



# Wallsend Children's Community **Strategy 2023-2026**

## **Our Vision:**

Empowering every child, young person and family  
in Wallsend to fulfil their potential



Media Enquiries:  
[paula.mccormack@ntlp.org.uk](mailto:paula.mccormack@ntlp.org.uk)



[wallsendonline.co.uk](http://wallsendonline.co.uk)



Wallsend Children's Community



[wallsend@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:wallsend@savethechildren.org.uk)

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## Introduction from the Community Champions' Group

Wallsend Children's Community is so important in our area because it's a way for us as locals to get our views across about issues such as children, schools and poverty. Otherwise our views would fall on deaf ears and nothing would be done. It's giving us as parents the chance to be heard, to feel involved, to get advice and to also share advice with others. Really, it's about helping each other, showing that Wallsend can work together so we can make things better together.

Our Children's Community has connected us all together to work towards the greater good. For example, helping to create an amazing lifeline by having organisations who help to provide free childcare for struggling parents and children during all of the school summer holidays. There's also been help with school uniforms, Christmas gift ideas and lots more. Without these things local families would really be feeling the burden. Our Children's Community is spreading the love and respect we all truly deserve.

It's so helpful and lovely that it's hard to imagine Wallsend without it now. Every area should be working towards creating a Children's Community like ours, to be able to work more efficiently and better. As a project this is a great role model for all families to follow and spread around North Tyneside, because the way we work is mind-blowingly magnificent. With this new organisation we are also changing too, like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, we are growing to meet all of our needs and aspirations.

## Introduction from the Chair

It gives me great pleasure to share our new strategic plan. We are confident that this is an inclusive plan because it is rooted in years of involvement with and listening to our community here in Wallsend. It sets an ambitious course to work with people who live in our community and agencies that work in our community to empower every child and family to fulfil their potential.

This strategy builds on the success we have achieved together over the last few years. I believe that its four headline objectives set a clear course for our future. Our link with Save the Children will continue in terms of support for our work and to help us get the voice of Wallsend out to national decision makers.

Meanwhile I am excited by the work we are doing across our community to ensure the way we organise ourselves in Wallsend will really help us into the future by making sure we have the right structure in place as well as secure funding.

The most important part of what we do is to work with people who live in this community or partners who work in this area. Despite any challenges we have faced there is a real sense of passion here in Wallsend that will help our young people to safely and successfully grow up here and take on a career that will allow them and their family to flourish.

Thanks go out to our community of parents, carers, young people, charities and organisations, and we look forward to continuing this work to ensure we have the biggest impact on our young people.

**David Baldwin**

Chair of the Wallsend Children's Community Transition Board

## Summary of the last few years

The town of Wallsend, on the north bank of the River Tyne has a proud history dating back to Roman times. It is famous as the eastern terminus of Hadrian's Wall. During the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries it was heavily industrialised, known for coal and shipyards. Sadly, shifts in the global economy over recent decades have meant the loss of this traditional economic base. The town now experiences considerable levels of inequality and disadvantage, reflected over many different metrics from educational achievement to health and wellbeing. The impact upon local children and young people is notable and concerning. Working in partnership to bring them hope and opportunity is therefore our primary concern.

Over the past 6 years, the Wallsend Children's Community has been developed as a project of the national charity Save The Children, to be a catalyst for local change. A small but dedicated team have been actively tackling inequalities hand in hand with children, families, schools, charities, community centres, healthcare and other services. The initiative worked hard to bring together key people and organisations interested in developing a collective strategy. No single organisation has the expertise or resources to tackle the issues that prevent our children and young people from thriving – the health inequalities, the delayed early years development, the educational gaps, the suppressed aspirations. Yet by working together with shared goals we believe we can create locally-relevant solutions that will really make a difference.

