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Funding announced to support mental health through creative education

An innovative mental health scheme at Northumbria University has been awarded £388,000 from The National Lottery Community Fund to support the mental health of adults from across the North East.

[Converge Northumbria](#) offers members of the local community in Newcastle upon Tyne, who have or are experiencing challenges associated with mental health, opportunities to learn on the University's Newcastle City Campus through art and creative education.

Converge is an innovative partnership across the public and voluntary sectors in Newcastle and Gateshead and beyond. Participants study non-accredited creative courses and access the same academic staff, learning resources, and well-being services as university students. Courses are taught by staff, students, creative practitioners, and former Converge Northumbria students on campus and in local cultural venues, with progression into further study, volunteering, or work.

Since it was established in 2018, Northumbria University has supported 420 Converge students and has recently received funding from The [National Lottery Community Fund](#), the largest community funder in the UK, to continue the programme for a further three years.

This grant enables the extension of bespoke and creative learning opportunities that are right for every student, providing coaching, life skills, personal development, benefit/citizen advice and advocacy, mentoring and experiential learning - enabling them to live healthier lives.

Dr Heather Robson, Head of Northumbria's School of Design said: "Thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund we will be able to grow Converge Northumbria to build and extend a personalised journey that is right for every participant. Converge Northumbria works with students not patients, offers education not therapy, with the whole person. It is community-led and always in partnership. Above all, the overall aim is for every Converge student to be ordinary, extraordinary, and to be themselves. Thanks to National Lottery Players, his award is lifechanging for the project, the individuals, our students and the region."

Converge at Northumbria is an example of the fantastic activity which will form part of the University's new Centre for Health and Social Equity, known as CHASE. The Centre will be delivering world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

The Converge model was founded by York St John University in 2008 and piloted at Northumbria University in 2016. Converge is part of Northumbria University's [Higher Education Without Barriers](#) campaign which has raised over £3.1m to support students from all backgrounds since its launch in 2022.

Find out more about [Converge](#) and how Northumbria is [driving social mobility](#).

To find out more about how organisations can work in partnership with the University to support the university-wide Higher Education Without Barriers programme, which enables more young people to access and succeed within higher education, please [contact Sue Vout](#), Northumbria's Trust and Foundation Manager.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at www.northumbria.ac.uk

--- Please contact media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

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