



# Our Schools Offer

How we can support students and staff during the school day and beyond.

      
[children-ne.org.uk](https://www.children-ne.org.uk)



Because growing up can be hard

Helping babies,  
children and young  
people grow up to be  
happy and healthy  
since 1891.



# About Children North East

**Children North East is a North East charity with a long history of supporting children and families. We exist because growing up can be hard. We want all babies, children, and young people to grow up feeling safe, loved, resilient, valued, and confident.**

Since 1891, Children North East have helped to transform the lives of babies, children, young people and families across the North East. In challenging circumstances, our teams are there to provide compassionate, expert support, often when there is nowhere else to turn for help.

We deliver services, support and initiatives that provide a platform for babies, children, young people and families to work through issues, take action and which gives them the tools to reach their full potential.

Our comprehensive support services include mental health support, family support, youth work, and community-based initiatives and we are dedicated to creating positive, lasting changes in the lives of children and young people.

Our work spans across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, making a significant impact at a local and national level.

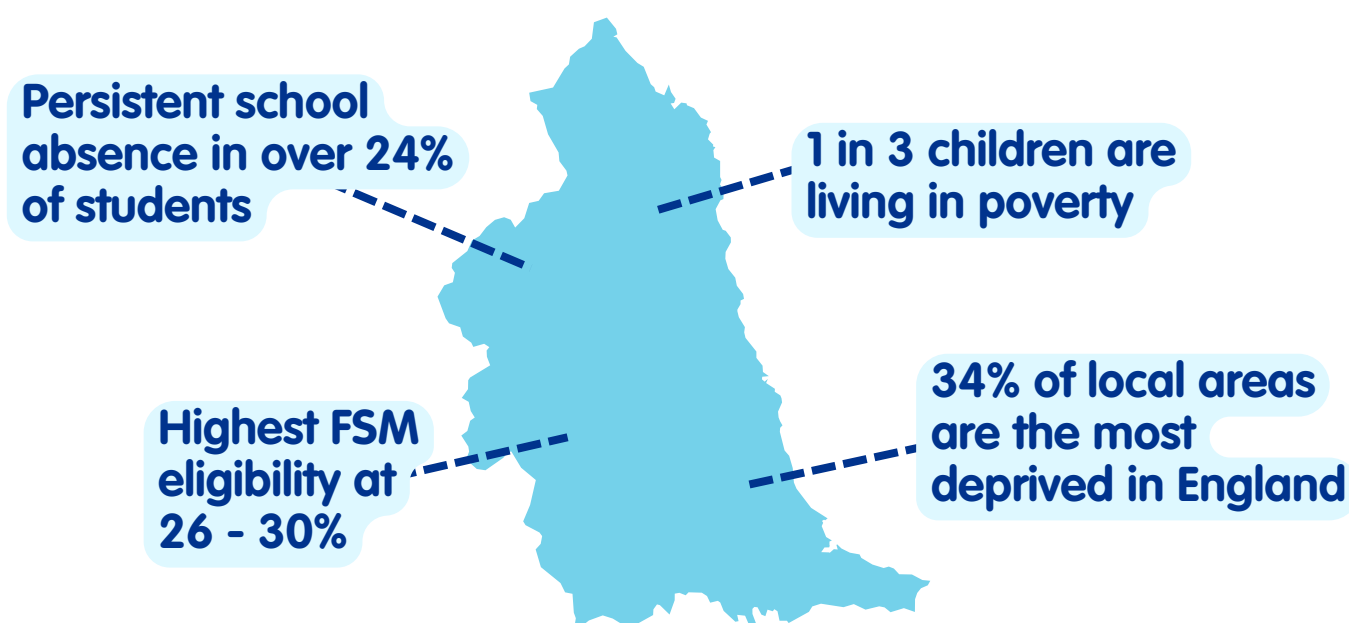


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## Why the North East needs our support

Children and young people in the North East face some of the most significant challenges. The region has the highest proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, some of the lowest attendance rates, and contains large areas of serious deprivation. Many families struggle with poverty, mental health pressures, and reduced access to vital services, all of which directly affect children's school experience and opportunities.



These pressures are not abstract - they shape everyday experiences: missing school due to poverty or anxiety, feeling excluded due to neurodivergence, or struggling without access to mental health support. These challenges result in lower attainment, disengagement from education, and poorer long-term outcomes.

