

# Big changes start locally

2015 - 2017  
Impact review



# Welcome

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**The Virgin Money Foundation opened its doors in August 2015 with a question to ask in every community facing a social or economic disadvantage: ‘What do you see?’**

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We asked this - and still ask it - because we believe passionately that the Virgin Money Foundation can make the biggest difference by supporting individuals and organisations that have the drive and ability to act on their vision to bring change in their own local community. Within these pages you will hear the stories of these individuals and institutions who, with support from the Virgin Money Foundation, have been working for change in their community.

It is already evident that the support we have given local charities has delivered important outcomes: people gaining sustainable housing where they otherwise would have no home, young people securing jobs when they never thought they would and new social enterprises being launched in the North East of England. It has been

a privilege to work with the inspiring organisations whose work has achieved these outcomes.

In our first 18 months of operation we have seen a growing movement of social entrepreneurs and organisations who are playing their part in making a lasting difference in places where it is needed most. These people are unafraid to challenge the status quo and work for change with their time, energies and actions.

As we develop as a Foundation our ambition is to invest in this growing movement. We will contribute financial resource and, vitally, draw upon our relationship with Virgin Money to provide skilled volunteers and additional expertise to strengthen their work. You will read in this report the way that we have started to make this distinctive offer and the plans we have to do even more in the future.



**Edward Wakefield**  
Chair of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward Wakefield".



**Nancy Doyle**  
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Doyle".

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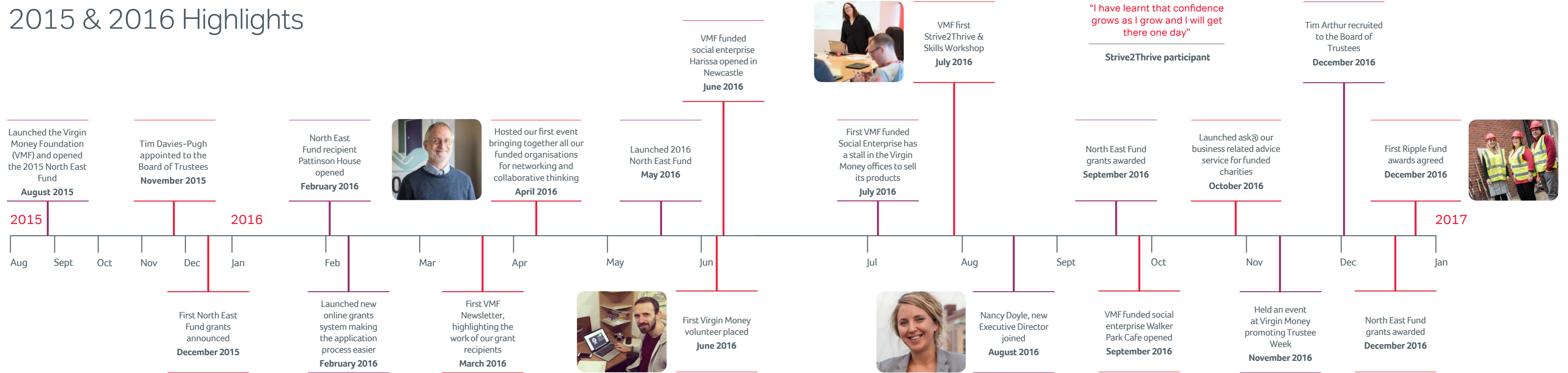
“The Virgin Money Foundation gave us the confidence to know that what we are doing really matters”

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**Carla Keegans**  
Ethical Lettings Agency

# Timeline

## 2015 & 2016 Highlights



*"We received a volunteer to help us design our website. Our volunteer, Pete is still helping us. The new website will increase our supporters and help us to communicate our work more effectively. We also attended social media training which was very helpful and we have really increased our usage over the past few months as a result."*

Emily Wright Handcrafted



# North East Fund

The Virgin Money Foundation launched its first round of grant funding on the 10th August 2015. With £1million per year for four years to distribute across the North East of England, the funding promotes long-term change in the communities that need it most.

