst enhancing the borough's overall sense of community.

Through targeted investments, the UKSPF aims to:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs, and living standards.
- Spread opportunities, particularly in areas where they have been weakest.
- Restore a sense of community and pride, especially in places where it has been lost.
- Empower local leaders and communities.

The objectives of the UKSPF align with the Council Plan 2022-2026.

Boosting economic growth, improving local infrastructure, and fostering community wellbeing are at the heart of both.

The council's emphasis on revitalised town centres, sustainable growth, and enhanced community safety mirrors the UKSPF's goals to reduce economic disparity, increase employment opportunities, and support place-based investment.

The council's plans to improve local services aligns with the UKSPF's ambition to empower local authorities to address specific regional challenges.



Communities & Place

Revitalising Neighbourhoods



FUNDING
£2.3
million

With this funding, we have invested in **green spaces**, **cultural heritage**, and **community projects**.



ENGAGEMENT AND REACH

Nearly 85,000 people have been directly impacted by the projects funded through Communities and Place, primarily through the installation of information boards and social media campaigns that have promoted and supported local events.

KEY PROJECTS SUPPORTED

Nature Recovery in Urban Spaces

A comprehensive plan to restore and enhance local green spaces, including tree planting and meadow creation, improving biodiversity and providing residents with cleaner, greener places to live.



"It's made me realise Newcastle is more than just a place to drive through on the way to somewhere else."



Brampton Museum

The Fascinating Folk of Newcastle and The Lost Charter projects



In 2023 Newcastle-under-Lyme celebrated the 850th anniversary of the signing of its founding Charter in 1173.

This project's purpose was to encourage pride in Newcastle-under-Lyme by bringing local people together to mark the town's 850th anniversary with a year of celebration.

A host of activities were held at Brampton Museum, including heritage film shows, music, dance and craft events. The Lost Charter and Fascinating Folk of Newcastle exhibitions proved highly popular, with several of the museum's historic charters conserved and redisplayed.

Celebrate Newcastle - a living history medieval event, which featured three UKSPF supported dance performances, was attended by 3,200 people.



**UKSPF funded Remembrance Weekend event
Sunday 12 November**



The Lost Charter



**Chris Malkin
Memorial
Lecture**

"The variety in the museum has brought it to life."

Nature and Wellbeing

Wild about Brampton

Transforming the **Brampton Park wildlife pond** and delivering engaging activities for young and old to boost **wellbeing and inspire people to care** about the environment



The Wild about Brampton project restored and enhanced the wildlife pond in Brampton Park as a freely accessible public space, creating impactful volunteering opportunities and delivering engaging activities that boosted wellbeing and inspired people to value the natural environment.

The programme was developed and delivered in partnership with local VCSE organisation Groundwork, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and local dementia specialists Father Hudson's Care. Additional support was provided by Newcastle Community Transport, Newcastle Hedgehog Rescue, Newcastle-under-Lyme parks team and a paid student film placement.

The project supported 31 volunteers who gave over 169 hours of their time. Volunteers met monthly to clear the wildlife space, put in new plants, build a dead-hedge fence and bug hotel, and help design a new self-guided eco-wellbeing trail and signage.

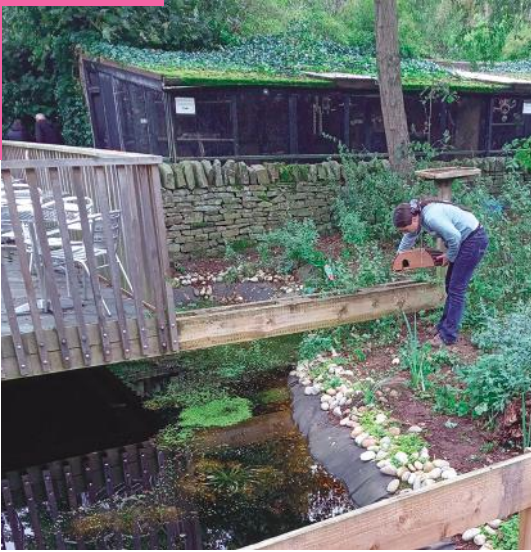
The beautiful new space was then brought to life with activities for families with young children, including seasonal story-times, and Nature Tots sessions, which introduced them to the importance of protecting wildlife. The summer session explored worms and mini-beasts, the autumn session introduced hedgehogs, and the winter session explored birds.

