

HOMEGROWN

20 YEARS IN THE NORTH EAST



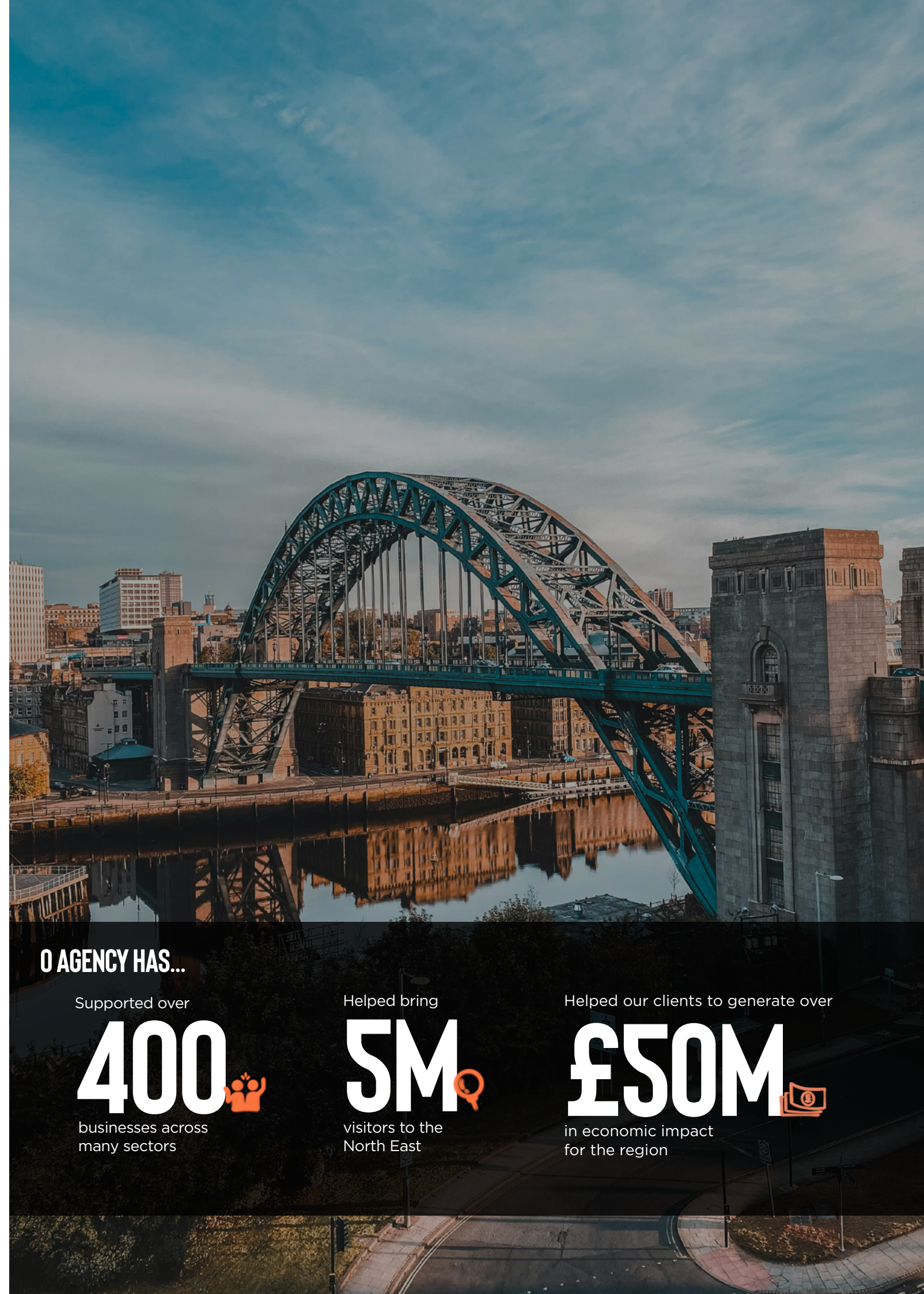
20

YEARS OF IMPACT

As we celebrate our 20th year in business this Homegrown magazine is an edition with a difference...a look back at the stories of brands and businesses homegrown in our region that we've had the privilege to share – those that tell their own story of 20 years of impact, change, innovation and community spirit in the North East.

Being behind the scenes of these organisations gives us a unique insight into the rich fabric of the most northerly region of England, the challenges we face, the opportunities we grasp and the true spirit of entrepreneurship and ambition that is taking us into our next chapter, thanks to the election of a new mayor and a hum of change around all four corners of the region.