Driven by our core belief that to be successful any initiative needs to be led by the local community and tackle an identified need, we focussed on three priority areas:

- **Youth unemployment:** which is a particular issue in the North East with relatively high levels of young people not in employment, education or training.
- **Housing:** because we recognise that you cannot hope to build a future if you don't have somewhere safe to live.
- **Enterprise:** because increasing economic activity in a deprived community is a vital and sustainable contribution to the future.



Carla Keegans, The Ethical Lettings Agency

By the time the 2015 funding round closed, the Foundation had received 221 applications with requests totalling £7,812,276.

After much discussion, the Foundation's Trustees agreed 27 awards. These ranged from an award to enable Food Nation, a social enterprise based in Newcastle, to set up a 'healthy' takeaway providing training opportunities, to an award to Nacro in Middlesbrough, to establish a housing service for vulnerable women and their children.

Following a thorough review of the 2015 North East Fund the decision was made to move away from a narrow application window with an early deadline and to reduce the number of unsuccessful applications. The second round of the North East Fund opened on the 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and was open until the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016. By the time the programme closed the Foundation had received 130 applications with requests totalling £3.6 million.

The Foundation awarded 26 grants under the 2016 fund.

These included:

- £36,763 to the 700 Club, a local charity providing help to homeless people in Darlington.
- £38,696 to Bright Futures, an ambitious organisation providing employment support to vulnerable young women in South Shields.
- £50,000 to YMCA Newcastle to set up a new social enterprise growing oyster mushrooms in recycled coffee grounds.



Community Members, Edberts House

At the end of the second round of the North East Fund we remain convinced of the benefit of local community action and are privileged to support people and organisations make a real difference.



Participant, Pennywell Youth Project

# North East Fund Headlines

## 2015

In 2015 we made 27 grants

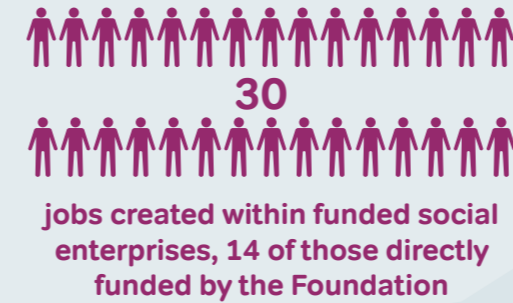
- 8 grants to organisations enabling homeless people or people at risk of homelessness to find a home. We support applications from organisations working to increase the supply of affordable rented properties
- 10 grants to organisations supporting young people into employment. We support applications from organisations directly helping young people to gain sustainable employment
- 8 grants to support community and social enterprise. We support enterprises that are innovative, sustainable and which create local jobs
- 1 feasibility study

## 2016

In 2016 we made 26 grants

- 14 grants to organisations enabling homeless people or people at risk of homelessness to find a home
- 10 grants to organisations supporting young people into employment
- 2 grants to support community and social enterprise.