Our school-based offer directly responds to these needs. Whether it's re-engaging persistently absent pupils, delivering vital therapeutic care, removing poverty-related barriers to education, or helping children build confidence during key transitions, our programmes are tailored to make a measurable difference where the need is greatest.

By focusing efforts here in the North East, we are not only addressing local inequalities - we're building a scalable model of change that can positively impact young lives across the country.

# Why work with Children North East?

Children North East is committed to enhancing inclusion and belonging in schools through our bespoke packages. Leveraging our extensive expertise, we co-produce tailored solutions that address the unique needs of each school community. By partnering with us, schools can create a more inclusive environment where every child feels valued and supported.

## Children

Our bespoke programmes are aimed towards supporting children's wellbeing, both in and out of school. We offer mental health support, both 1-2-1 and in groups so children and young people can learn more about themselves, and how they can support their own mental health. We also facilitate youth groups, giving young people a safe space to come together and build their own communities of shared interests.

## Teacher and Staff Training

Our training can help schools to find ways to support their students, and ensure they are offering an inclusive, equitable space for their students and staff. By offering additional training, you can help ensure all students have a space to thrive.

## Families

We look to provide support that extends outside of the school day and aim to connect with families to give them the tools they need to build strong relationships together. By working to strengthen these bonds, a stable home life makes a massive impact on children during the school day.

## Whole School

By approaching the school setting as a whole, holistic space we can help ensure you are advocating for changes to the whole setting, and addressing barriers which affect students, staff and families. Opening up these conversations and taking part in our work can help reduce stigmas and uncover the hidden barriers which affect many people during the school day.

## Worrit Warriors

Delivered by mental health professionals and supported by creative learning charity, Mortal Fools, helping young people at risk of suicide and other high-risk mental health challenges. Children taking part in 'Worrit Warriors' explore how they can look after their own mental health, grow their resilience, and learn coping techniques for dealing with challenging emotions and processing difficult experiences.

It will promote the idea **"Brave isn't how you feel... it's what you do"**. The 'Worrit Warriors' project combines the award-winning 'Melva' Digital Programme, including a feature film, digital game and creative resource toolbox, which provide an accessible, fun and dynamically structured approach to talking about and understanding negative thoughts, feelings and experiences.

The 'Melva' Programme has a particular focus on our 'worrits' (worries), and children learn that it's ok to feel worried, anxious or nervous sometimes. What's important is knowing how to recognise and manage those thoughts and feelings.



**"He is typically so hard to engage and doesn't often get on well with adults. I am pleasantly surprised at how much he has joined in. He struggles with emotions and often lashes out at peers, so seeing him be so supportive and open to talking about his anger and emotions is wonderful."**

Head Teacher of Worrit Warriors participant



## Counselling in Schools

Therapeutic support is a powerful and important intervention for children and young people experiencing mental health challenges.

Children North East's in-school counselling service provides pupils facing mental health challenges with access to professional therapeutic care directly at school. Pupils experiencing mental health issues or trauma, such as bereavement, abuse, or family crises, can work through their difficulties, develop effective coping strategies, and build a foundation for good mental health. Each year, we support thousands of children and young people to enhance their mental health and wellbeing. Our services are tailored to the specific needs of each school and may include individual support, group sessions and drop-ins.

Children North East is a member of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition. All of our counsellors hold a Level 5 certificate or above in counselling.

By working with Children North East on this essential pastoral provision the school will benefit from onsite healthcare professionals, as well as:

- Demonstrating commitment to the highest standard of pastoral support for pupils.
- Benefitting from a pathway of support to address issues such as negative behaviours or poor attendance.
- Ensuring pupils are given the best opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- Evidencing a proactive 'in school support' approach to mental health.
- Increased capacity to deliver mental health support.

**100%** of the 400+ children and young people accessing Children North East counselling in the last two years have stated their mental health has improved as a result.



Children & Young People's  
Mental Health Coalition



## Masquer-Aid Programme

Masquer-Aid is our psycho-educational programme for young people aged 11-25 who have recently found out they're neurodivergent or are waiting for a diagnosis.