Ten dementia-friendly wellbeing sessions used live music to bring back happy memories, which proved especially popular with local care homes.

"My son absolutely loved it and has not stopped talking about it all day! Thank you"

**Summer session-
super worm themed**





Toad Hall and stone sculpture installed, both donated by local residents

- ❑ Unsafe bridge is removed and safety fencing installed by parks team Contractors build tarmac path
- ❑ Volunteers install 'dead hedge' fencing
- ❑ Volunteers begin clearing area around pond
- ❑ 'Toad hall' habitat box and stone sculpture installed, both donated by local residents



The new pond with wildlife enhancing plants

Wild about Brampton Under 7's Sessions



"So full of life and so vibrant. All credit to the museum staff and team, thank you"

These projects have brought enormous success. The museum was recognised in 2025 at the Enjoy Staffordshire Awards, taking bronze in both the Small Visitor Attraction of the Year and Accessible and Inclusive Tourism categories, as well as being highly commended in Ethical and Sustainable Tourism and for Team of the Year.



Philip Astley Centre



The establishment of the world's first Heritage Centre dedicated to Philip Astley, the father of modern circus born in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1742.

The funding has given life to the Visitor & Activity Centre, becoming a hub for cultural and educational activities, that incorporate ground-based circus skill workshops, talks, lectures, film shows, exhibitions and craft.

The Centre has become a global landmark for circus heritage, attracting international visitors and providing local residents with a unique cultural space. The Centre's first anniversary celebrations, which included circus skills workshops, performances, and a visit from Newcastle-under-Lyme MP Adam Jogee, showcased the growing importance of this venue in promoting local pride and fostering creativity in the borough.

Beat the Street – little changes big results

This health and well-being programme was commissioned and led by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council with support from Chesterton College School Games Organiser.

Beat the Street turns towns into giant games. Players earn points, win prizes and discover more about their area by walking, cycling and wheeling around town.

This far-reaching behaviour-change programme creates a social norm around being active. It connects people to each other and their environment and addresses health inequalities through small changes to daily behaviour.

Throughout the 4-week game, 1441 players travelled more than 4200 miles playing this fun initiative, resulting in 0.4 point increase in life satisfaction and equating to a social and economic value of £400 per adult participant. 12,254 taps were recorded on Beat Boxes throughout the borough with the most popular Box outside Chesterton Primary School.

"It was fun doing it with my family as it brings us closer."

"I got to know places I didn't know before."



New Vic Theatre

Astley's Astounding Adventures

The New Vic Theatre immortalises real-life local hero onstage

This theatrical extravaganza celebrates the genius of local Newcastle Under Lyme hero Philip Astley – the Father of Modern Circus.

From his humble beginnings to international impresario, the play includes drama, music, aerial performance, circus and comedy in an ambitious retelling, celebrate the Borough's 850th anniversary.

The show met with huge acclaim, with 26 performances over 4 weeks attended by more than 7500 people. Press reviews were glowing, with a 4-star review in The Stage and a news piece on BBC Midlands Today.

"Visually inventive, entertaining story of the godfather of modern circus."

The Stage magazine



Aspire Community Connector

This UKSPF funded project in connection with Aspire Housing offers employment and skills specialist advice within the local residents' community. Delivered from Kidsgrove Customer Service Hub (recently refurbished through UKSPF), the project held a workshop as part of Newcastle Business Festival, pulling in support from Staffordshire County Council Support Team, NHS Talking Therapies and NHS Step On.



Homeless Hub

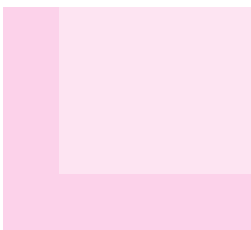
A focus on rough sleepers and at-risk individuals, to provide safe, secure, supported accommodation and wrap-around person-centred support.

To deliver this project, Newcastle-under-Lyme Council is converting a building into two distinct uses: a homelessness hub and a supported accommodation for rough sleepers.