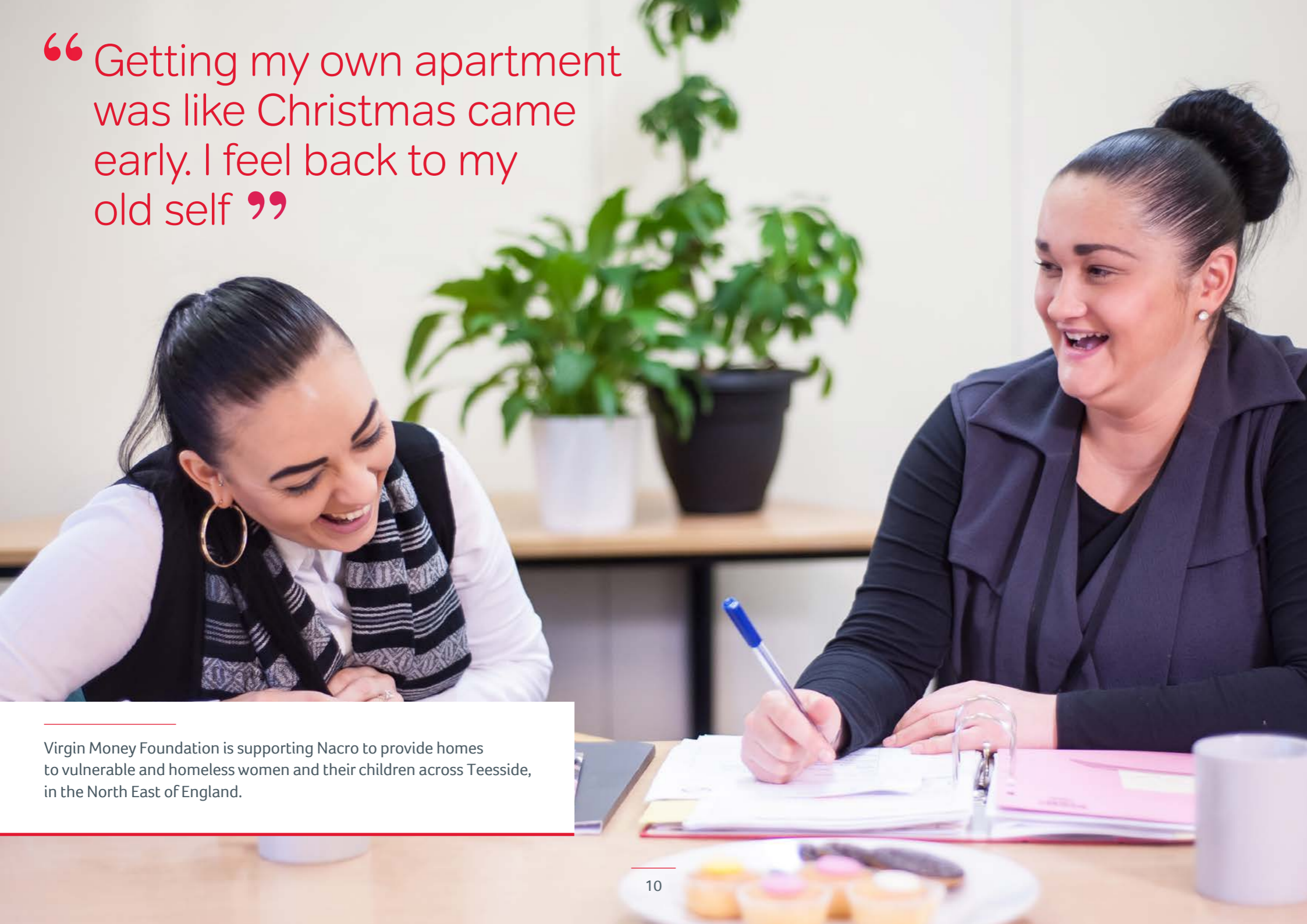
## Outcomes from the 2015 North East Fund



## North East Awards 2015 and 2016



“Getting my own apartment was like Christmas came early. I feel back to my old self”



Virgin Money Foundation is supporting Nacro to provide homes to vulnerable and homeless women and their children across Teesside, in the North East of England.

## Beyond the Grant

Alongside all of our grants, Virgin Money Foundation offers non-financial support to build the capacity of the organisations we fund. Since we launched we have provided:

4 mentors/coaches



3 trustees



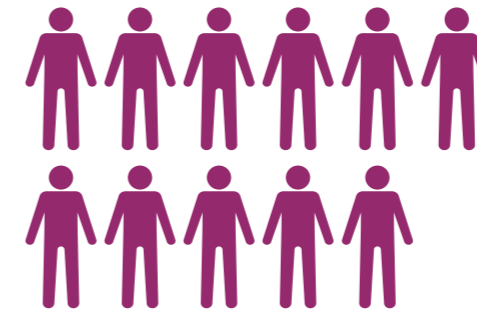
9 skills based volunteers



70 homeless hampers



11 places on management training



24 places on social media training



“Working with Bill has been very beneficial to The Skill Mill; helping us to find ways we can improve as a business and helping me to be clear in defining what I want to achieve. Having thoughts and ideas from someone who works in a completely different sector has allowed us to rethink how we can move the business forward.”

**Charlotte Thorpe**  
Business Development Manager,  
Skill Mill

“The team made us really welcome and I think the session demonstrated to the group that there are other skills that businesses look for, not just academic ones. When you work with young people day in, day out, we see that some individuals have so much potential, so for someone else to recognise that too, gives us a real boost!”

