



Candidate Pack
Trustee

HELLO!

The Key envisions a North East of England where all young people can unlock fulfilling futures, free from barriers or limitations. For over 30 years, we have worked collaboratively to support young people to recognise their strengths, build confidence, and take positive steps towards their futures through meaningful, youth-led opportunities.

Our work is built upon four core pillars that young people should be:

- Empowered to **use their voice** and be heard
- Trusted to lead and deliver **projects and activities** meaningful to them
- Supported to build the **skills and confidence** they need to thrive
- Inspired to become active in their communities by exploring **enterprise or tackling social issues**

Our core pillars are supported by our organisational values of:

- **Collaboration:** We achieve more together than by acting alone
- **Focus:** We keep sight of the goal to achieve our mission
- **Growth:** We constantly strive to be the best we can be

[To find out more about our work and impact, please click here to download our three year strategy setting out our commitment and focus 2025-28.](#)



About us

WHAT WE DO

The Key began life over thirty years ago when a determined group of North East young people, youth workers and academics developed a model to engage and support young people to build skills. Over time, the model evolved into a programme to provide young people with an opportunity that empowers them to use their voices and ideas as they lead their own projects and activities. Today, we call our trusted programme, the KEY+ Challenge, and its used daily by over 80 partners working with young people in communities across the North East of England.

THE KEY+ CHALLENGE

Young people come together in small groups in places and spaces that they are familiar with. They're guided by a trained KEY+ facilitator - a trusted adult in a supportive role a who ensures young people remain in the lead. Working together, young people follow our proven, five-step process to:

1. **Think** of a project or activity that they want to make happen
2. **Plan** what is needed for that project, including a budget
3. **Pitch** their project to a panel of business and community volunteers
4. **Do** their project if approved by the panel
5. **Review** and reflect on their project, learning, and development

Young people complete this process up to three times, each time planning more progressively challenging projects with greater personal development.

At every step, young people are encouraged to take ownership. Their ideas often stem from the things they are most interested in. Projects might be ambitious, such as tackling environmental issues through a local recycling campaign or simpler, like organising a silent disco or a trip to let their hair down as young carers. What matters is that each project presents a meaningful challenge that helps young people take the lead, build confidence and develop practical life skills.



KEY+ in Action



KEY STORIES

2024-25 KEY STATS

1,635

individual young people were supported to participate in KEY+



They used their ideas and took the lead to think, plan, pitch, do & review

347

of their own projects & activities

Including:

- Food hamper support for struggling families
- Group bonding experiences
- Community fun days
- Environmental campaigning projects



97%

of young people reported improved essential skills as a result of participation



98%

of young people reported improved confidence thanks to KEY+

97%

of young people asked, said KEY+ will have a positive impact on their future



QUOTES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

"KEY+ helped me have the confidence to believe in myself and not dim my personality to suit other people."

- Deborah, KEY+ Completer

"I've learnt I am more capable than I give myself credit for."

- Gary, KEY+ completer

"It has pushed me out my comfort zone and made me improve in lots of different ways and given me opportunities that I could never imagine."

- Nicola, KEY+ completer

"KEY+ has helped me with my responsibilities and me as a person. I can take more stress now and I have more energy and motivation to do work."

- Rhys, KEY+ completer

"I am more confident and don't feel scared to stand up and talk anymore."

- Emily, KEY+ completer

"Before doing this project, I wasn't a very positive person and didn't have anything to aim for. By doing this project, it has given me a focus and the feeling of achieving something."

