

STRATEGIC PLAN

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2028



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan sets out our strategic objectives and social business objectives for Riverside Community Health Project (Riverside) for the five years from April 2023 to March 2028. This strategy provides the broad framework for our work and forms the basis of the organisation's fundraising strategy to follow. Trustees and staff will use this document to shape the development and delivery of specific activities and projects.

We set up a Strategy Development Group to lay the groundwork for Riverside to decide on the most relevant strategic objectives. This group arranged conversations with community members to discuss four key questions:

- What does a good community look like?
- What good stuff is or has been in the community?
- What would you like to see developed in the community?
- What issues need to be addressed?

The Strategy Group commissioned a review of existing reports and research on the needs, perspectives and assets of the West End of Newcastle. Using publicly available information, the group also gathered details on areas of work carried out by community groups and organisations in the NE4, NE5 and NE15 postcodes.

From the above activity Riverside has decided to focus on the following six **strategic objectives** in the next 5 years (2023 to 2028):

1. To support families to enable their children to have the best possible start in life
2. To assist adults to counter disadvantages they and their families experience
3. To facilitate women coming together to explore and influence factors affecting their lives
4. To maintain Carnegie Building's role as an accessible community hub for local residents and organisations
5. To work with local residents to achieve positive change through community action
6. To support community members to combat isolation, improve wellbeing and improve community cohesion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY continued

The specific actions that will move Riverside towards achieving these strategic objectives are set out in this report. Riverside's Board of Trustees will review progress against these strategic objectives throughout the plan and decide whether the objectives need to be amended according to changing need.

Organisationally we commit to ensuring our work is strengthened by focusing on the following six **social business objectives**:

- 1.To ensure Riverside works in response to the identified needs, assets and perspectives of the local community
- 2.To be strategically placed to champion health needs of residents, particularly families with children, women and people from migrant communities
- 3.To support and maintain a staff team with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to achieve our strategic objectives
- 4.To develop a Board of Trustees with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to provide robust organisational governance and leadership
5. To achieve a long-term, sustainable mix of public and charitable donations and earned income
- 6.To improve the financial and environmental sustainability of Carnegie Building

Progress against social business objectives will be reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees.



1. INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan was produced internally by Riverside Community Health Project (Riverside) to guide the work it will undertake in the local community over a five-year period. The previous plan, originally intended for the three-year period from 2019–2022 was extended by one year.



This extension was in acknowledgement of the disruption caused by covid and the need for Riverside to direct its effort to supporting community members during covid restrictions. The extension also allowed time for a newly appointed Chief Executive (late March 2022) to participate in the strategy development process.

The strategic plan is ultimately approved and overseen by the Board of Trustees of Riverside Community Health Project. However, a core group of staff and trustees operated as a Strategy Development Group carrying out the ground work for this plan (see Appendix 1 for a list of members). This group met six times from July 2022 to March 2023. The Strategy Development Group organised several pieces of work, the outcomes of which inform the plan and are mentioned throughout the document. This work includes:

- An action plan on how to develop and communicate Riverside's strategy
- A statement on Riverside's approach to community organising and development
- A time out session with the Riverside staff team
- A series of community conversations with local residents and members of the public, including volunteers
- A review of the available reports and research on local needs, perspectives and assets

INTRODUCTION continued

The plan was then drafted by the Chief Executive for approval by the Board of Trustees, which took place following further discussion and amendment.

Although approved by trustees, it has been agreed that the plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Should circumstances and need change during the life of the plan, strategic and social business objectives can be modified in response to changing need. This plan will be used to monitor the strategic direction of the organisation and its work. The plan will also provide useful information to inform Riverside's fundraising efforts.

The overall strategy will drive the development of a fundraising strategy to follow in the 23/24 financial year. Taking time to develop the overall organisation strategy first will help Riverside ensure the fundraising strategy and subsequent fundraising activity will remain true to the organisation's vision, mission and objectives (see 2.3). As such, the plan may be supplied to funders as part of fundraising activities and contract negotiation. Finally, this plan could and should be shared with partner agencies to promote collaborative efforts that respond to communities in the West End of Newcastle.



2. ABOUT RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT

OUR HISTORY

Before developing into the organisation it is today, a project called Riverside Child Health Project was set up in 1979 to encourage lots of different disciplines practitioners to work together. This new way of working came from a growing awareness about the links between poverty and ill health. Local parents, mainly women, become involved in this project due to their commitment to making child health services more appropriate and accessible. The community development strand of the project supported these local women set up Riverside Centre in the basement of what was Benwell Library.

Riverside was formally established as a charity in 1991 to extend community development and support work with local communities. Under the leadership of a board of trustees and staffed by a team that mostly resides in the local community, Riverside has had a sustained presence in the community since its formation. This longevity, as well as the commitment to the area and its people are important to enable Riverside to have the trust of the community. People that engage with Riverside mostly come from the wards of Benwell and Scotswood, Elswick, Blakelaw, Arthur's Hill, West Fenham, Wingrove and beyond.

Riverside believes that to build strong communities, it is vital to address the inequalities that affect the health of people in disadvantaged areas. We are proactive about trying to create opportunities for local residents so they can tackle the disadvantages they experience and fulfil their potential. We are committed to working with others to reduce inequalities and promote health and wellbeing in the West End of Newcastle. We believe that through collaboration we can increase our collective impact.

CHARITABLE OBJECTS

As a charity, Riverside has identified and works towards charitable objectives. These objectives are specified within our memorandum and articles of association as:

“to preserve and protect the health of persons in Newcastle particularly by advancing the education of the public in the promotion of health awareness health related issues and health problems”

OUR VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

Riverside’s vision for West Newcastle to be “a healthy and thriving community”. We will work towards our vision through our mission which is:

“to improve the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged communities in West Newcastle by working to community development principles and collaborating with others to respond to need”

OUR VALUES

Empowerment

We commit to working ways that increase the power people in local communities have over their own lives and in their wider environment.

Equality

We commit to work that contributes to eradicating inequalities, through value the diversity of our community and practicing equity. Equity recognises that people experiencing inequalities need to be treated according to circumstances to be able to achieve equality.