This ambitious, bespoke building offers showers, and laundry and will provide an informal meeting place in a welcoming environment. The project aims to break down barriers to engagement through an environment where local networks and agencies in housing, probation, and adult social care are available to support individuals without the need for an appointment. The proposed on-site support workers in the accommodation and hub will lead on trauma-informed care and a person-centred approach, with provision to provide housing and support-related functions.

Clough Hall Park

Clough Hall Park is a small public park in Kidsgrove, run by Newcastle-under-Lyme, for the community. The park has a children's play area, a football pitch, a skate park, tennis courts and a bowling green.



Honey Box Live

Honey Box Live is a grassroots music project based in Newcastle-under-Lyme, offering emerging musicians, presenters and creatives the chance to develop their craft and perform in a professional broadcast environment.

Its sister strands, **Honey Box Hive** and **Honey Comb**, deliver networking events with performances, guest speakers and peer support, helping to build a stronger, more connected creative community.

Backed by the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**, the project has supported new skills, creative careers and wider cultural engagement across the borough.

Over the last year, they have delivered:

- Seven workshops, for 102 participants. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of attendees saying the sessions increased their confidence.

One participant said: "It's the most I've learned in a short space of time — I feel much more confident about ... live events."

- A training panel with Arts Council England and Help Musicians, attended by 40 creatives

- Presenter development for four individuals, resulting in 17 live presenting opportunities

"We're passionate about live music and creative development." Pete Herbert, managing director of PH Production Services said.

"This year, we also introduced touring opportunities and began building a regional band exchange network, helping local artists reach new audiences and stages.

"Online, our impact continues to grow," he continued. "Facebook followers increased by 94%, Instagram reach rose by 766%, and YouTube views reached 1,478."

Honey Box and Honey Comb are building lasting infrastructure for Newcastle-under-Lyme's cultural future, one performance, workshop and connection at a time.



Supporting Local Business

Fostering Innovation, Employment, and Growth



FUNDING
£1.9
million

Supporting local businesses is at the heart of the **UKSPF's** goal to **create** a more **dynamic and resilient economy**. By investing in **entrepreneurship, innovation, and business sustainability**, **Newcastle-under-Lyme** has enhanced opportunities for local enterprises and **increased job creation**

Business Enterprise Support

Individual coaching and mentoring for entrepreneurs and self-starters, helping them develop sustainable businesses that create long-term employment opportunities. This project has been particularly supportive for residents in deprived communities, helping with business plans and to start viable businesses.



Support Staffordshire Volunteering for All

Empowering communities to be the best they can be

Support Staffordshire offers a free, friendly and confidential Volunteer Brokerage Service, helping people to find opportunities that suit their lifestyle and interests. The UKSPF funding has allowed the project's growth and development with the appointment of a new Volunteering for All official, getting the right people into the following range of roles:

- ☐ Reception work
- ☐ Community garden maintenance
- ☐ Community drivers
- ☐ Charity work
- ☐ Admin support



Connects Network

Supporting Business, Building Community

Connects Network has grown into a key part of the business landscape in Newcastle-under-Lyme, delivering informal, welcoming events that foster genuine connections and support local enterprise.

Backed by UKSPF funding, Connects Network has hosted 11 Connects sessions, including two extended meetups at Keele University, attracting 271 people.

Digital presence has seen a significant boost. Improved content, testimonials and behind-the-scenes footage have driven strong engagement and helped build a recognisable local brand. Facebook visits are up 13 percent, reach has increased by 653 percent, and a new Instagram channel has 234 followers. The Connects Community WhatsApp channel has 50 active members.

Managing Director of PH Production Services Pete Herbert said: "One of our proudest achievements was co-producing and delivering the first Shaping the Future Business Festival.

"The five-day celebration of innovation and entrepreneurship brought together Newcastle Borough Council, Keele University, and NSCG College.

"From standing ovations to pop-up coffee vans and hands-on workshops, the festival was a confident showcase of collaboration, creativity and business potential."

Themed days, including Women in Business, and Innovation were a key part of the festival, which

also featured three keynote speakers, four guest speakers, two hosts, and 16 workshops delivered across 27 sessions.

