



Gateshead quayside

Apr 16, 2024 08:47 BST

## Cultural-led regeneration to help Gateshead flourish

**A Northumbria University academic has received levelling up funding to help creative and cultural practitioners bring jobs and greater economic and community activity to Gateshead town centre.**

[Dr Rebecca Prescott](#), from Northumbria's Newcastle Business School and Dr Alexander Wilson, Lecturer in Urban Planning at Newcastle University, will use the £165,000 from Gateshead Council's levelling up fund on a research project called [Flourish](#). The project will build on a 10-year collaboration

between Northumbria and Newcastle universities, the National Trust, Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust and Gateshead Council. It will also feed into a wider regeneration and revitalisation initiative, the Tyne Derwent Way a 9-mile outdoor trail connecting the centre of Gateshead with the Derwent Valley.

As a multi-disciplinary and collaborative project, Flourish aims to promote a more dynamic and inclusive creative and cultural environment in Gateshead. The research will include a broad range of subjects and methods from, ecosystem-mapping to urban participatory planning. Researchers will work with a stakeholder group of artists, local businesses and other cultural sector entrepreneurs to understand the challenges, opportunities and infrastructures they need to help create a flourishing and prosperous town centre. These stakeholders will also receive bursaries to maximise participation rates and the impact of the research.

Dr Prescott said: “Flourish is about getting buy-in from the grass roots, engaging with artists, cultural practitioners and other local entrepreneurs in Gateshead to understand what support they need to set up their businesses and enterprises. Bringing the creative community into regeneration like this can be complex and requires involving a diverse mix of practitioners in participatory decision making and grant making to fully understand what support and infrastructure they need to establish viable and sustainable businesses. Previous experience shows this doesn’t always happen – it really needs significant and sustained co-investment and energy.

“Over the next year our research will also draw on the findings of previous studies investigating the challenges for practitioners. Additionally, we will work on knowledge sharing activities with Creative Cultural Zones around the UK where there are good examples of creative businesses finding permanent affordable places to work and are supported to start up and grow.”

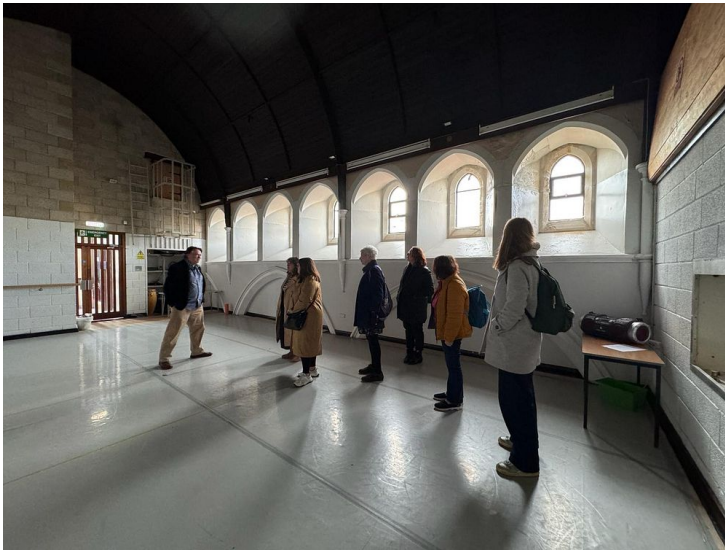
Dr Prescott says outputs from the research are expected in May 2025 and that any recommendations will respect the history and industrial heritage of Gateshead.

She added: “What we want to see in terms of impact from this research is greater activity in the town centre, increased footfall and dwell time – those markers that say an area is vibrant and thriving. Creative and cultural enterprise are a vital part of the wider development of the south side of the

Tyne with the new Sage Arena and International Conference Centre earmarked for completion in 2027.

“Getting Flourish right will help a whole range of creative and cultural practitioners – from local artists and architects to fashion designers and all sectors in between. Its economic and cultural impact will also significantly benefit the wider communities of Gateshead.”

Researchers investigating potential premises in Gateshead for cultural practitioners:



For more information in Newcastle Business School at Northumbria please visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/nbs](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/nbs)

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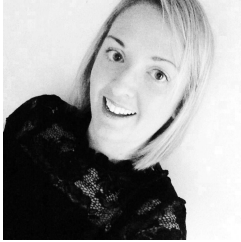
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