We're really proud of what we've achieved in **three key areas:**

### Connecting Organisations

There is now healthy collaboration between services for funding and provision that more widely benefits the community. A partnership of 13 organisations was formed to work together to support families through the Emergency Response Grants during COVID. 349 families benefited from over £100,000 in support. We brought together several partners developing a committed local workforce to deliver holiday activity programmes supporting thousands of local children and young people to access social, emotional, and physical activities, learn new skills and experience new places.

We've connected several Wallsend schools to the Opening Schools Facilities programme and the North of Tyne Combined Authority's Child Poverty Prevention Programme, bringing vital funding and services directly into schools providing welfare advice, family learning, breakfast and after school clubs, food and uniform banks.



## Case Study: Organisational Representative

The North of Tyne Combined Authority came up with a really great plan called the Child Poverty Prevention programme. They teamed up with our schools, and Wallsend Children's Community (WCC) has been doing an awesome job bringing it to life in nine out of the seventeen schools in Wallsend. These schools were chosen because they're in areas where lots of families face tough times, especially financially.

This programme has three big parts, or "Pillars," for schools:

**Pillar 1:**  
Helping out with  
poverty in  
schools

**Pillar 2:**  
Giving advice and  
support to  
families right at  
the school gates

**Pillar 3:**  
Helping bosses  
understand how  
to help their  
workers better,  
beyond just  
money

With Pillar 1, WCC has brought in local groups to help schools, from cooking sessions for families to make food and making clothes available. For Pillar 2, they received help from North Tyneside Citizens Advice Bureau (NTCAB).

They didn't know much about schools or communities, but have the skills of supporting families with money issues. Working together, all parties are ensuring families get the timely help they need.

WCC also used their know-how to make sure NTCAB worked well with each school's community. They introduced NTCAB staff at fun events and even online to make them familiar faces.

Now, NTCAB is part of the partnership, helping with grants and joining a range of organisations making Wallsend an awesome place for families. It's all about raising children together, like one big village!



## Sharing Learning

There are now evidence-informed initiatives that truly make a difference to children and young people in Wallsend. The Wallsend Children's Community now facilitates the Wallsend Schools Partnership, enabling 17 schools to gather insights from community, parent, and pupil surveys covering 7000 children. Now equipped with crucial data, schools can better understand and support children and families facing financial, mental health, and other stresses in their lives. As a result, it has been possible to connect partners to run community activities, food and school uniform banks, and also host summer and holiday activities for children whose parents experience in-work poverty. These 10 programs over 89 days serve as lifelines for parents, including Sarah, who stated that: *now as a family we have a whole community behind us, going to events every day, fully dressed, coping & happier.'*

### Case Study: Organisational

North Tyneside Learning Trust and its schools have benefitted enormously from the contribution made by Wallsend Children's Community in connecting children, young people and families, to valuable opportunities offered by regional and national partners.

Relationships with regional partners including the North of Tyne Combined Authority has served to ensure that nine schools in Wallsend are now actively engaged in the Child Poverty Prevention Programme geared towards tackling the symptoms and causes of child poverty.

By working in partnership with Wallsend Children's Community 524 families with children under 5 years old were identified for Emergency Response Grants supported by Save the Children. £154,926 has been allocated so far, alleviating the impact of poverty on very young children. The grants have proven to be a lifeline to many Wallsend families, particularly during the Covid -19 pandemic. The programme has also served to strengthen relationships between home and school enabling positive interventions in other areas including attendance.

Ofsted reports on schools in Wallsend regularly feature the contribution and impact of Wallsend Children's Community. Schools rely on valuable research and intelligence supplied by Wallsend Children's Community to shape services and tailor interventions to meet the needs of their school community. In creating and sustaining these connections with regional and national partners, Wallsend Children's Community is having a transformative impact on the experiences and life chances of children, young people and families living in Wallsend.

