



Northumbria University staff and alumni outside the University's London campus

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Unlocking potential, irrespective of background, through sport

More than £2.5m has been raised for a Fund that will provide life-changing opportunities for those who would not otherwise be able to access higher education.

The impressive sum has been raised for Northumbria University's [Higher Education Without Barriers Fund](#), which launched in January 2022, to enable motivated students from all backgrounds to access and succeed at Northumbria.

Northumbria's Higher Education Without Barriers sport programme uses sport as a tool to engage and inspire people in schools, and in local communities, to access the opportunity to study at Northumbria.

Knowing that sport is a fundamental power for social good and social change, the University organised three sport-related events to raise awareness and money for the Higher Education Without Barriers Fund.

This included a team of alumni and staff from the University cycling 300 miles over four days. The 13-strong team of cyclists set off on their bikes from Northumbria's London campus on Tuesday (October 17) and arrived at Northumbria's Newcastle city centre campus on Friday (October 20th).

Dr Craig Hodgson, Senior Research Assistant in Chemistry at Northumbria University, was part of the team cycling the epic stretch between both campuses.

He said: "I wanted to get involved in this event because I came to Northumbria nearly 10 years ago now on a Foundation year where I received a bursary myself. I'm a keen cyclist, so I thought it was a really good opportunity to give something back and help raise awareness of the Fund.

"University shouldn't just be for part of the population; it should be for everyone who can come here and succeed."

To generate further funds for Higher Education Without Barriers, the University hosted a sport fundraising dinner at St James' Park, Newcastle, on Friday 20th October. The event was attended by more than 300 guests.

Finally, throughout October, Northumbria's students, alumni, staff and business partners will be cycling between 30 and 300 miles in their own time to raise money for the Fund. Miles will be clocked up by cycling outside, taking spin classes as well as cycling indoors on an exercise bike.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Andy Long takes part in a fundraising cycle challenge alongside Northumbria University colleagues

Professor Andy Long, Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive of Northumbria University, said: "I applaud all those who have supported or taken part in these activities. Whether it was cycling the 300 miles from London to Newcastle, braving spinning classes, or giving generously at our fundraising dinner, this has been a real collective effort and hugely successful.

"Everyone with the potential to go to university should have the opportunity to achieve their goal. Through the Higher Education Without Barriers Fund, we are providing a range of financial initiatives, mental health and wellbeing services and community-based projects to make participation and progression in higher education more achievable for academically talented students, regardless of their social or economic circumstances."

So far over £2.5m has been raised for Northumbria University's Higher Education Without Barriers Fund. More than 2,000 students have benefitted from outreach activities, scholarships, hardship bursaries, mental health and wellbeing initiatives, as well as student volunteering and enterprise activities.

For more information about Higher Education Without Barriers or to contribute towards the Fund visit: www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/alumni-association/giving-to-northumbria/

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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