Participation

We commit to working with people in communities in ways that encourage their maximum participation in the decisions and actions that affect them.

Partnership

We commit to collaborating in the spirit of partnership with groups and individuals whose values align with ours, for the benefit of local communities.

Social Justice

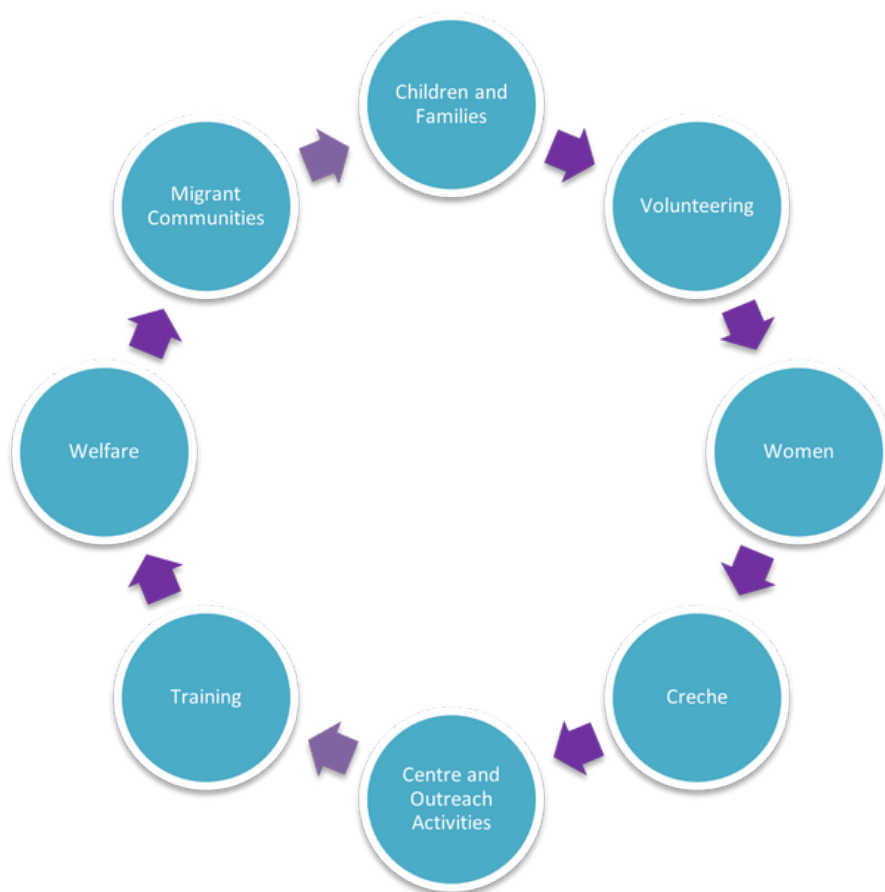
Our commitment to empowerment, equality, participation and partnership are local expressions of how we strive to contribute to social justice. We understand social justice as being the fair and equitable status of all individuals and groups in society.

OUR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Riverside is committed to using a community development approach whenever and wherever possible. As part of this strategy process we undertook a reflection about what community development means to people in our organisation.

Please see further details of this reflection in Appendix 2. We express our commitment to practicing community development in our everyday actions and the organising work we do. We will return to this commitment in our strategic objectives.

RIVERSIDE'S CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS



Our current work includes supporting children and families, providing welfare advice, supporting volunteering, co-ordinating an extensive programme of training opportunities and facilitating women only groups. (See Appendix 3 for a summary from 2022/23). Creche provision enables parents of young children to engage in training and groups and activities.

Riverside recognises the impact of inequalities and poverty on the health of communities. People from communities experiencing economic disadvantage are likely to die younger and spend more of their lives with ill-health than those that come from more affluent areas. Some people are additionally disadvantaged, for example, people who do not speak English as a first language. Riverside's work has changed over time in response to the changing needs and demographics of the community.

For several years Riverside has been at the forefront responding to the need for inclusion and support for migrants, particularly those from European Union (EU) countries. More recently, we delivered a large programme supporting people applying for Settlement Status from the EU. This programme ceases in 2023 due to the funding stream coming to an end. Whilst not currently working at the same scale as before to support migrant communities, we are committed to securing funding to keep this strand of our work in place. We recognise the importance of engaging with and providing support to the whole community in ways that support the inclusion of migrant people.

CARNEGIE BUILDING AS A COMMUNITY HUB

Riverside carries out most of its work in Carnegie Building, although also does work in other community settings. Carnegie Building opened as Benwell Library in 1909 and is a place of significant local heritage. The building is named after Andrew Carnegie, a well-known Scottish migrant who amassed wealth from his steel business in America and whose donation enabled the library to open.

Riverside was based in the basement of the library and when Newcastle City Council closed the library in 2010, Riverside took over the running of Carnegie Building. Since then Riverside has brought other organisations into the building that benefit the community.



As well as Riverside, five community and voluntary sector organisations/projects currently have their office base there.

- Jobs Education and Training (JET) – supports people from ethnically minoritised and migrant communities, asylum seekers and refugees to improve their skills and education and find work.
- Involve North East – works to give people a say in health and social care services so that patients, carers and the public are at the heart of the decision-making process when it comes to service change, re-design or relocation
- Search – supports the health and wellbeing of older people across the Inner and Outer West of Newcastle. Search provides advice, activities and groups, as well as help for older people to live independently.
- Side Step – This Action for Children project works with children and young people from ages 11 to 18 years, recognising the vulnerabilities that contribute to the risks of criminal exploitation.
- Success for All – works with children aged 8 – 18 capture their potential and create academic success.

Carnegie Building is a Children and Families Newcastle hub, meaning various children and family practitioners carry out face to face work with children and families in the centre. With different organisations and visiting staff working under one roof, as well as many events that take place, Carnegie Building has become an important and vibrant resource in the heart of the West End community.



3. LOCAL NEEDS AND RESPONSES

Riverside is a place-based organisation which makes it important to understand the needs of the local community as well as the range of organisations that exist to respond to need in the community.