A business market took place in the town centre over two days, and a 30-stall showcase was hosted at Keele University. More than 250 attendees participated across the week.

Pete added: "Connects is about people, not pitches. It's helping local businesses grow, share ideas, learn from each other and build something stronger together.

"The momentum is real, and the community keeps growing."

"Connects Network was extremely refreshing... a good change of pace." – Rob Fenton



"First time of attending and it was a fab morning... I left buzzing!"

Emma Cronin, Wild Pickle

Keele University Initiatives

Flourish

Through the Flourish programme, Keele University has successfully connected graduates with local businesses, helping them tap into a talented pool of young professionals while supporting the regeneration of Newcastle-under-Lyme's town centre. This initiative has fostered local innovation and enhanced the long-term sustainability of the economy.

The project has enabled Keele students and graduates to work with businesses, not-for-profit organisation and communities in Newcastle-under-Lyme, creating new jobs, encouraging graduates to stay in the area and delivering social and economic benefits.

The project will contribute to the revitalisation of Newcastle-under-Lyme town centre with much of this activity due in the new Digital Society Centre in the town centre.

The project delivers over these key areas:

☐ Digital society and economy

☐ Sustainability

☐ SME innovation

☐ Access to justice

☐ Culture and creativity

☐ Entrepreneurship

“Flourish is a great way of supporting local businesses whilst providing students a great opportunity to gain experience in a workplace setting. The student was professional and delivered an effective project that should help our business to grow.”



Philippa Richardson
Digital Engagement
Manager – Flourish
Programme with
**Ben Hill, Director of
Newcastle coffee
shop, Piccoloco,**
which has previously
received support
from Flourish

Moving Ahead

The Moving Ahead project evolved from a research-focused initiative into a flexible, outcome-driven programme supporting innovation among local businesses. By facilitating 12 innovation funding bids, it enabled companies to adopt new technologies and develop sustainable, growth-oriented strategies, strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Its success has been rooted in collaboration with Keele University academics, offering businesses access to research expertise, technical knowledge, and creative problem-solving. This partnership supports businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate. Combined with innovation network events and individual project support, it has helped numerous businesses navigate diverse paths to innovation.



Keele in Town

Opened in January 2025, this heralded the start of a new chapter for both Keele University and Newcastle-under-Lyme's town centre. An empty heritage building, transformed into a mixed-use facility has created a space where businesses and non-profit organisations can shine, while Keele students and staff can get together, study and connect with the community.

Offering digital connectivity and driving productivity and skills, Keele in Town offers adult courses delivered by Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group, legal advice clinics and MPFT digital training drop-in sessions.

The centre has also hosted several key events including a photo exhibition by Kevin Hayes, a session for International Day of Women and Girls in Science and a Business Innovation Clinic as part of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Business Festival.



'Miner Birds by Kevin Hayes' photo exhibition

993 people directly received Local Business Support

189 entrepreneurs have been assisted - including the Business Enterprise Support project, which delivers local, individual, needs-based help to increase the number of start-ups and combat low levels of entrepreneurship in the area

445 enterprises have received non-financial support, including through Moving Ahead. This project helps business grow through innovation support, R&D relationships, and a strong local network

The University of Staffordshire's Advanced & Digital Technologies Innovation Accelerator (ADTIA)

This far-reaching project has helped local businesses adopt new digital technologies, improving their productivity and global competitiveness.

The Advanced & Digital Technologies Innovation Accelerator (ADTIA), fully funded through Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, has supported 20 Newcastle-based businesses to adopt advanced or digital technology.

With academic support, a University of Staffordshire student (Innovation Consultant) worked with businesses to support their development of new products or services, or make operational changes to increase productivity.

Examples of successful collaborations were:

Thrive and Shine - an organisation that evaluates and reports on employee stress within businesses developed a platform to allow them to streamline and automate their processes, meaning they could work with larger employers as well as reduce their costs to become accessible to more businesses.



Staffordshire Precision Engineering - saw its Innovation Consultant transform the document management system.

In addition to the benefits to business, the students and graduates who took part in these 360hr funded placements learnt valuable, real world, on the job skills, developing communication skills, project management and time management skills, which would prepare them for employment after education, increasing their employability.