- Teoni, KEY+ completer

1. **31 King NUF:** A group of NEET young people took on KEY+ to build skills for their future and in doing so, delivered a transformative project to rejuvenate a local community garden. From painting sheds and repairing benches to tackling general maintenance, the group enhanced the space for others while developing essential skills. Through this hands-on experience, they strengthened their problem-solving, budgeting, and communication skills. [Read their journey.](#)

2. **Care and Cup's Society** took on the KEY+ Challenge to organise a pop-up café at the Little Sisters of the Poor residential home, fostering intergenerational connection and reducing loneliness among elderly residents. The project not only brought joy to the residents but also left a lasting impact on the young people. [See what they did here.](#)

3. **The Cream Egg Key Voices** organised an environmentally themed community event aimed at promoting recycling and sustainability. The event featured refreshments, goody bags, a clothes swap, and a pledge wall, all designed to encourage eco-friendly practices. Along the way, they built skills and confidence and experienced the full impact that KEY+ delivers. [Check it out here.](#)

4. **Roots** were moved by the issue of men's mental health and wanted to raise awareness of support and suicide prevention. Despite facing challenges like poor weather and lower-than-expected attendance, they successfully got their community together and organised a charity football match. Roots nurtured their problem solving, enterprising and communication skills throughout and were delighted to raise a whopping £600! [Read about it here..](#)

Why us



WHY BE A TRUSTEE FOR THE KEY

At The Key, **we believe that every young person has the potential to succeed - but too many face barriers that limit their opportunities.** Our work focuses on communities where poverty is prevalent, and support young people who face additional barriers.

As a trustee you will:

- Contribute to empowering young people through the KEY+ Challenge
- Collaborate with and support a highly skilled and passionate team and board of trustees
- Play a meaningful role in an exciting new chapter for a long-standing North East youth charity



Liz Watchorn
The Key's Chair of Trustees

A few words from our Chair

"On behalf of The Key's board, hello and thank you for your interest in our trustee vacancy. We have a strong set of core beliefs, collaborative values and a real drive to see as many young people as possible complete our refreshed and impactful programme, The KEY+ Challenge.

We have a dedicated board of trustees with a strong mix of backgrounds, experience and a passion to inspire belief in young people.

Together, we can inspire belief in young people who need it most."

A note from our Chief Executive Officer

"We are seeking a new trustee to join our board - someone who is genuinely passionate about empowering young people and helping them believe in their potential. We're particularly interested in individuals who currently work with young people or within organisations dedicated to supporting them. Previous board experience isn't required, as we provide a full and supportive induction.

The Key has a proud history of helping young people across the North East build confidence, develop new skills, and shape their own futures. We are now looking for a trustee who can help guide the next chapter of our organisation, ensuring we remain stable, compliant, and ambitious in our mission.

If this sounds like a role where you could make a meaningful difference, we would be delighted to hear from you."



Rebecca Maw
The Key's CEO



The Role



Role Description: Trustee

Purpose of the Role:

Our volunteer trustees play a pivotal role in ensuring the organisation is well governed and complies with all legislation and good practice relating to charities. The trustee will work with and provide support to our CEO, the Chair and internal team.

Person specification

- **Current or very recent experience of working with young people or within an organisation that supports young people**
- A passion for inspiring belief in young people
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Good, independent judgement
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team and make decisions in the best interests of The Key
- Acts with Integrity
- **Previous Board experience is not essential.**

Commitment:

- The required time commitment is around 4-5 hrs per quarter.
- Trustees are expected to complete an induction programme during their first 6 months as a trustee of The Key, which is designed to help them understand the organisation and their role on the Board.
- Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings. Board meetings are held in person four times a year, two at The Key's office and two online, typically on Thursdays from 4.30pm - 6.30pm.
- Trustees are expected to attend one additional 'Away Day' each year which is allotted to strategic planning. It is usually held in January and can take up to 5 hours. Venues vary, but tend to be held in the Newcastle / Gateshead area.
- Trustees are expected to attend the annual general meeting (AGM) of The Key, which takes place in the autumn immediately before a board meeting and usually lasts 30 minutes.
- Trustees may be asked to join a 'Task and Finish' subgroup from time to time as the need arises.
- Papers are distributed one week in advance of meetings. Meeting papers should be read in advance of the meeting.
- Trustees are invited to become Volunteer Panel Members who make up our friendly dragons den style panel who listen to young people pitch their project ideas, however this is not essential.
- Trustees claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings.
- Trustees serve an initial term of three years, followed by additional terms of service, by agreement between the trustee and the board.