In considering the needs and wishes of local people, we are using two main sources; conversations we had with community members and available reports/research about the West End of Newcastle. The examination we have done into needs and services has helped inform the strategic objectives we have developed.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

We facilitated a series of three conversations with members of the community at different times of the day – morning, afternoon and evening. Our goal was to get a sense of peoples' perspectives about where they lived and what issues needed either Riverside's attention or needed to be fed back to other decision makers.

We promoted the conversations through local organisations, social and community mailouts, as well as our own. In acknowledgement of the barriers that can get in the way of participation, we arranged childcare and offered language interpretation by prior arrangement.

To create a mood of community members coming together around a table to talk, we included a meal as part of each session, appropriate to the time of the session. Finally, we encouraged participants to speak, write or draw what they wanted to say, according to what felt best. This approach proved useful when one participant, drew a picture of a plant, which she used as an analogy to highlight the importance of community to the lives of the people in it:

“We start with good soil and then seed. How we look after a plant is how it grows to be healthy, just like in the community.”

In total, forty-one adults participated in these sessions, the majority of whom were women and there was a diverse mix of ethnicities and age ranges. This number is lower than we had hoped, which we need to bear in mind when looking at the findings of these conversations. However, the themes and topics that emerged provide a useful understanding of the perspectives of different people, not just people that participate in Riverside's activities.

For example, many of the participants in the evening session do not usually take part in Riverside activities, with some coming in to the centre find out what was taking place. Most participants in the morning and afternoon sessions are frequent attendees at Riverside, though in the morning session we also had two participants from a local employment focused organisation.

Riverside staff created a large information board with a section showing past projects and activities carried out by Riverside, a section summarising our current activities and an open area depicting the future. We used this board as a way into the discussions, which we centred around four key questions:

Q1

What Does a Good Community Look Like?

Q2

What good stuff is or has been in the community?

Q3

What would you like to see developed for the community?

Q4

What issues need to be addressed?



The findings of these community conversations are presented in Appendix 4. The importance of relationships as the defining feature of a community was emphasised time and again in the conversations. Many participants expressed that the quality of relationships and connections between people had declined compared to the past. The need and importance of the work we do was made clear to us by participants.

However, we were challenged to think about people that do not readily fit into some of our main activities. As an example, at several points participants talked about the need to combat isolation, particularly for people who live alone or people whose children are too old for the family focused groups at Riverside.

In summary, although the discussions were not solely about Riverside's work, the points of view people expressed both confirmed and challenged some of our thinking about the kind of work we could / should do in future. We can see a need to bring residents together in ways that are meaningful to them, not solely for us to provide services as an organisation, but for us to support more community relationship building that can combat isolation and encourage peer support / community action. This is one example of how the perspectives of community members have shaped the strategic objectives we have set.



REVIEW OF REPORTS AND RESEARCH ABOUT THE WEST END OF NEWCASTLE

As well as having conversations with people we could reach, we wanted to consider what was already known about the West End of Newcastle. We wanted to pull together the different reports and research projects carried out by organisations, including Riverside and academic researchers.

We secured a small grant from the Social Justice Advisory Group at Newcastle University and arranged for this work to be carried out by Suzanne Butler from the university. You can read her full review here: [The Needs, Perspectives and Assets of Communities in the West End of Newcastle: A Literature Review.](#)



In brief, this review concludes that:

- Although the West End of Newcastle experiences social problems, there is a rich and vibrant range of community groups and organisations
- Many groups and organisations collaborate together to support people, although a shortage of funding makes working together more difficult
- Gaps remain in relation to issues identified by local people about their neighbourhood, environment and what they need to live prosperous lives.
- There is a history of activism in the area and this is still ongoing today
- By working together, groups and projects in the West End are well-positioned to help people to be more involved in local decision-making structures as they wish

MAPPING LOCAL COMMUNITY SERVICES AND GROUPS

Riverside gathered together as much information as it could about local services and groups in the NE4, NE5 and NE15 postcodes. We did this to reflect on what support is available in the area to enable us to take that into account when planning our future work. In addition to services for particular groups of people, children, asylum seekers, people seeking employment etc. we also gathered information on place-based community organisations, like Riverside.

The mapping exercise has helped us question what we do, what work we are best place to do and what work should be undertaken by those in a better position to do it. Analysing what is already available has helped us to decide to cease one form of support. For several years Riverside fundraised to buy in what is known as level two or specialist welfare advice. We did this due to high demand and a shortage of available specialist welfare advice in the area.

However, whilst there is great demand for specialist welfare advice, in recent years it has become available in close proximity to Carnegie Building. With this provision in mind, it is not necessary for Riverside to meet the cost of bringing this service into Carnegie Building. Riverside continues to provide level one / general welfare advice. However, instead of directly funding specialist advice, we provide information on other nearby sources of support.



4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Riverside has devised the following strategic objectives for 2023 to 2028. These objectives are based on the needs identified within the community and the findings of the exercises carried out in preparation for this strategy.



01. To support families to enable their children to have the best possible start in life

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Facilitating structured groups that bring parents/carers and young children together to aid attachment and child development
- Bringing families together in informal sessions and events to enhance wellbeing and reduce the impact of poverty
- Encouraging mutually supportive relationships between families to enhance wellbeing
- Working collaboratively with other family support organisations to influence and maximise locally accessible services for families
- Providing support to families in the form of early help and generally empowering relationships
- Supporting families to take up development opportunities and material support



02. To assist adults to counter disadvantages they and their families experience

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Co-ordinating a programme of training and learning enabling adults to develop their skills, for wellbeing and/or employability

- Providing opportunities for adults to improve their confidence through community involvement and volunteering
- Providing general welfare advice to adults, recognising that this holistic support benefits the whole family
- Supporting referral for specialist welfare advice