Young people will take part in a 12-week programme where they learn about what it means to be neurodivergent and talk about their shared experiences with peers. We also offer 1-2-1 counselling for neurodivergent young people who are struggling with their mental health – young people can be involved in group settings, or receive individual counselling to help them to progress to group settings when they are ready.

The programme empowers young people to see the positives in their neurodiverse identity and provides them with transferable skills to use in their everyday navigation of neurotypical environments.



Masquer-Aid referrals are open to young people in Newcastle, and must be made through the NHS Newcastle and Gateshead Children and Young People's Service (CYPS), who can be contacted via their website or telephone 0191 246 6913, freephone 0800 652 2864 or email [NGCYPS@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:NGCYPS@cntw.nhs.uk)

Schools outside of Newcastle can contact us directly for more information.

**"...felt prouder than he ever has of himself and never believed he would be able to do it."**

Masquer-Aid participant about his own engagement with the group

**"Masquer-Aid is a great place for understanding more about neurodiversity."**

Masquer-Aid participant



## Transition Programme

This programme seeks to improve transitions as students move between different levels or types of education, such as primary to secondary school, by addressing behaviour and young people's inclusion and mental health.

It is proven to do this by supporting those struggling to build a sense of purpose and positively engage in school and improve and build their self-confidence and self-belief.

Transitions contribute to supporting young people's integration in school and promoting a successful transition. They help to set children and young people up for ensuring they have opportunities to realise their potential and be part of the region's future success. This programme is delivered in conjunction with the KEY Challenge, a charity dedicated to ensuring young people have access to meaningful opportunities to build their skills, confidence and resilience.

**"It has helped me to make more friendships and build better communication and have fun. It has also helped me build new skills like planning my time and energy."**

Pupil who participated in the programme

**88% of young people reported an increase in confidence.**



## Enriching Youth Groups

Through youth groups we create a space where young people can come together with shared experiences to build their own communities. We work to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion by hosting and supporting these groups within school settings.

Within these groups, we aim to guide the young people to have ownership over the group, including suggesting and planning activities, creating community rules and guidelines and suggesting ways of making other people aware of the group.

Some activities our groups have participated in include visiting museums and other settings to assess how accessible they are, taking part in arts festivals and took trips to learn about fire safety and first aid. Through these groups, young people can learn more about understanding themselves and each other, make new friends and connect with peers and grow their confidence.

Currently, we offer specialist groups for neurodivergent youth, LGBTQ+ and asylum seeking and refugee backgrounds and are always keen to support specific groups for your school setting.

**“Neurodivergence is not a choice, it’s not a bag you can put down or something you can turn on and off”**

Young Person from peer support group



## Ways to Wellbeing

Children North East recognise that everyone may struggle with their mental wellbeing at some point in their lives. Young people naturally go through a huge brain development in their adolescence and this can make distinguishing normal changes from a developing mental health diagnosis difficult.

The fully CPD accredited Ways to Wellbeing programme has been developed to support parents and school staff to better understand children and young people's emotional development. We will offer tools and information for parents/carers and school staff to understand and support children's emotional health.

In these sessions, we offer resources and guidance to support specific emotional wellbeing concerns. We also go through a wide range of information for those wishing to understand more about emotional wellbeing and how that relates to children.

We can offer sessions specifically for parents/carers, extended family and community leaders, and specifically for school staff.

These sessions can holistically address mental health and brain development, and focus on specific topics;

- Mental health & stigma
- Communication & conflict
- Anxiety & depression
- School avoidance
- Adolescent brain development
- Reducing parental conflict
- Eating disorders
- Self harm and suicidal thoughts
- Wellbeing and self-care

**“These courses have been excellent in helping me understand how a child's brain develops, how to explore their thinking and behaviours; and the importance of calm communication.”**

Ways to Wellbeing participant



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## Family Support

Our experienced teams can provide help to families during challenging times, working with individuals and the family as a group to help them stay safe, care for each other and play a positive role in each other's lives.

Approximately one in five families report 'distressed' relationships\*, managing pressures on family life such as the breakdown of adult relationships, health challenges or experience of trauma.

Our unique support services offer impartial, expert help to families during the most difficult times, supporting them to work through issues, to engage with organisations like Children's Social Care or meet the requirements of legal proceedings. We listen to the needs and experiences of individual parties and work to achieve the best long-term outcomes for the children and young people affected by them.