Success stories include:

- ❑ At Time 4 Sport one of the placement students secured a two year role as KPT Associate.
- ❑ Concentric Solutions offered its placement student a full-time developer job.



Growth Hub

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub – A Recipe for Local Success

This one-stop shop for central support service helps local businesses start, grow, and thrive. Through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub delivers fully funded support programmes that have played a vital role in driving sustainable economic growth across the region.

The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub acts as a first point of contact for businesses seeking advice, funding, and support, connecting them with a wide network of over 120 public and private sector partners. It simplifies access to business support on funding, regulations, marketing and sustainability, and tailors its services to the unique needs of each business.

UKSPF projects include:

- ☐ Support for Newcastle Business Festival
- ☐ Dedicated business advisors providing one-on-one guidance, helping businesses navigate grant applications, growth strategies, and innovation opportunities
- ☐ Business mentoring
- ☐ Digital technology support
- ☐ Green energy and sustainability initiatives
- ☐ Marketing and branding assistance – including events and workshops



The Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub
Manager Rachel Wood meets Business Festival Keynote Speaker Keith Brymer Jones



Business Festival street entertainment



People & Skills

Addressing Skills Gaps and Empowering Local Residents



The **People and Skills** theme focuses on **tackling barriers** to employment, particularly for those facing **long-term health issues**, **economic inactivity**, or a lack of skills. By **investing in upskilling and training**, this theme ensures that local residents are equipped to access **high-quality jobs** and improve their **overall employability**.



Key Projects Supported

NEWCASTLE AND STAFFORD COLLEGES GROUP UPSKILLING COURSES

Using UKSPF funding to develop local skills

This initiative has delivered short courses in critical sectors, addressing local skills shortages and improving career prospects for all.

Georgina Barnard, Director of Projects for NSCG, said: "The Shared Prosperity Fund has allowed us to design and deliver highly technical short upskilling courses in priority sectors – advanced manufacturing, construction and digital.

"Not everyone can commit to a two or three year programme of study and our employers need skills now. These short courses are important to help businesses thrive in the region."



EEE4 DISADVANTAGED UPSKILL PROJECT

Targeting adults from disadvantaged backgrounds, this project has provided tailored support to help them gain new skills and enhance their employability.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE 50+ WORKFORCE

A targeted effort to bring experienced individuals back into the workforce, leveraging their valuable expertise while providing them with training to stay competitive in today's job market.

GREEN SKILLS

As part of the transition to a green economy, this project has offered training in sustainable technologies, ensuring that local residents can access emerging job opportunities in this growing sector.

- Number of economically inactive people engaging with keyworker support services - **273**
- People receiving support to gain employment - **332**
- Volunteering opportunities supported - **60**

A TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURE FOR NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME



The UK Shared Prosperity Fund has enabled Newcastle-under-Lyme to embark on a journey of regeneration and economic growth, tackling long-standing challenges and creating a foundation for future success.

With the support of UKSPF, these projects have revitalised the borough's cultural, business, and social landscape.

Through continued investment in Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills, Newcastle-under-Lyme is laying the groundwork for long-term prosperity.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

A key enabler of the successful UKSPF delivery in Newcastle-under-Lyme was the development of strong relationships as the intervention projects progressed.

Several delivery partners were able to leverage existing networks and relationships previously established by other delivery partners accessing UKSPF support.

Informal meetings and debriefs were key to relationship building, which facilitated cross-project learnings.

Each delivery partner had opportunities to provide updates to the wider group. The cohort discussed intervention projects in turn and provided collaborative support to either bridge networks or directly refer beneficiaries to intervention projects within the cohort.

Some business beneficiaries participated in multiple business interventions supported through the UKSPF.

**Geoff Beadle, Economic Development Officer,
Growth & Development, Newcastle Under Lyme
Borough Council, said:**



"The UKSPF has not only succeeded in its initial aims to support economic growth for the businesses of Newcastle and foster heightened community well-being, but it has also enabled us to address specific regional challenges.

"I can't thank the projects enough for their collaborative approach. Partnerships have been forged that will empower and improve our Borough well into the future."