03. To facilitate women coming together to explore and influence factors affecting their lives

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Facilitating relationship building and mutual understanding between women from long-established and newer migrant communities
- Providing opportunities for women to raise their awareness of wellbeing, health and health issues
- Encouraging women to meet with service delivery agencies and decision makers to articulate their needs and share their experiences of using services
- Listening to migrant and ethnically marginalised women about the particular challenges they face
- Supporting women to explore the common and distinct challenges they experience and issues that require collective action (see next objective)



04. To maintain Carnegie Building's role as an accessible community hub for local residents and organisations

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Ensuring Carnegie Building is occupied by organisations and projects that support local residents
- Where possible, ensuring the collective of organisations in Carnegie Building work with a mix of age ranges and support people in the community on a range of issues
- Working collaboratively with practitioners in Carnegie Building to ensure community members receive a warm and helpful welcome

- Providing accessible and affordable space for grassroots community groups to meet
- Encouraging relevant organisations and practitioners into the building to meet specific unmet needs



05. To work with local residents to achieve positive change through community action

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Building relationships with local residents and listening to their concerns
- Making connections between local residents to identify similar issues of concern
- Enabling organising networks and leadership to emerge in the community
- Encouraging local residents to identify issues that cause community tension and challenge decision makers to prioritise these issues
- Supporting residents to influence services that affect them and their networks



06. To support community members to combat isolation, improve wellbeing and improve community cohesion

Riverside will achieve this by:

- Creating opportunities for different people in the community to interact with each other
- Helping people of different ages and from different backgrounds to build relationships and understanding with each other
- Providing opportunities for residents to raise their awareness of wellbeing and health issues
- Encouraging residents to identify situations that heighten isolation and helping them to develop self-help responses
- Working collaboratively with others to create opportunities for all of the above

Objectives one to four are a continuation of objectives from Riverside's previous plan 2019 – 2023. Objectives five and six are new. Their newness is not to suggest that we don't already encourage community action or support residents to combat isolation and improve wellbeing and community cohesion. The newness comes from including this work in our strategic objectives. Both objectives focus on supporting community members to be change agents.

These new objectives require Riverside to practice community development in our everyday actions, which fits our expressed commitment. The Riverside staff team has laid the groundwork for this practice through the community organising training we have undertaken together.



5. RIVERSIDE AS AN ORGANISATION

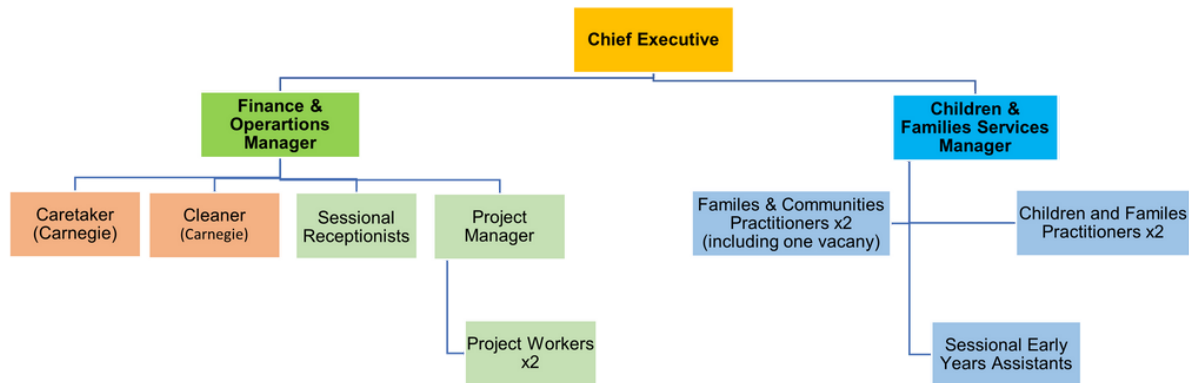
STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF RIVERSIDE

Riverside is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. The Board of Trustees of the charity is also the Board of Company Directors. Trustees provide leadership, scrutiny and accountability for the organisation. Trustees are drawn from the wider community, including participants of Riverside and people that bring key skills to the Board. A governance manual has been developed to ensure governance is organised, legally compliant and following good practice. Trustees are given induction support and access to training so that they can fulfill their governance responsibilities.

Riverside has a skilled and committed Board of Trustees. At the outset of this strategy, Riverside has committed to reviewing the skills audit of trustees and undertaking a recruitment process. This process is intended to increase the membership of the Board of Trustees and add to the existing skills set.

The Chief Executive is responsible for ensuring the organisation's strategy is implemented through Riverside's operations and project delivery. Whilst relatively new to Riverside, the Chief Executive is fortunate to be leading a staff team rich in assets. Most team members come from or live in the local community and their knowledge, empathy and skills in supporting community members are the defining features of Riverside's relevance and credibility. The staff team structure is shown in the next diagram.

STAFF TEAM STRUCTURE



Riverside has developed organisational policies, systems and processes which are regularly reviewed so improvements can be made. Riverside work towards quality assurance includes:

- Regular staff supervision and appraisals
- Performance reporting to trustees at each meeting
- Regular review of key policies and procedures, internally and by expert professionals
- Achieving the Trusted Charity Mark – Level 1, which is externally assessed
- Achieving the Investing in Volunteers Award, which is externally assessed



CARNEGIE BUILDING AS RIVERSIDE RESOURCE

Carnegie Building has developed significantly since Riverside took the building on in 2010. Riverside negotiated a long-term lease with the building owner, Newcastle City Council and set up a subsidiary company 'Carnegie Building Newcastle' to manage the building day to day. We are committed to making Carnegie Building as welcoming, accessible and sustainable as it can be for the community. Riverside has raised and invested hundreds of thousands of pounds to enable three phases of refurbishment in the building, including an extension to the first floor, completed in 2022. As introduced in 2.6 above, Riverside has also brought other organisations into the building. Sharing Carnegie Building with other vital community and voluntary sector groups increases the support available to local residents and the income generated keep the building running.

In addition to serving the community, Carnegie Building needs to remain a sustainable resource for Riverside. As well as attracting other community-serving organisations into the building, we hire rooms out to local groups and to residents for special occasions, such as birthday parties. At the end of each financial year, if any surplus (profit) has been made by Carnegie Building, it is gift aided to Riverside to help further its objectives.