**Sarah Warren**  
Youth Worker, YMCA Newcastle

### Strive2Thrive

Strive2Thrive prepares young people for the world of work. The first Strive2Thrive event we held was with South Tyneside Training and Enterprise Network in July 2016. The success of the event has meant that we will now run sessions regularly.

The programme has been put together to allow attendees to:

- Understand what makes up a business
- Consider their own skills
- Talk with a variety of people within the business about their work experiences and career decisions

25 young people benefited from Strive2Thrive



“I know they will support me with anything. I’ve gained so much confidence”

Virgin Money Foundation is supporting Young Asian Voices to provide paid employment and work experience to young people from black and minority ethnic communities across Sunderland, in the North East of England.

## Beyond the Grant

### YMCA Newcastle Case Study

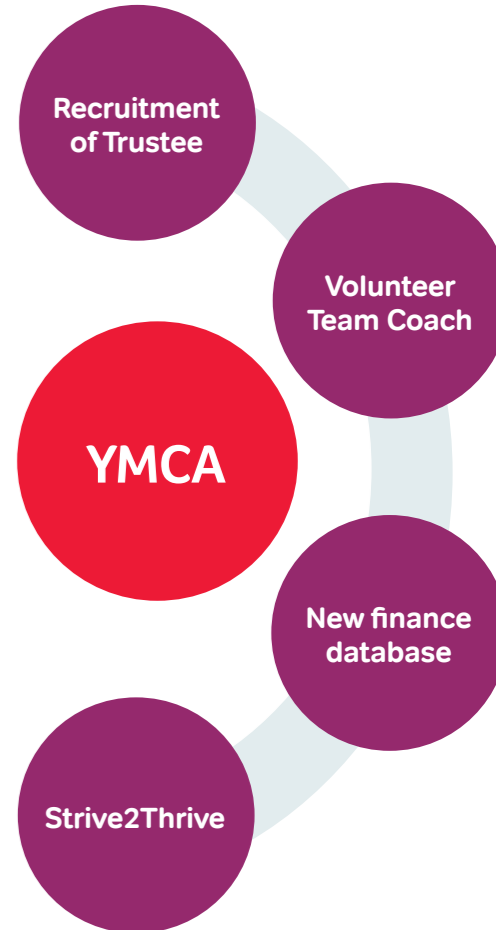


YMCA Newcastle have been awarded three grants by the Virgin Money Foundation in 2015 and 2016, one helping young people to gain sustainable employment and two to help establish social enterprises.

The grants total is  
**£128,400**

“Right from the outset we realised that being a grant recipient of the Virgin Money Foundation would enable us to access a wide range of additional benefits from across Virgin Money. We recruited a trustee to fill a skills gap on our Board, have an executive coach supporting the staff team each month and our finance team received two days of support to help us improve our use of Excel. The people offering this support were using volunteering days given to them by Virgin Money supplemented by their own personal time. One of our team attended a management training course at Virgin Money looking at creating high performance environments and we took 11 young people into Virgin Money for Strive2Thrive! I would estimate the monetary value of this additional support at over £7,000.”

Jeff Hurst,  
CEO, YMCA Newcastle



“To have someone trust you,  
it’s just massive”



Virgin Money Foundation is supporting Cornerstone to provide housing, training, and employment for homeless people and ex-offenders across County Durham, in the North East of England.

## Cornerstone

**Cornerstone is a homelessness charity who through their Virgin Money Foundation grant have opened a shop called 'The Cracket' with a craft workshop to the rear. All their tenants are encouraged to become involved with the shop whether it is in retail, production or deliveries.**

All the products for sale have been hand made by Cornerstone service users.

Susan came to Cornerstone after sleeping on the streets for several months and fighting a 15 year heroin addiction. She hadn't had a hot shower for months and being given a crash pad was like being given a palace – even if it was just one room. Susan quickly settled in. She found the fully furnished accommodation brilliant, as she had limited money and few belongings. She loved knowing that Cornerstone staff were in the office downstairs from her and that she could call on them whenever she needed. The safety and security allowed her to address her addiction and she came off heroin.