## Empowering People

Now, Wallsend is a more connected, empowered and resilient community. The Wallsend Children's Community set up Wallsend Online that enables hundreds of regular users to find out what is going on for children and families in the area with content designed by young people and partners. A lively group of 28 'Community Champions' calling themselves "You got this group" has also been formed involving local people who understand the challenges and strengths of the Wallsend community. The Champions' voices shape provision locally and inform national policy, and they connect Children's Community activity with the wider community to ensure families are getting the support they need. As one of our parents put it: *"I now know what I need help with, who to talk to about it and where to get that help when I need it."*

### Case Study: Staci's Story

Wallsend Children's Community has played a transformative role in Staci's life. From being a shy participant in holiday programs, she has grown into a proactive and influential advocate for a cause she believes in. Staci was subsequently selected as one of eight young people chosen to be part of Save the Children's national Child Poverty Campaign Group. She attended a week-long residential programme to decide what the campaign should encompass. This included discussions about what poverty means and doesn't mean, as well as determining the narrative of the campaign. Next, she travelled to London to work with the media team at SCUK's head office. Again, she played a crucial role, particularly in the music selection for the campaign film. Later, she flew to Bristol to join a film crew for the filming of the campaign video. This was a new experience for her, which she embraced despite her nerves of flying for the first time. The culmination of Staci's efforts and the entire campaign came when the film was launched on Sky News. Staci's involvement in the project contributed significantly to its success. Her involvement allowed her to develop essential life skills, gain media exposure, and contribute to an important social issue. The experience has boosted her self-confidence and provided her with valuable skills for the future.



Standing on the platform of these achievements we now feel that the time is right to step out from under the umbrella of Save The Children to form a locally-rooted organisation:

**Wallsend Children's Community**

**This strategy sets out the top priorities of the new organisation.**



## Strategic Objectives and Goals

We have identified four headline objectives, each linked to a number of goals. The objectives will be fulfilled through the cumulative effect of achieving the goals associated with them.

- It is expected that operational delivery plans will be drafted, unpacking each of the goals in terms of specific actions, deadlines, financial implications, performance measures, etc.
- This means that the strategic plan can be reviewed and updated annually as part of the natural business planning cycle to assess the progress being made toward the fulfilment of the objectives.



## Objective 1: Growing Collective Impact

We will seek the best possible outcomes for children and young people from cradle to career, working with our community and a wide range of partners in an atmosphere of shared responsibility to enable the children and young people of Wallsend to thrive. Our goals remain in line with the North Tyneside Children and Young People's Plan 2021-25 and resonate with the ethos behind our work as a village raising children together.

### Goals

#### 1.1, To mobilise partners in delivering around 3 core themes:

##### 1. *Getting things right early to get the best start in life*

- Focus on the first 1001 days of life, supporting positive early attachment and consistent parent-child interactions
- Support positive progression on EYFS 0-5 framework through our Early Years Network and Early Years grants

##### 2. *Fit and Healthy*

- Working towards attaining this in its fullest sense for every child and young person to have good physical and mental health and feel happy.

##### 3. *Realising Aspirations*

- Opportunities to discover new horizons and develop belief in oneself
- Supporting schools to ensure further education pathways are clear and accessible to enable choice
- Supporting schools to ensure young people are prepared for future careers with local employers ready to welcome young people and support them to be ready for the world of work

#### 1.2, Develop key impact indicators around the 3 core themes (see 1.1)

##### 1. *Greater clarity on what impact we contribute and why*

- Conduct research and seek advice around potential impact baselines
- Also measures of "throughput" e.g. how many Community Champions have been engaged to make a positive contribution

##### 2. *Co-produce shared methods and systems for consistent evidence collection.*

- Develop shared standards of anonymised data exchange
- Ability to highlight within data the particular contribution made by WCCT and the difference it made

### 1.3, Getting closer to impact-making

#### 1. *Involvement in research*

- Highlight regional and national best practice, track emerging needs, generate insight, spot new issues as they emerge and disseminate to relevant partners

#### 2. *Facilitate co-design*

- Increasing the voice, agency and power of people raising children in Wallsend in the process

#### 3. *Commissioning work*

- Being responsive to local needs and demand.
- Forming collaborative teams to pilot, prove concept then push out via partners and providers