The need for sustainability poses challenges and opportunities. Challenges come from the age and size of the building, which are reflected in its running costs. The need for improved energy efficiency is significant, not only with the heating system, but also aspects of the building's fabric and exterior, particularly the windows. It is clear further significant investment is required to address this need.

However, we should not lose sight of the opportunities that come with committing to reducing the carbon footprint of Carnegie Building. Doing so would help ensure the building can stand the test of time and remain a valuable resource for the West End of Newcastle for generations to come.



MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Riverside has different audiences to engage as part of an ongoing programme of promotion and publicity of the organisation's work including:

- Local residents
- Partner organisations
- Voluntary and community groups
- Statutory funders
- Charitable funders
- Health and social care professionals, many of whom refer into Riverside

Riverside has the advantage of strong links into local communities via staff, community members that engage with Riverside and links with other agencies working in the area. We are aware of the need to continually communicate what is on offer through:

- Networks in the West End of Newcastle
- Staff, trustees and residents that participate in Riverside
- Our website, e: newsletter and social media
- Posters and publicity displayed in Carnegie Building
- Health and social care professionals
- Some funders that promote services in the community
- Printing a programme of activity three times per year and distributing it in community settings – GP surgeries, schools, libraries, play centres and advice centres etc.
- Encouraging word of mouth recommendations

Communication is especially vital to ensure local people are aware of the range of support on offer at Riverside. We need to be mindful of feedback from community members that we should not rely solely on social media promotion, even though social media is a key aspect of how we inform people about our activities. Given that activities change over time due to fluctuations in funding and changes in assessed need, we must ensure our different communication efforts keep up with those changes.

6. SOCIAL BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Whilst driven by charitable objects, Riverside is aware of the need to apply a business-like approach to running the organisation. In acknowledgement that generating profit is not our prime motivator, we subscribe to social business objectives rather than business objectives.

We have identified six social business objectives to work towards so that Riverside is successful long-term.



These are:

1. To ensure Riverside works in response to the identified needs, assets and perspectives of the local community
2. To be strategically placed to champion health needs of residents, particularly families with children, women and people from migrant communities
3. To support and maintain a staff team with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to achieve our strategic objectives
4. To develop a Board of Trustees with the skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to provide robust organisational governance and leadership
5. To achieve a long-term, sustainable mix of public and charitable donations and earned income
6. To improve the financial and environmental sustainability of Carnegie Building

We expand on our approach to these objectives in our annual business plan.

CONCLUSION

This plan sets out our high-level objectives for the five-year period from 2023 to 2028. Four of these strategic objectives represent a continuation of past objectives. The remaining two objectives ensure our commitment to community development is represented strategically and made explicit in what we do as an organisation and how we do it.



APPENDIX 1

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT GROUP MEMBERS

Trustees:

Michelle Gibson

Catherine Mackereth

Carly Walker-Dawson

Staff:

Gabriela Caradonna

Toni Harvey

Jade McIver

Kate Mukungu

Ayshea Robson

Christine Rogan

Emma Spence

APPENDIX 2

RIVERSIDE'S STATEMENT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Riverside is committed to using a community development approach wherever possible. The meaning we attach to community development is that it:

- is a process where local people come together to identify what they want and need, and act to improve the lives of people living in the community.
- involves supporting people to come together to take collective action.
- involves building on the resources within communities, be they social, personal, financial or physical, and seeking to engage more widely to increase assets for local people.
- involves commitment to ensuring people's voices are heard to bring about change.
- is concerned with building on assets, rather than focusing on the deficits.
- is an approach which values the existing strengths within communities and seeks to draw on local expertise to improve lives.
- recognises the importance of giving people more power over their lives to enable them to act to improve their lives.
- holds power structures to account
- helps communities and public agencies to work together to improve how decisions are made to improve services, programmes and policies.
- can only be achieved by reducing inequalities
- promotes equality, human rights, social justice and respect for diversity.

Importantly, Riverside believes community development is not about:

- imposing an agenda
- making assumptions about what the community needs
- making decisions without local people
- being judgmental

APPENDIX 3

ACTIVITY AND DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY 2022/23

Riverside Community Health Project

1st April 2022 - 31st March 2023

1,508  People participated in our family fun events as part of Best Summer Ever, funded by the Holidays Activity Fund	850  Food parcels were issued to families in the local community	555 Under 5s Parents / carers and children under 5 attended regular groups and activity sessions	427  People from the EU were supported to apply for UK settled status and were provided with post-application support
413  People went on day trips we organised using money the families saved throughout the year.	333  People attended school holiday day trips as part of the Best Summer Ever programme	256  People attended our one off events such as International Women's Day, Winter Wonderland and Festival of Lights	251  People were provided with support from the Winter Wellbeing Fund to minimise the worst effects of fuel poverty
214  Families received Christmas hampers from Riverside with support from Your Homes Newcastle, Cash for Kids and the local Ward Committee	171  People received welfare advice and support e.g. benefits, debt, housing and school applications	125  Children received support towards the costs of out of school activities, such as swimming and sport, as part of the Holiday Activities Fund	116  Trainees attended training courses at Riverside e.g. Makaton, Creative Crafts, Safeguarding, Security Industry, and Teaching Assistants' Training
89  People took part in our employability project funded by the EU as part of Community Led Local Development	80  Parents / carers and babies / toddlers attended our First Words Together courses	75  Women attended our women's groups: Time to Talk, for women from all backgrounds, a group for Czech / Slovak speakers and a group for Romanian	43  Parents / carers and babies under 1 attended our baby massage courses
14  Families were supported with an Early Help plan by one of our Children and Family Practitioners	7  People registered as volunteers and became active at Riverside		