Cornerstone support workers could see her commitment and how far she had come in a short time and felt she was ready for the next step. The opportunity of a flat came up in February 2016 and Susan took it, decorating it from top to bottom.

**“I was over the moon with my flat, so I did all the painting myself, no-one helped me and I look around it now with pride.”**

When The Cracket opened Susan was given the opportunity of volunteering in the shop. She helped decorate it with other volunteers before the opening and over the past few months she has become the lead worker. She volunteers five days a week and has increased sales to the point where the shop is now self-sufficient.

Susan told us she couldn't be happier that her life is moving in the right direction and she loves being in the shop.

**“I can't believe that some of the people I always felt looked down on me come into the shop to talk, some have even bought things that I have made myself.”**

Virgin Money Foundation awarded

**£38,450**

to support The Cracket



# Looking Forward

As you will have read through this report, the Virgin Money Foundation has been focusing to date upon investing in the geographical area where we are based and enabling young people to gain jobs, those in housing need to gain homes, and new social businesses to thrive.

Our ambition however is wider. Over the next two years we intend to design and launch new funds supporting charities both here in the North East and beyond. Each of these funds will work towards our overarching goal of regenerating communities which have experienced social and economic decline.

Some of the key developments to expect from the Foundation in the years ahead are as follows:



The Ripple Fund supports sustainable regeneration in local communities, enabling activity that has a ripple effect beyond its immediate context. It is the Foundation's large grants programme, offering grants of up to £300,000. Each year we will search for and select a small number of organisations to work with on signature projects. Whilst the Ripple Fund offers a grant, partnership with the organisations we fund will be a key feature as we look to amplify their work and extend impact.



2017 will see the Foundation working with its first three Ripple Funded organisations, Scotcash, Emmaus and Edberts House.

## VMF #iwill Fund

The #iwill campaign aims to ensure that 60% of 10 to 20 year-olds across the UK are taking part in meaningful social action by 2020. To help support this ambition the #iwill Fund aims to increase the number of opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful youth social action, with an explicit commitment to reducing the socio-economic gap in participation. The Virgin Money Foundation is match funding £850,000 from Big Lottery Fund to create a £1.7million funding programme for the North East.

For the Virgin Money Foundation, developing an #iwill fund takes forward our commitment to supporting projects working with young people, supporting young people to engage with their community and asking them our original question 'What do you see?' enabling their vision to become reality.

“What do you see?”



The VMF #iwill Fund will launch in summer 2017.

## Small grants fund

One of the key characteristics of the Virgin Money Foundation is our relationship with Virgin Money and its customers. During 2017 we will be designing a small grants programme which we will deploy with the input of our colleagues in the Virgin Money Lounges and with Virgin Money customers.

Working with the iconic Virgin Money Lounges we will roll out a fund designed to involve staff and customers in a process of nominating and awarding local charities working in the most deprived parts of their communities.

The grants will support events and activities that make a real difference to the local community.

## Beyond the grant

The Virgin Money Foundation shares features with many grant making trusts, however our ambition goes beyond grant making. Awarding grants to local charities is one element of the support we offer, but more than financial resource is needed.

Excellent charities need access to skilled individuals, high quality training, appropriate systems and their voice amplified. As an independent foundation set up and based within Virgin Money, we make it our role to dig deep into the resources of the business to draw from the skills, connections, and energy of its staff and open up access to its training and development programmes.

In the year ahead this offer will continue to grow.

“While the money we received was much needed, the additional support was of similar value to our organisation. Our operations manager found the management training particularly useful. We have felt supported and almost part of a wider team.”

Steve Vasey  
CEO, Cornerstone

## Sharing Expertise

Whilst we have the benefit of being located within Virgin Money's Gosforth office, accommodating over 1,800 staff with a variety of skills to call on, we are aware that some of the expertise needed by the charities we fund is best provided by other charities who have worked with similar client groups and achieved change. The Foundation resources the community of charities it funds, but encourages them to give back, sharing their own skills and experiences with other charities. We see this 'give back' and sharing of time and skills as a key characteristic of the movement we seek to build. Magnifying the impact any one organisation has through inspiring action in others and by sharing expertise. During the year ahead we plan to increase the opportunities for charities to convene and support one another in this way.