The goal of our work is to enable families to thrive, always putting the safety, wellbeing and interests of affected children first. Our service can support families towards a wide range of outcomes, with the team taking a holistic, bespoke approach to each individual family.

Our methods include education and role-modelling, family supervision, therapeutic support, mediation and support to engage with third-party agencies.

\*Family-Action.org.uk

**"We've been given access to resources that will make a huge difference. It's so easy to talk because you don't get judged. They have a way of talking to him that gets him to open up."**

Quote from a mum who we supported with her son's severe behaviour issues



# Neurodiversity Inclusion Training

Our CPD accredited Neurodiversity Inclusion workshop for schools, developed through years of consultation and research, delves into the lived experiences of neurodivergent young people attending mainstream schools. You will hear about the unique barriers neurodivergent pupils face and learn best person-centred practice to promote their inclusion and to help them to thrive.

Training objectives:

- To gain an insight into lived experiences of neurodivergence (including stimming, masking and burnout); societal barriers; and the impact of neurodivergence in the classroom and beyond
- To explore the voice of neurodivergent young people
- To consider adjustments that can be made in the classroom and school to promote inclusion

**“I was very impressed with the content of the course and how it was delivered.”**

Participant feedback

**“The knowledge of both facilitators was incredible.”**

Participant feedback



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## Infant Mental Health Training

Suitable for Early Years settings, our Infant Mental Health programme, Little Minds in Mind, delivers high quality training, exploring what is meant by the term 'Infant Mental Health', why it's important and why it's everyone's business.

It enables practitioners to maintain an infant health frame of mind in all aspects of their work. Giving colleagues working with infants and their families the skills and resources to identify, manage and promote secure parent infant relationships and ensure the emotional well-being of infants and their families.

**"The team have been so valuable and working with them has been amazing. Newcastle are lucky to have this service as my other perinatal colleagues from other North East areas often wish they had something similar for their mums and babies".**

Perinatal Community Practitioner

Our Level 1 and Level 2 training can be delivered in person or online, and is CPD Accredited. These courses have been developed from our years of experience working with families, midwives, hospital practitioners and mental health experts.

This training enables practitioners to understand Infant Mental Health and use this knowledge to identify possible risks and problems to signpost, or where to go for support.

- Explore the factors that impact a baby's emotional well-being
- Identify risk factors affecting Infant Mental Health
- Learn how to recognise signs of distress in infants
- Your role in advocating for babies
- Explore resources and tools for promoting infant mental health



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## Poverty Awareness Training

With rising costs of living and rates of poverty, it is more important than ever that schools are aware the effect of experiencing poverty has on their students. Low-income families face many hidden barriers to the school day, from school lunches, transport, trips, equipment and uniform, accessing education can be expensive and has a huge impact on families.

Poverty Awareness training for school staff focuses on the three pillars of Poverty Proofing®: Voice, Place and Structural Inequalities. In this training, we take a holistic overview of how poverty affects students, families and schools. We explore poverty as a concept, who is affected by poverty, the causes and consequences of poverty and understand how it affects decision making and identify how stigma and unconscious bias can impact those experiencing poverty.

This training comes from Children North East's Poverty Proofing experience, which for over a decade has worked to gather the voices of staff, students and families and their experiences of poverty, reducing stigma and uncovering hidden barriers. We can deliver the training in-person or online and provide a range of resources to support schools after.

In the year 2024/25, the Poverty Proofing the School Day team trained over 880 staff over 39 sessions in locations nationwide. 99% of those completing our evaluations said that they would recommend the training to a friend or colleague

**"It was very eye opening to hear the statistics and good that these were made relevant to the local area. It was useful in terms of putting yourself into the shoes of families who are struggling."**

Teacher feedback

**"I learnt about how quickly things can change financially, and the impact on children from financial difficulties where small changes can help."**

Teacher feedback



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## Poverty Proofing© the School Day

Since 2014, Children North East have developed their consultation model which is a nationally recognised tool, supporting schools to remove barriers for pupils living in poverty.

We work directly with pupils and families in schools to understand their unique experiences and gather information to inform better practices for the school to implement.

Through this, we can ensure that no child faces barriers to education due to their financial situation and that schools have a better understanding of how they can support their students. We have learned about the hidden barriers many students face and the emotional toll that comes with being a young person in poverty in a setting they attend every day.