#### 4. *Being flexible around delivery*

- Develop appropriate partnerships where gaps exist

### 1.4, To share insight and learning

1. Taking time to look closely at what is happening and learning to improve the overall quality and consistency of local delivery

2. Ensuring initiatives are evidence-informed so that impact for children and young people can be reliably expected



Objective

1

## Objective 2: Increasing Collective Influence

We will play a pro-active and effective role both supporting and challenging all those who share in the vision of the Children's Community to shape and scale up the number, quality, consistency and sustainability of opportunities that are being accessed by children, young people and families in Wallsend.

### Goals

#### 2.1, Connecting Organisations

1. *Facilitating collaboration between services to identify and scale up best practice that benefits children, young people and the community*

- Better mapping of which organisations are involved and why
- Networking people and facilitating meetings and events

#### 2.2, Greater focus to our influencing

1. *Helping the wider system involved with children, young people and families become increasingly able to:*

- Self-reflect
- Include and collaborate
- To mobilise community voice
- Make decisions based on local insight and evidence
- Shift towards a focus on root cause and prevention

#### 2.3, Improve communications and awareness of the work of Wallsend Children's Community

1. *Engage hundreds/thousands of local people in a vibrant two-way conversation about what the Wallsend Children's Community is, does, and how to be involved.*

- Build on the success of initiatives such as Wallsend Online along with other digital and physical methods of reaching and engaging people
- Grow our mailing list for news distribution
- Implement a You Said We Did approach

2. *Grow the local, regional and national reputation of the Wallsend Children's Community*

- Maintain an ongoing link to Save The Children, supporting its Policy, Advocacy and Campaigning e.g. Potential not Poverty campaign

3. *Develop and action a 3-year communications plan*

- Ensure clarity of message and consistency of message
- Develop a strong and persistent voice that is expected from all speaking on behalf of the Wallsend Children's Community, linked to our value of speaking human
  - Become better storytellers using a combination of case studies and performance data to reveal both the texture and scale of impact made

## Case Study: Gemma, Community Champion

Gemma is a local parent of three children and one of over twenty Community Champions (CCs) supported by Wallsend Children's Community (WCC). At one of their weekly meetings, the subject of parental mental health was raised as a common issue. Gemma suggested that she would lead a group on a walk in the local park and share some mindfulness exercises with them. WCC provided support and encouragement to help her get started and "Wellbeing Wander" was born.

The initiative has been a big hit, enabling young parents to get outdoors, breathe fresh air, connect with other parents and with nature, all whilst getting some gentle exercise. An improved sense of wellbeing has been a common outcome for almost all involved.

As parenting can sometimes be isolating this initiative enables a natural support network to be created, combatting loneliness and fostering a sense of community. It's also been an opportunity to introduce or re-introduce parents and children to the nature on their doorstep in Richardson Dees Park, growing familiarity and use at other times. The children really enjoy playing, exploring, and having fun in a natural outdoor setting.

Gemma showcases activities parents can do with children with no cost for resources, which have been aligned with current events, such as summer solstice, weather, seasons etc. The incorporation of mindfulness activities and practices helps participants reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and enhance overall emotional health.

The involvement of the parks team in Richardson Dees Park and introduction and subsequent funding from Rise North East, demonstrates community engagement and collaboration, leading to the successful implementation of the program, illustrating how community members and local organisations can work together to create initiatives that benefit the community as a whole, improving the quality of life for parents and children alike.



## Objective 3: Securing Essential Resources

We will ensure that Wallsend Children's Community has all it needs in terms of secure, sustainable funding and a dynamic and versatile team of staff and volunteers, many of whom will be 'qualified by experience'.