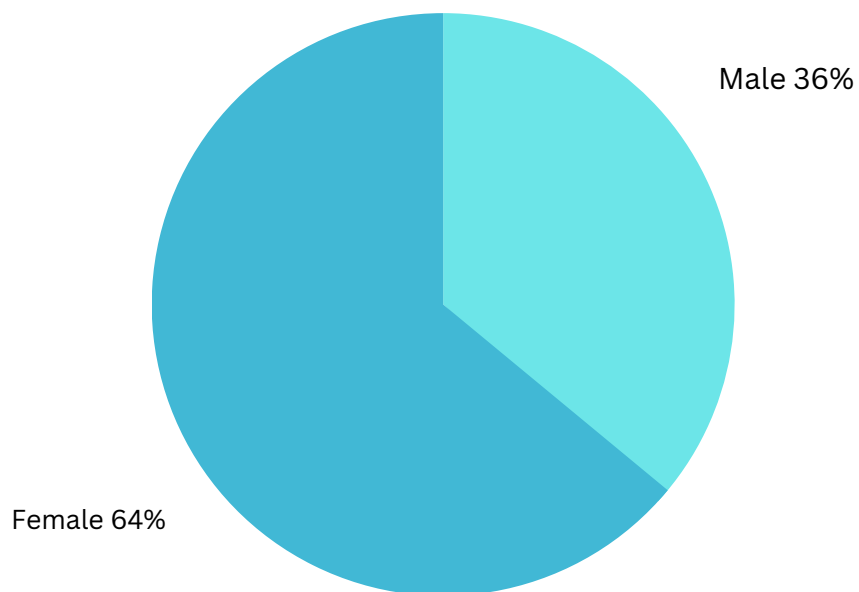
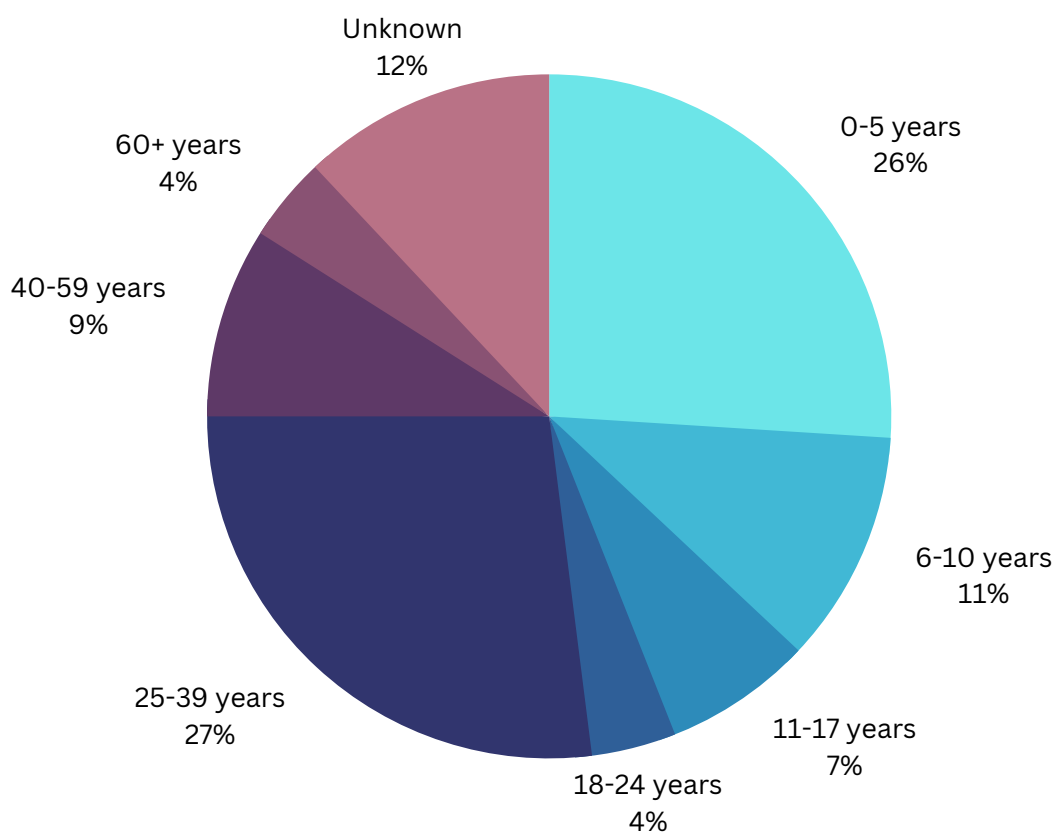
Estimated Number of People Engaged: 2500