We hope you enjoy hearing about some of the stories we have told...but as a region we need to tell more. We need to stand up and tell the stories of innovation, of new growth industries such as clean energy, digital and life sciences, share the passions of the rich cultural scene our venues and events bring to life, shout about the skills of the future coming out of our colleges and universities and above all, tell the story of North East life, of our coast, cities and countryside and what makes it a place like no other.



O AGENCY HAS...

Supported over

400

businesses across
many sectors

Helped bring

5M

visitors to the
North East

Helped our clients to generate over

£50M

in economic impact
for the region

HELLO...

Founded in 2005, we have been building brands across sectors through media profile and impactful communications, and with the rise of social media, we developed our team of content creators and social media strategists, across every new platform, from LinkedIn to TikTok, to make sure our clients stand out with contagious content.

We were the first to market in influencer marketing, with a decade or more of experience in delivering successful and impactful creator campaigns, helping our clients to build authentic influence. Fast forward to today and we're a team of strategists and creatives working across brand communications for some of this region's most impactful organisations.

Our team are what makes us special – we have built a culture for nurturing the best in the business, which can be seen in our awards cabinet!

NORTH EAST 'MARKETING AGENCY OF THE YEAR'

2021, 2022, 2023

PR WEEK 'BEST AGENCY OUTSIDE LONDON'

Finalist

CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 'OUTSTANDING PR CONSULTANCY'

Winner

JOURNAL 'BEST PLACES TO WORK' SME

Winner

NORTH EAST 'FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR'

Winner

PROLIFIC NORTH 'BEST CONSUMER CAMPAIGN'

2023

ENTREPRENEURS' FORUM 'IMPACT' AWARD 2024

Winner

**IN THIS ISSUE WE LOOK BACK THROUGH
OUR ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES
WE HAVE TOLD ABOUT PEOPLE AND
ORGANISATIONS LEADING THE WAY IN....**

01 INNOVATION

05 CULTURE

**02 CLEAN
ECONOMY**

06 TRANSPORT

03 SKILLS

07 HEALTH

04 HOUSING

**08 SOCIAL
IMPACT**

CONTENTS

INNOVATION

A region renowned for its innovation, it's no surprise that the North East is now home to a wide range of new tech companies, from fintech to gaming, data and cleantech.

Some of the big tech superstars putting our region on the map include the likes of Sage PLC, proptech market leader iamproperty and global games house Double 11, but we have also seen a rise of new emerging entrepreneurs taking tech to a new level, such as the cutting edge companies in virtual and augmented reality at PROTO in Gateshead or the global online sampling business SoPost.

In the last 20 years we have worked with tech entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey from seed to scale to sale, and we are proud to count many of our region's tech success stories as part of our own. Building a brand in the tech space means being able to have a clear value proposition, investable story and attractive employer offering – getting those things right means the pace of scale never needs to slow down.

Tech sits at the heart of our region's economic strategy, and working with clients in this sector sits close to our heart in our own business journey.

HOW WE'VE SUPPORTED OUR TECH CLIENTS OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS...

50 *Profile* Told more than 50 fast growth tech stories to the world

£400M *Investment* Helped our clients raise their profile to secure over £400m in investment to help them scale and succeed

1,000S *Conversations* Helped to start thousands of innovation conversations

200 *Services* Helped our innovative clients to release 200 products and services

1,000S *Recruitment* Helped innovative businesses recruit thousands of people into the region and beyond

200 *Awards* Helped our clients win over 200 awards for their innovation

IAMPROPERTY



iamproperty is one of the UK's fastest growing businesses, featuring in the UK GP Bullhound Top 100 and Top 50 list in 2022, 2023 and 2024. With over 700 team members across the UK and some of the industry's most innovative solutions for Estate Agents and consumers, iamproperty has forged its place as a PropTech pioneer, with big ambitions for the future.

We started to work with iamproperty back in 2020, at a time where the business was launching new and exciting products to the market, in addition to its award winning and marketing leading auction service iamsold. From concepting software brands and go-to-market strategies, to brand building PR, acquisition and internal communications support, innovative digital assets and direct to consumer campaigns, we work across all parts of the business supporting

the UK marketing group as an extension of their team.

As part of our brand building activity, we've also helped them to reach trade titles to aid their ambitious growth and acquisition strategy and to drive awards success, with more than 25 award accolades since 2020 for their innovation, culture and leadership. Their presence on social media channels has increased by over 300% and campaign led enquiries are up by 300% across services since 2021.

