

WELCOME TO



DURHAM
COMMUNITY
ACTION

Durham Community Action Overview

About Us

Durham Community Action is recognised as the leading infrastructure organisation for County Durham; providing advice, support and assistance to frontline groups operating in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and to various communities of interest. We enjoy national influence and presence along with 37 similar rural community councils, through our membership of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

Our Offer

Our varied work is divided into four main themes as described below. We offer a bespoke service; a large proportion of our services are fully funded or pro-bono so free to the community, but some are on a paid for basis - we will discuss this in detail with you when you make your initial enquiry.

ENABLING COMMUNITIES

- **Community Development Support:** a specialist information, advice and guidance service for individuals looking to set up a VCS organisation, and to volunteers and committee members of established VCS organisations or community buildings. Our bespoke approach allows us to enable our clients to get the information, advice and guidance they need on a wide range of topics including governance and funding. We support voluntary led organisations to build on their practice and facilitate a regular programme of events and training including our Community Hubs Development Programme.
- **Share and Learn Network:** we facilitate a network of voluntary led community organisations running local buildings/assets and local services who meet on a regular basis to discuss specific topics. We encourage the network to share their experience through an online forum and support best practice through our programme of events and training.
- **Community Led Planning:** facilitation, support and guidance for organisations looking to produce a community plan.
- **Bespoke Casework:** we have the expertise to provide a range of community development solutions. We aim to support volunteer led community organisations through the provision of individually tailored projects that support an organisation meets its specific needs. We cover a range of growth and development topics including organisational strategy and development, technical management of charity commission requirements, fundraising strategy and business planning. These bespoke packages of casework will enable organisations to build a thorough, in-depth understanding of their organisations/projects vision, needs and goals.
- **Training:** we offer a wide range of skills development and practical guidance on a range of topics, including good trusteeship, financial management, managing risk and attracting new business.

GETTING VOICES HEARD

- **Partnerships:** we support and broker a lot of partnership working in County Durham, both within the VCS and across the voluntary and public sectors. This provides a range of opportunities for professionals and volunteers to share experiences, solve problems and work more effectively together. Check our website for details about partnership working in the County and the roles we play to support it.
- **Campaigns and Consultations:** we participate in local and national campaigns and consultations and encourage the individuals and groups we work with to input their views and experiences to help try and make a difference.

PROMOTING ACTION

- **Food Durham:** hosting of the County Durham Food Partnership that works to support and grow a 'fairer, greener, healthier' food system in County Durham. It has produced a Sustainable Local Food Strategy and Food Charter and runs two main projects: Growing Durham and the Durham Food Hub.
- **Growing Durham:** Growing Durham is helping more people across the county to grow some of their own food. It is creating a network of new and diverse community growing schemes that will help to improve access to fresh vegetables, herbs and fruit.

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING

- **I want to Volunteer:** we provide support and advice to those wishing to volunteer including arranging a confidential one to one interview with a trained volunteer adviser to find out what opportunities may be available, providing information about volunteering and current opportunities and assistance with filling out any required paperwork.
- **Involving Volunteers:** we offer practical help to those organisations wishing to recruit volunteers including finding volunteers through our brokerage service and advertising volunteering opportunities through www.do-it.org.uk (the national volunteering database).
- **Good Practice Guides:** we have a range of guides which cover volunteering topics and provide advice in different aspects of volunteer management.
- **Volunteer Kite Mark:** we can support organisations to achieve a quality standard in volunteering – County Durham Volunteer Kite Mark which recognises an organisations commitment to overcome barriers to support and develop their volunteers.
- **Volunteer Passport:** we offer an accredited pre-volunteering course for those interested in finding out more about volunteering which covers generic skills needed for different volunteering roles. Organisations are invited to meet learners and promote their opportunities.
- **County Durham Volunteers Coordinator Forum:** we facilitate this forum which provides the opportunity for staff and volunteers who are responsible for volunteer management in their organisation to network with those from other organisations who have similar responsibilities.
- **Training:** we offer a wide range of accredited and non-accredited skills development and practical guidance on a range of topics including the Volunteer Passport and managing volunteers.

The following sections outline each of our areas of work in more detail

ENABLING COMMUNITIES



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

We offer a specialist information, advice and guidance service for individuals looking to set up a voluntary or community organisation, and to volunteers and committee members of established voluntary or community sector organisations or community buildings.

Our service provides a wide range of practical help, resources, advice and support in areas including accounting systems, asset transfer, charity registration and charity law, committee procedures, deeds and leases, employment law, governing document review, health and safety requirements, incorporation as a company or CIO, insurance, land registration, licensing requirements, management committee responsibilities, marketing opportunities, policies and procedures, trustees roles and responsibilities and village surveys.

We are keen to support groups and develop new ideas and innovation. We can assist with the setting up of groups, developing an appropriate governing document and organisational structure, funding advice, policy development, charity registration, strategies for development and resourcing the work, business planning, nurturing partnership working, trustee development and providing training opportunities.

SHARE AND LEARN NETWORK

We also run a Share and Learn Network online forum which focuses on three key areas – Fundraising, Marketing and Running Your Building and there is also an area for Volunteer Coordinators to share information. We encourage groups to use the forum to share ideas, news and suggestions, request information and ask questions. Members of the network are also invited to regular meetings to discuss specific topics.