Number of People with Demographic Profiles: 992

2500

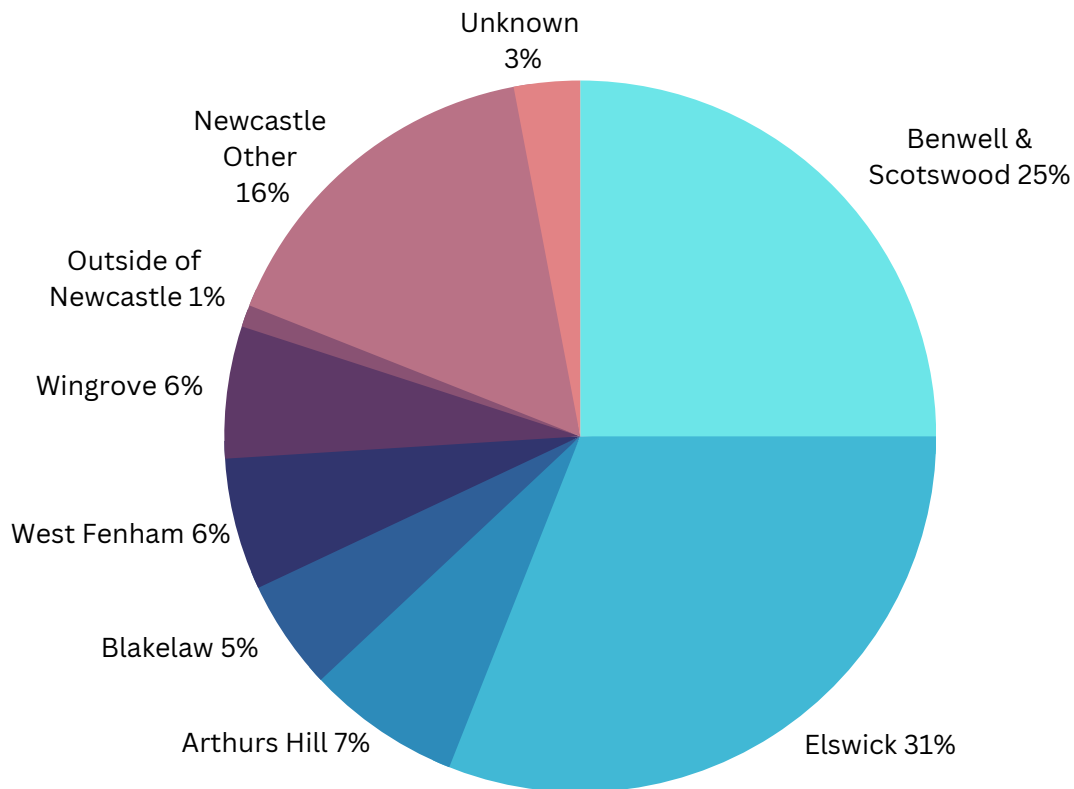
992

Gender

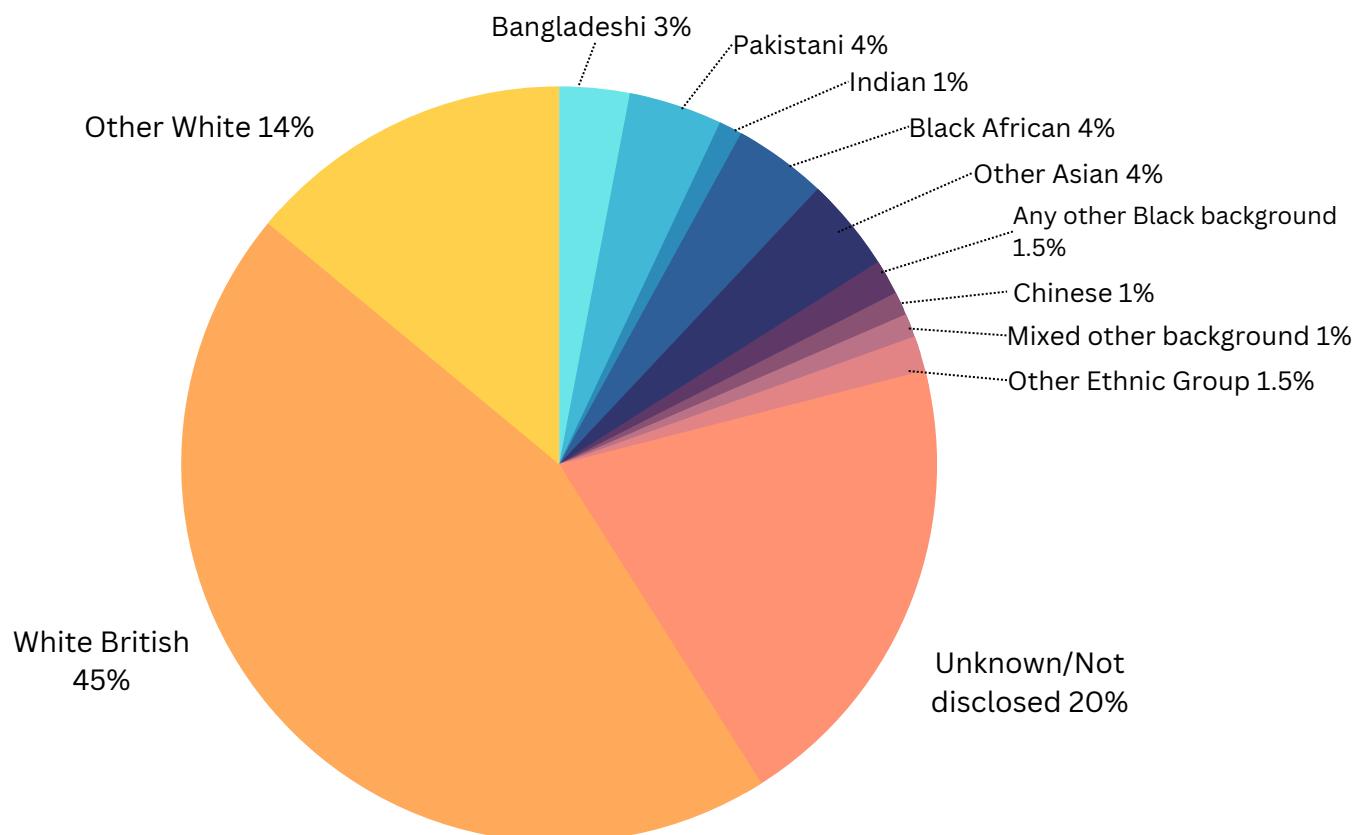


Age

Area



Ethnicity



APPENDIX 4

FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

What Does a Good Community Look Like?

All groups first emphasised relationships when discussing their views of a good community. Responses that bear this out include; coming together, people helping/supporting each other, friendships, knowing your neighbour, people knowing each other, being united and, having people to rely on.

Participants also spoke about feelings they get from a good community, many of which are connected to relationships, for example, a sense of togetherness and community spirit. Other important attributes to a good community were that it is welcoming, safe, has community cohesion and is clean/tidy. Drawing her idea as a picture and speaking through an interpreter, one participant used the analogy of a plant growing to highlight the importance of community:

“we start with good soil and then seed. How we look after a plant is how it grows to be healthy, just like in the community.”

This view was supported by group members, one of whom added “everybody needs to learn to grow”.

Each group highlighted that a good community has services, facilities and amenities in place, although one group was clear that the relationships in the community came first. and the services/amenities came second. The necessary services highlighted included:

- Activities for children and young people, including opportunities to have fun
- Welfare support – good advice on what to do and where to go when you need help

- Drop in centres
- Transport system
- Shopping centres
- Parks that are fit for purpose
- We need to police walking in the community, not driving around in cars
- A final feature that was highlighted was the need to have good communication so that people could know what is available to them in the community. People in two of three reminded that having information online will not reach all residents.