Working with O has accelerated our position in the market and helped us to reach new audiences to drive awareness and growth in our market categories. We always feel like their only client, even though we know we aren't.

Michele Gettins, CMO for iamproperty

NWG INNOVATION FESTIVAL

We partnered with Northumbrian Water Group on its first ever Innovation Festival back in July 2017 to welcome some of the world's leading brains as they came together to tackle major social and environmental challenges.

Telling the story of a festival with a difference meant taking a new approach, so our social media crew headed to Newcastle Racecourse to support the team with live feeds and fast-paced digital content reaching circa. 1 million people across the duration of the festival, whilst visits from emerging digital influencers harnessed even wider social media reach.

IF TV was created to bring the festival to life. Facebook Live streams ensured that even those who couldn't attend the

festival didn't miss out, as well as bringing together a nightly online TV show at 7pm to round off each day's progress.

From morning yoga in the Wellness Tent, to daily 'sprints' where businesses, universities, schools and members of the public looked at a range of issues, including flooding, the environment and social inclusion, this innovative event has gone on to become one of the biggest and best b2b festivals in the UK.



SCIENCE CENTRAL... THE EARLY DAYS OF HELIX

Before the wonders that are the sparkling buildings of the Helix site in the west of Newcastle city centre, we were asked to help encourage a centre of innovation for innovative science or technology businesses in the region through a unique partnership between what was then named Newcastle Science City; a partnership between Newcastle City Council and Newcastle University.

The campaign objective was to promote the development as a centre for innovation in science and technology businesses in the region and UK-wide, whilst acting as the press office for the Science Central site. We fielded all media and public enquiries and acted as a key point of contact for PR liaising throughout Science Central's multiple partnerships with the likes of Newcastle University and Newcastle City Council, ensuring collaboration and support throughout the campaign.

We spearheaded a PR campaign to involve local people as 'poster stars' for the Science Central development, a promotional exercise created for global audience visibility.

Our work throughout the first year of this contract involved striking a balance between proactive and reactive PR activity, handling the media interest surrounding this sensitive urban development against the backdrop of a highly political landscape.



CLEAN ECONOMY

Cast your eyes across the horizon and our region is leading the way in a new clean economy, from offshore wind to electric vehicles. The drive towards net zero has seen the North East grow the highest concentration of energy-related companies of any English region, with 7,600 people employed in over 700 businesses, generating an annual turnover of £2.7bn in the low carbon economy (InvestNewcastle).

'A greener North East' has been set out as a key regional agenda, taking inspiration from our industrial heritage and unique mix of urban areas, countryside, coastline and rivers, to nurture our natural resources - creating green jobs, sustainable industry, and clean energy (NECA).

Businesses large and small are leading the way from start-ups like Swarm to established players like Osbit, alongside an infrastructure designed for a greener future at Port of Tyne and internationally acclaimed investments like Dogger Bank.

Supported dozens of businesses in developing their

ESG COMMS STRATEGY

Managed Ministerial and Media visits to

NORTH EAST REGENERATION ZONES

carbon-reducing schemes and clean energy sites

Led on emerging

EV INITIATIVES

across the region to help get 100s of EV vehicles on our roads

CLEARLY DRINKS



Sunderland based drinks manufacturer Clearly Drinks came to us to make its products ‘thirst’ choice for their customers, attracting new audiences across the UK and raising its profile as a longstanding North East brand with a powerful history and bright future.

We utilised a wide range of tactics to deliver a strategy which was robust enough to support the company’s ambitious growth targets.

The campaign generated earned media coverage in trade titles including The Grocer, International Retail News and Talking Retail, directly resulting in two new retailers proactively reaching out to stock the brand.

The company was actively working towards achieving net-zero status and improving its industry leading carbon footprint. A main area of focus was plastic reduction, which resulted in a substantial investment

into recyclable packaging for its products. We helped the team at Clearly Drinks to develop a consistent and memorable approach to their sustainability and environmental commitment.

We worked closely with the team to develop a visual identity for their ambitious ESG strategy. Alongside creating the visual identity for the strategy, our team designed and created an animation for internal teams and external stakeholders, internal signage, infographics and media outreach of their commitments.

We’re still Clearly Drinks’ PR partner today.