COMMUNITY LED PLANNING

We have a long and unrivalled background in helping to support communities across County Durham to produce a Community Led Plan for their area. Community Led Plans can support local communities, Parish Councils and partner organisations to fully understand the issues that are faced by and important to local people. We can provide specialist support and invaluable experience to help any organisation looking to produce a plan. Our staff can facilitate community meetings, support steering groups, provide template documents, offer guidance on consultation, and help to support the drafting of the final document.

FUNDING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

We provide advice and support to groups across County Durham, both large and small, to help them access funding to develop their work. We encourage groups to develop a funding strategy to ensure they are looking at a sustainable model of fundraising which addresses a range of income including grant funding, tendering for contracts, provision of services, donations and fundraising, and trading if appropriate.

ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT

We provide the facilitation of bespoke sessions to assist groups to look at their current projects and review their direction of travel for going forward. This is a dynamic process that requires attendees to evaluate their current provision/services and plan their future. Through this process the group should build a thorough, in-depth understanding of their organisations/projects vision, needs and goals.

BUSINESS PLANNING

Our team of staff have a wide range of experience drawn from across the business, charity and social enterprise sectors. We are able to guide organisations through the business planning process; in particular we offer support by providing model templates and facilitating workshops or discussions to help you make decisions on an appropriate model of operation.

TRAINING

We offer a wide range of skills development and practical guidance on a range of topics, including good trusteeship, financial management, managing risk and attracting new business.

For more information please contact Kate Burrows, Community Support Manager on 01388 742051, email kate.burrows@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk or visit <http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/general.html>

GETTING VOICES HEARD

PARTNERSHIPS

we support and broker a lot of partnership working in County Durham, both within the VCS and across the voluntary and public sectors. This provides a range of opportunities for professionals and volunteers to share experiences, solve problems and work more effectively together. Check our website for details about partnership working in the County and the roles we play to support it.



CAMPAIGNS AND CONSULTATIONS

We participate in local and national campaigns and consultations and encourage the individuals and groups we work with to input their views and experiences to help try and make a difference.

For more information please visit <http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/getting-voices-heard.html>

PROMOTING ACTION

FOOD DURHAM

We host a project to support the production and consumption of sustainable food in County Durham. The project places food at the centre of policy making as a driver of community, economic and environmental development. It is about encouraging a healthier, greener and fairer food system that supports our local economy. Food Durham is the working name for the County Durham Food Partnership and it is a member of the Sustainable Food Cities network. The project has produced a Sustainable Local Food Strategy (2014 – 2020) and Food Charter. It is now actively implementing the Strategy by developing and running new projects and by partners in member organisations working on issues including Food and Health, Public Sector food procurement, and Food Poverty. More details about the partnership can be found at www.fooddurham.net



GROWING DURHAM

This is helping more people across the county to grow some of their own food. It is creating a network of new and diverse community growing schemes that will help to improve access to fresh vegetables, herbs and fruit. Our support includes working with individuals and groups to look at different approaches to community growing projects and help them choose the best approach, identifying suitable land and advising on infrastructure, planting, maintenance, helping to write funding bids, linking people and projects who are doing similar things and delivering skills development sessions and sharing information.

For more information please contact Hannah on 01388 742048 or email hannah.murray-leslie@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk or Peter on 01388 742054 or email peter.samsom@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk or visit <http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/food-durham.html>)

SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING



I WANT TO VOLUNTEER

We provide support and advice to those wishing to volunteer including arranging a confidential one to one interview with a trained volunteer adviser to find out what opportunities may be available, providing information about volunteering and current opportunities and assistance with filling out any required paperwork. We also offer support and training to those who are already actively volunteering providing local services or co-ordinating local clubs and groups.

INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

We offer practical help to those organisations wishing to recruit volunteers including finding volunteers through our brokerage service and advertising volunteering opportunities through www.do-it.org.uk (the national volunteering database).

We also interview potential volunteers and match them to suitable volunteering opportunities, offer practical help and support including recruitment processes, DBS checks, training opportunities, expenses and insurance, and support and access to publications and useful resources.

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDES

We have a range of guides which cover volunteering topics and provide advice in different aspects of volunteer management.

VOLUNTEER KITE MARK

We can support organisations to achieve a quality standard in volunteering – County Durham Volunteer Kite Mark which recognises an organisations commitment to overcome barriers to support and develop their volunteers.

VOLUNTEER PASSPORT

We offer an accredited pre-volunteering course for those interested in finding out more about volunteering which covers generic skills needed for different volunteering roles. Organisations are invited to meet learners and promote their opportunities.

COUNTY DURHAM VOLUNTEERS COORDINATOR FORUM

We facilitate this forum which provides the opportunity for staff and volunteers who are responsible for volunteer management in their organisation to network with staff and volunteers from other organisations who have similar responsibilities.

Presentations are regularly given by organisations on new initiatives or overviews of volunteering programmes. Training and support are also offered to forum participants to enable them to be effective in their roles as volunteer coordinators.

TRAINING

We offer a wide range of accredited and non-accredited skills development and practical guidance on a range of topics including the Volunteer Passport and managing volunteers.

For more information please contact Abby Thompson, Volunteering Manager on 01388 742055, email abby.thompson@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk or visit <http://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/supporting-volunteering.html>

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