# Grants Awarded North East Fund 2015

## Social Enterprise

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### Edberts House - £18,098

To develop a community bakery in a new community project on a deprived estate in Gateshead

### Food Nation - £27,728

To enable a successful social enterprise to set up a new 'healthy takeaway' which will provide training and employment opportunities in Newcastle

### Labelled CIC - £43,500

To set up a social enterprise providing training and work experience for people with learning difficulties in a deprived community in Middlesbrough

### Trust in the North - £49,850

To employ a business manager to grow a social enterprise providing employment in a specialist garment manufacturing business in Lynemouth in Northumberland

### Tyne Gateway Trust - £35,000

To fund the development of a social enterprise incubator unit to create jobs for vulnerable parents and young people in South Tyneside, North Tyneside and South East Northumberland

### Vision Sense - £17,130

To develop and launch a training platform which will employ eight young disabled ambassadors to provide training regarding hate crime

### West End Women and Girls Centre - £46,913

To develop a local bakery to generate an income for the charity and provide employment opportunities to women from the West End of Newcastle

### YMCA Newcastle - £42,130

To set up a community hub in disused building as part of the refurbishment of Walker Park in Newcastle, to provide training and employment opportunities for young people

## Homelessness

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### Changing Lives - £50,000

To fund the Homelife Tenancy Support Team to help homeless people, or, people at risk of homelessness, to find and sustain an affordable home

### Cornerstone Supported Housing - £38,450

To develop an initiative in a deprived area of Hartlepool which provides housing, as well as training, support and access to employment for homeless people

### Handcrafted Projects - £16,830

To recruit a worker to enable the charity to renovate derelict properties to provide accommodation for homeless people

### Moving On Durham - £44,000

To develop the charity's social lettings agency "Moving on Housing", which provides accommodation for homeless young people across County Durham

### Nacro - £40,588

To establish a housing service that provides homes for vulnerable women and women with children who are homeless or in housing need in Middlesbrough

### Oasis Aquila Housing - £43,979

To fund a social lettings agency which will provide long-term affordable rented accommodation for homeless and vulnerable people in Gateshead

### Open Door North East - £31,716

To replicate a successful Middlesbrough refugee housing project in neighbouring Stockton and Hartlepool

### The Ethical Lettings Agency - £40,000

To employ a worker to provide support and advice to homeless people in Redcar and those at risk of homelessness to help them secure accommodation

## Youth Education and Training

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### Auckland Youth and Community Centre - £34,815

To provide young people living in a very disadvantaged community in County Durham with child care and youth work training apprenticeships and help to find work

### Blue Watch Youth Centre - £27,915

To support an employment training programme for young people in a deprived part of Sunderland

### Building Futures East - £34,183

To provide training and job opportunities in an environmental improvement programme in Walker in Newcastle

### Cleveland Ironstone Mining Museum - £40,000

To help 18-25 year olds to gain work experience, build confidence and secure employment in this area of high unemployment and social deprivation

### Pennywell Youth Project - £48,351

To deliver an employment programme for very disengaged young people who are not in employment or training from the Pennywell Estate in Sunderland

### South Tyneside Training and Enterprise Network Ltd - £48,359

To support young adults aged 16-25 who have multiple barriers into employment

### The Box Youth Project - £42,494

To motivate and support unemployed hard to reach young people into employment by providing tailored programmes to develop employability skills and raise aspirations in Sunderland

### The Skill Mill Limited - £40,800

To develop social enterprise which employs ex- young offenders and other vulnerable young people to deliver environmental management and flood-risk mitigation services in Newcastle

### YMCA Newcastle - £36,270

To deliver a 12 week employability programme with hard to reach young people across deprived areas of Newcastle

### Young Asian Voices - £40,900

To employ four young people and to assist 18-20 year olds into sustained employment from inner city Sunderland

## Feasibility

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### Bensham Grove Community Association - £20,000

To look at developing a Grade 2 listed community building in Bensham Gateshead to include a collective arts space including workshops and galleries