Apply

HOW TO APPLY

We are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, and we welcome applications from all sections of the community. Previous board experience is not essential.

We encourage conversations with prospective trustees in advance of an application being submitted. Please contact Rebecca Maw, Chief Executive Officer for an informal chat via email rebecca@thekeyuk.org

If you think this could be the opportunity that you are seeking, please email a CV and short covering letter to rebecca@thekeyuk.org

Deadline: 31st March 2026

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

We intend the recruitment process for Trustee to follow:

- Informal discussion with CEO online or by phone
- Submission of CV and covering letter by email to CEO
- Applicants who are shortlisted will be invited for an informal discussion in person with the Chair and one or two trustees & Youth Advisory Board Members



I really did feel empowered and it changed the way I thought. It left me thinking nothing was beyond my reach.



The Key helped me no longer feel alone. It helped me feel part of a team and I am so much more confident now.

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Our Strategy



At The Key, we believe that every young person has the potential to succeed - but too many face barriers that limit their opportunities. Over the next three years, our strategy will focus on expanding access, improving quality, and increasing impact, ensuring that young people, particularly those growing up in poverty and those facing challenging circumstances, have the tools to build bright futures.

THE CHALLENGES WE ARE TACKLING

Young people in the North East face some of the most significant challenges in the UK, including:

POVERTY & SOCIAL MOBILITY

35% of children in the region live in poverty, limiting their education, career prospects, and life chances.

LIMITED ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Underfunding of youth services has increased barriers and reduced access to impactful youth opportunities.

REDUCED ACCESS TO YOUTH SERVICES

Youth service funding has fallen dramatically everywhere, but the North East saw the steepest cuts.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

1 in 5 children have a probable mental health disorder, affecting their confidence and engagement.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The North East has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the UK at 15%.

YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

The North East's overall SEND rate is higher than the national average, including those with EHC plans.

OUR RESPONSE: THE KEY+ CHALLENGE

The KEY+ Challenge is our flagship programme which nurtures young people's psychological needs, enhancing their wellbeing and developing growth mindsets.

Guided by a trained facilitator, groups of young people follow our five-step process to think, plan, pitch, do and review their own projects, exploring their purpose and building the skills, confidence, and resilience to take control of their futures.

Working with others, we create youth-led opportunities that empower young people to harness their own agency and forge positive pathways for themselves, regardless of their starting point.



"It has helped me improve my skills, build my confidence, become more independent and talk to different people."

- Ethan, young person who completed KEY+

Our Strategy



OUR 2025-28 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. REACH



Supporting young people who need us most

- Build, maintain and enhance relevant partnerships
- Respond to national, regional and local priorities and align our efforts towards supporting young people who need us most
- Raise our profile amongst relevant new, existing and emerging networks

3,700
individual young people will participate in the KEY+ Challenge



Young people will participate in the KEY+ Challenge in **237** locations throughout the North East of England



2. QUALITY



Creating the best experience for young people

- Clearly and consistently communicate the value of our role and our offer
- Establish and embed our quality framework and create opportunities for sharing best practice and elevating ambition
- Tailor our programme to meet young people's specific needs

92%
of young people will report improved essential skills with an average skills growth of 25%



Design and deliver **5** tailored adaptations of KEY+ to meet young people's specific needs



3. IMPACT



Delivering the best outcomes for young people

- Empower young people to understand and articulate how the skills they develop through KEY+ supports their futures
- Establish and embed an evidence-based impact framework, using data to inform priorities
- Link the direct impact of our programme to the long-term outcomes for young people

98%
young people will feel KEY+ will have a positive impact on their future



Establish a Key Alumni offer and Youth Advisory Board, nurturing follow-on opportunities with **150** young people



We are committed to expanding opportunities for young people - but we can't do it alone. By working together, we can ensure that young people have the support, skills and opportunities they need to succeed.

To find out more visit www.thekeyuk.org or [to read our full three year strategy document click here.](#)

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Young people in our region often face significant challenges. These pressures can limit their confidence and prevent them from exploring their interests, motivations, and potential, as well as from taking part fully in their communities.

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