What Would You Like to See Developed For the Community?

There were many responses to this question across all three groups. Some content relates to issues that participants felt should be fed back to other key services e.g. Newcastle City Council. They are included here for transparency. In bringing together the suggestions made by participants, it is worth noting there were some similarities across the different groups. Where a point is in bold text, it shows it was raised in more than one group.

Activities for People of Different Ages and Family Circumstances

- More activities for people of different ages, e.g. families with teens and young adults, people in their forties, fifties and older generations – bringing people together of different ages [1]
- More activities, trips and groups for people without young children and people that live alone
- More evening services for families, parents and children, women, men, mixed groups
- More after-school activities for children like Cubs and Brownies/activities for children that are not yet teens.

[1] The facilitator mentioned Search based in Carnegie Building. The group members did not know about Search or the other organisations in the building.

Better Communication

- Advertising Riverside in City Life which goes through peoples' letter boxes. Don't limit communication to social media as some people don't have it or don't use it, sometimes for mental health reasons.
- Better communication between wards, councillors and community members. Some people living in Benwell are in Elswick ward and don't know who their local councillors are or how to contact them
- Community champions to help make sure information is shared with people about what is in the community
- Panel discussions about community life.

One participant highlighted that how you listen and communicate is as important as what is being communicated:

"I want people to listen to us with their heart and also put the heart in their answer."

Education, Training, Employment and Enterprise

- Sewing courses
- English courses
- Cooking courses for people living alone
- More help for people to develop into employment
- Self-employment opportunities in crafts/clothes making, cleaning – going through the marketing and selling process

Cultural Exchange

- New group with people from different cultures, open to all and educating each other about different cultures – for example, food around the world
- Sharing the Arabic community in the discussions and activities.

Improve Existing Facilities

- More fundraising events such as sponsored walk and bake sale to improve Carnegie Building.
- Better safeguarding at Hodgkin Park – fence around play area.

Single / Ungrouped Responses and Quotes

- A community run nursery – it is difficult for working parents to find affordable childcare
- Community café where people can take turns cooking and go through relevant training to progress. One of the group members would like to run it.
- A savings club or credit union. Help families with budgeting.
- Mentoring and hand-holding programme
- Skills exchange scheme for members to help each other without exchanging money
- More wellbeing / mental health support
- More communal space
- Better housing access
- There is a limited choice of high schools within the local area

“There needs to be more people power. Without it nothing can be achieved”

“There is a lot of anti-social behaviours, petty crimes, theft and fire in the local area (some worse than others) and not a lot of police engagement within community. Police officers are never seen walking in the community they are always in car driving about and the police don’t communicate with local residents”.

What Issues Need to be Addressed?

As with the previous question some content relates to issues that participants felt should be fed back to other key services. There are also quite a few similarities with the responses to the previous question. Once more, where a point is in bold text, it shows it was raised in more than one group. Quotes are used as much as possible.

Mental Health Issues Including Isolation

- Mental health issues and suicide, especially male suicide
- “People don’t come out as much because of economic problems which makes their isolation worse”
- “Mental health services are failing us. The waiting list for help is too long and people become worse during that time.”
- More help with evening isolation.

- “Mental health and social isolation are huge issues at the moment. These aren’t being addressed and this area is the least supported with services limited for people of all ages.”
- “We used to know our neighbours and now people don’t know who lives beside them. Families have been moved to areas with no facilities and no way of coming together.”

Childcare and Activities for Children

- We need to address the accessibility/affordability of children. Free creches?
- We need activities for children with disabilities
- We need to receive small support e.g. when children are at home because they are not well and then we are missing a course
- Lack of activities for 3-8-year olds
- “There needs to be more affordable childcare so parents can get involved in training, education and employment”
- Parenting as a course – that is a big need

Training, Employment and Enterprise

- We need to make a link between training and opportunities for self-employment
- Supporting services to work together e.g. if somebody is in debt there is no point looking for job. When they come to Riverside and get welfare advice and then they can think about going to work
- Help with training to develop our skills – continue running the training you do
- IT training courses with creche
- We need a crèche or community nursery where people from community can get involved to become a nursery worker in the future
- There needs to be more collaboration between services. People in community are not aware of what is available when it comes to job search
- Art sessions and courses

Local Environmental Issues

- The area is dirty e.g. dog mess – we can clean the area.
- Fly tipping
- Rat infestation
- “The cleanliness of the local area needs to be addressed”
- Amount of takeaways – too many
- Bin situation – communal bins, household rubbish waste and business/takeaway waste

Language, Communication and Signposting

- Groups need leadership from their own community and in their own language e.g. Farsi, Romanian. That community person can be a bridge to their services.
- Language barriers
- Signposting to relevant services in ways they can understand
- Access to ESOL
- Understanding conversation – context “jokes, seriousness, meaning”

Knife Crime, General Crime and Nuisance Behaviour

- Knife crime, especially the death of a young person in the area.
- “The police need to walk around the community and get to know people. They won’t do that though.”
- Anti –social behaviour, petty crime, fires, criminal damage,
- Teenagers on mopeds causing nuisance

Housing Issues

- Slum landlords and high tenancy turnover
- “There is a lack of liveable, safe and affordable homes in the local community. Housing is really poor and needs to be addressed, especially rogue landlords and anti-social neighbours.”

Community Issues

- “Westgate College is a dividing line – there is a shortage of community organisations and activities on the other side of the college”
- We need better community cohesion

Health Issues

- GP a big problem, I have been waiting in the queue half an hour. No doctor available – just nurse. I’m feeling very tired and I need a doctor
- I have also been waiting for months for an appointment.

Council Issues

- Help to deal with Civic Centre about understanding Council Tax and also problems with rubbish
- Council cuts that take away important resources from the community, such as the removal of play areas Britannia Place, cutting youth services etc.

Public Services

- We need a system where we can have question and answer sessions with public services so community members can understand how to deal with them.

School Issues

- I have a problem at my child's school.... I want to speak to the school about it but I can't get through to anyone





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