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## 2015 Total = £999,999

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# 2016

## Social Enterprise

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### Linskill and North Tyneside Community Development Trust - £28,750

To employ a worker to generate significant additional income from its childcare facilities

### YMCA Newcastle - £50,000

Towards the start-up costs for a training enterprise growing oyster mushrooms. The funds generated will support the work YMCA Newcastle do with young people. The enterprise will also provide training opportunities for young people

## Homelessness

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### 700 Club - £36,763

To support the Bridge2Home in Darlington. This is a bond scheme which has been in the town for the last 20 years

### Action Foundation - £48,931

To continue to expand Action Lettings which provides emergency accommodation to refugees and asylum seekers in Newcastle and Sunderland

### Barnardo's - £39,695

To employ a housing worker in Newcastle, their role is to support 80 young vulnerable parents each year to find and to keep a home

### Barnabas Safe and Sound - £3,000

To employ a consultant to develop an options appraisal for their work in Northumberland

### Centrepoint- £49,310

To employ two learning support workers, to work with the young people they house in Sunderland to help them into work based apprenticeships

### Coatham House - £49,500

To employ staff to provide practical help and support to young people in Redcar to ensure they can manage their tenancies and access educational and employment opportunities

### Community Campus 87 Ltd. - £39,510

To employ a worker to support clients across Tees Valley as they take the final step to move on to live independently

### Depaul UK - £39,875

To employ a worker to manage a new community resource in a deprived part of South Shields and to a bond scheme helping homeless young people secure rented accommodation

### East Cleveland Youth Housing Trust - £34,900

To employ a second site supervisor and a tenancy support worker for their work in Redcar and Cleveland

### Emmaus North East - £50,000

To employ staff at the first Emmaus Community in the North East of England. Their role will be to support "companions" to move on into independent living

### Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau - £49,197

To contribute towards the Housing Advice and Tenancy Support Service. This service enables homeless people at risk of becoming homeless to secure rented accommodation in Hartlepool

### Oasis Aquila Housing - £46,940

To continue its successful bond scheme which enables homeless people to access rented accommodation in Gateshead

### The Ethical Lettings Agency - £14,180

To enable TELA to explore the possibility of developing a property investment fund. This fund would enable them to scale up their ethical lettings services in Redcar, supporting people into affordable and decent accommodation

### YMCA North Tyneside - £49,459

To fund one full-time tenancy officer and sessional workers to help the young people it houses to better manage their tenancies and them secure and maintain move-on accommodation

## Youth Education and Training

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### A690 Youth Initiative - £41,733

To employ two part-time support workers to work with young people who are not in employment, education or training to gain and sustain employment

### Actes Trust - £24,159

To help develop an accredited employability programme for long-term unemployed young people in a deprived area of Middlesbrough

### Berwick Youth Project - £34,220

To employ a worker to support homeless young people in Northumberland to secure and maintain accommodation in the private rented sector

### Blue Watch Youth Centre - £27,915

To continue to run the 'Steps to Success' programme providing support for those who want to move into employment by preparing them for the world of work

### Bright Futures - £38,696

To expand a new programme concentrating on getting young women in South Tyneside into sustainable employment

### Oxclose & District Young People's Project - £47,286

To run an employment programme working with young people in Sunderland who are not in employment, education or training

### Pennywell Youth Project - £40,000

To continue to deliver the Employment Pathways Programme to help young people develop skills and support them in becoming ready for work

### South Tyneside Training and Enterprise Network Ltd - £47,723

To support young adults aged 16-25 who have multiple barriers into employment

### Street League - £37,068

To attract and engage unemployed young people in Middlesbrough from the most challenging backgrounds, with the ultimate aim of progressing them into employment, education or training

### Youth Almighty Project - £31,190

To work with young people from Sunderland who are not in employment, education or training, to help them into sustainable employment

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## 2016 Total = £1million

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“We have been made to feel like individuals, the Foundation staff know our names and always make us feel welcome. Obviously the money we received has been terrific, but I feel the add-ons and support has at times felt of equal value. To sum up our relationship with the Foundation it has felt very inclusive.”

Anon

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