**“It’s given us a much more complex picture of the needs of our population in school. For some who had made assumptions about families at all levels, this was a revelation.”**

Headteacher

Our staff consult students, parents, staff and governors to understand their challenges in an inclusive, straightforward and supportive process. We then complete an audit and work with the leadership team to identify pathways to reducing the impact of poverty on students. Schools receive a thorough written report and action plan to inform impactful decision-making, and receive accreditation pending a follow-up review. The process can also include training for staff and governors on the causes, consequences and impact of poverty on children, young people and their families and ways to identify and mitigate barriers in their roles.

Our team can offer full or abridged versions depending on the needs of the school, the available finances and whether there is a specific focus.



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## Poverty Proofing© Pupil Workshops

Our Poverty Awareness Workshops are carefully structured to educate, engage, and empower students to better understand poverty in a way that is age-appropriate, respectful, and action-oriented. Delivered by a team of experienced teaching professionals, we tailor each session based on the needs and developmental stage of the group, ensuring accessibility is our priority whilst maintaining the depth needed to spark meaningful engagement.

Our workshops leave a lasting impact on young people by using interactive tools, games, and discussion-based learning across all age groups to aim to:

- Understand the realities of poverty beyond stereotypes and assumptions
- Develop empathy without pity for peers who may be experiencing hidden hardship
- Think critically about fairness, inequality, and social systems
- Take action, by identifying and suggesting changes to everyday practices which may unintentionally exclude or disadvantage peers
- Ensure every young person feels part of the solution

**“Really helpful, I liked it because it is real, and I think it was really important to know about what we did today.”**

**“It taught me about poverty and realise what life is like for different people.”**

**“I loved that they included games and activities. They are very kind and inclusive.”**

**“We learned about poverty and how some pupil's lives are different to others because they don't have the resources to join in.”**



# Consultations for Research and Evaluation

Children North East are highly skilled and experienced at leading and delivering consultation and research projects with children, young people and communities.

Our work is commissioned by a wide range of organisations including schools, Local Authorities, the NHS, public services and community organisations. We have a strong history of partnership working with universities.

Our expert team designs and delivers bespoke consultation and research projects, employing a wide range of innovative and creative methods to collect valuable insights from different stakeholder groups, including those in underserved communities.

Our broad experience includes delivering projects at scale (1,000+ participants), small scale qualitative research, facilitating long-term support (such as youth advisory boards) and dealing with sensitive subject matter.

**“Sometimes they listen to my parents more than me.”**

We believe the voice of children and young people is central to improving services for them and understanding issues important to them.

**Examples of our work include:**



**Change Now Report**



**VOICES. Report**



## Focus on Attendance

Ensuring high levels of pupil attendance, especially in mainstream secondary schools, has become increasingly challenging. Both overall and persistent absence rates remain significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels, despite substantial efforts from schools, local authorities and the Department for Education to encourage regular school attendance.

A number of our services outlined on the previous pages can be tailored to support pupils who are struggling to attend school regularly.

Peer mentoring, counselling, and family support can all be effective in improving the attendance of individual pupils by identifying and removing their barriers to attending school.

In our Transition programme and peer support groups, we can work with groups of pupils who struggle to attend school to address their concerns and barriers, encouraging improved attendance.

Our Ways to Wellbeing programme includes a module specifically about school avoidance, supporting parents in working with their children to develop good attendance habits.

**“Due to the consistency from the team and positive relationships formed, B has made vast improvements in arriving to school and transitioning inside.”**

Feedback about our bespoke family support work focusing on attendance



# Contacts

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## Get In Touch

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## Our Locations

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### Head Office

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**Tel:** 0191 256 2444

### Graingerville (Therapeutic)

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Westgate Road,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE4 6UJ

**Tel:** 0191 273 3997

### Cowgate (Community Hub)

Cowgate Centre,  
Houghton Avenue,  
Newcastle upon Tyne,  
NE5 3UT

**Tel:** 0191 2727 824

### Gateshead Hub

14 Regent Terrace,  
Gateshead,  
NE8 1LU

With your help, we won't stop until every baby, child and young person has the happy, healthy start in life they deserve.



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Company Number 90288  
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