### Goals

#### 3.1, Implement our fundraising strategy

1. *Facilitating collaboration between services to identify and scale up best practice that benefits children, young people and the community*
- Sign-off a new fundraising strategy and then break that down into an actionable plan with corresponding responsibilities delegated to the appropriate team members / third parties
- Action the fundraising strategy to secure sustainable funding
- Maintain our commitment to bringing external financial resources into Wallsend and not compete for local funds that are a lifeline for the grassroots organisations we partner with

#### 3.2, Grow Local People

1. *We will grow a dynamic and versatile team blending the skills and energies of both staff and volunteers*
  - Greater emphasis on a 'grow your own' model with increased role for local people 'qualified by experience' – especially parents and carers
  - Explore flexible models of payment for participation – important for local people who have lots to offer but cannot afford to volunteer their time
  - Employ staff in roles that have a clear business case related to at least one of our four strategic objectives
  - Support youth-led opportunities around leadership, volunteering, social action and accreditation
2. *Equip our team with all they need to succeed*
  - Sign-off a new fundraising strategy and then break that down into an actionable plan with corresponding responsibilities delegated to the appropriate team members / third parties
    - Strengthen the team in respect of skills and abilities required in the area of communications
      - Take good care of the health and wellbeing of those working for or on behalf of Wallsend Children's Community
3. *Equip partners to build a local workforce*
  - Engaging local businesses and charities serving young people and families within our education sector
  - Engaging local education staff with local businesses and charities to maximise income and impact
    - Be responsive to changing environments and challenges our community is facing through investment in local workforce development

## Objective 4: Structuring for Success

Our organisation will be the long-term custodian of the Wallsend Children's Community. Therefore, we will transition into a new legal form choosing the option that will best facilitate our vision. Aligned to this we must consider what roles are required along with more effectively arranging our various boards, working groups and committees to ensure that the people of Wallsend are integrally involved and at the heart of direction and decisions.

### Goals

#### 4.1, Develop and implement a transition plan [through 2023-24]

##### 1. *Research, select and establish Wallsend Children's Community as a legal entity*

- An options appraisal to be produced in good time to enable the formation of the new entity in early 2024

##### 2. *To take into consideration:*

- Engineering an ongoing link of some kind to Save The Children, finding the right balance of maximising ongoing credibility whilst achieving greater autonomy
- Risks around which types of legal arrangement may help or hinder the ambition to bring local people closer to the heart of direction and accountability

#### 4.2, Explore Wallsend Children's Community's relationship to other groups within the area

##### 1. *Agree new governance arrangements*

- Recruit and appoint new trustees/directors or whatever the new entity requires
- Clarify relationship between Wallsend Children's Community, the Community Partnership Board and the Community Champions
- Define the future relationship between what is currently the 'Core Team' and the Community Partnership Board

##### 2. *Continually improve the way we bring people together*

- People gathered may have many differences but must be united around the common cause of wanting what is best for children, young people and families in Wallsend
  - Welcoming, safe, accessible spaces in which local people can build trust, share needs and find solutions

Objective

4

# Appendix 1 – Our Values

## We all love Wallsend

We have more things in common than things that divide us. The main thing that unites all of us is that we love Wallsend and want the best for our children and young people

## We include and involve

*“Nothing about us without us.”* This means those affected by the issues – children and young people and those raising them – are at the heart of shaping how those issues are addressed

## We speak and behave “human”

When we get together and talk, we use language that we all understand, avoiding jargon. We think human when we agree actions, we are led by lived experience

## We put our talking into action

We are ambitious / impatient to see change because this is how our community feels. Together we expect things to happen as a result of all the talk

## Appendix 2 – What do we mean by Community?

During 2023 the Wallsend Children's Community held facilitated events with local people exploring what the idea of community means to them. A range of connected ideas emerged including the following themes:

- Wallsend as our place, where we live, our geography, our history and the physical spaces we live in.



- Wallsend as our people, our sense of family, belonging and safety, everyone living here, learning here, working and volunteering here.



- Wallsend as our vision, something bigger than ourselves, empowering, inspiring, sharing values, helping, supporting, making things happen, looking out for each other, talking and listening, togetherness and trust.