Get
more
ViTS

vitamin

C

Sparkling
Sonder



DER-IC

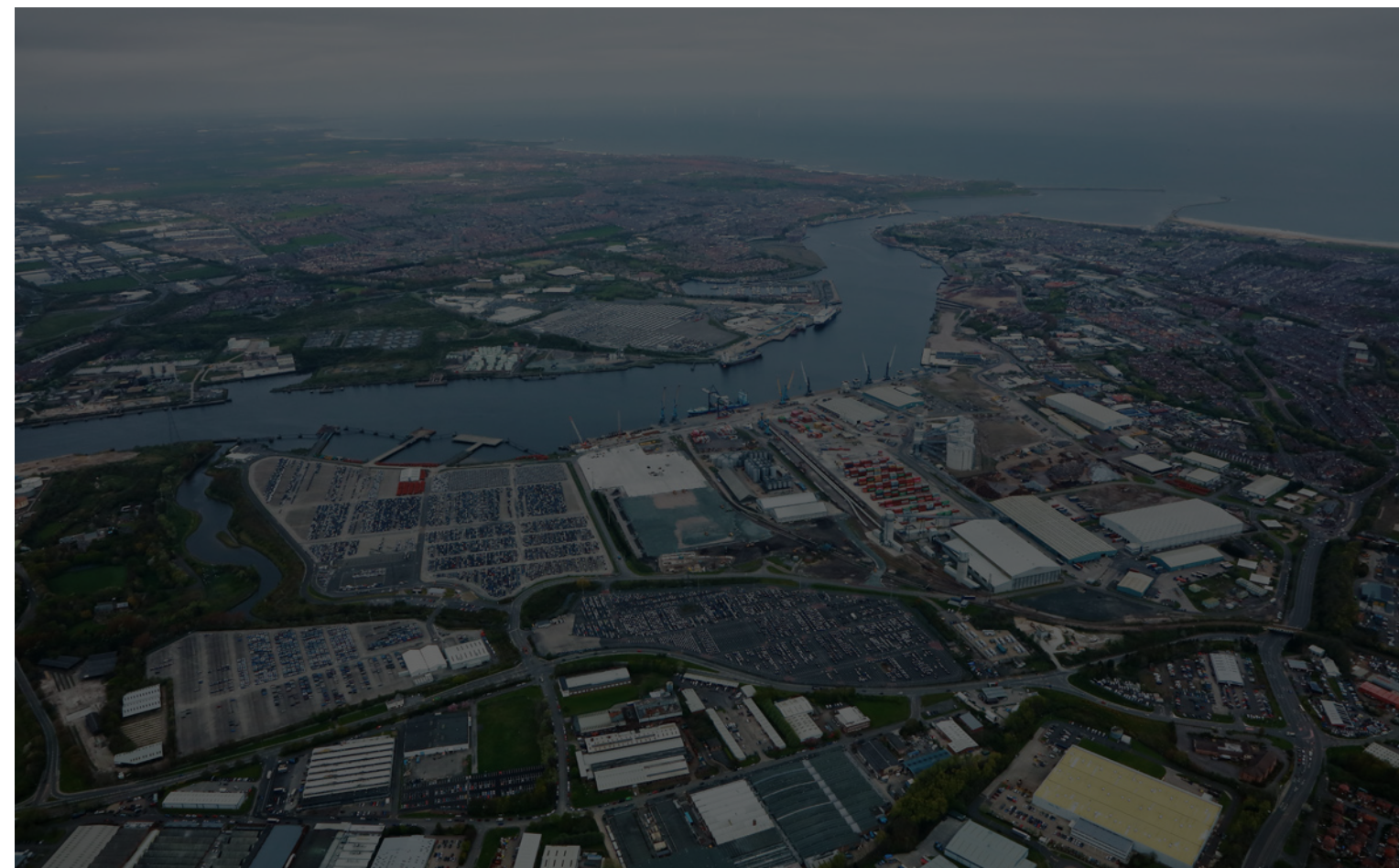
O was engaged by Newcastle University in 2022 to provide a 12-month PR strategy and campaign for its Driving the Electric Revolution Industrialisation Centres (DER-IC).

DER-IC is a UK-wide network supporting the growth of power electronics, machines and drives (PEMD) supply chains in the UK, through world-class design, manufacturing, test and validation facilities. DER-IC is part of the £80m Driving the Electric Revolution Challenge at UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Our team of talented writers frequently transformed often very technical and complex ideas from within the niche sector of Power Electronics, Machines and Drives and applied our knowledge base from broader areas of electrification

and sustainability to create exciting press stories and thought leadership pieces, highlighting DER-IC projects and work, tailoring content to the audience required – this included being agile and responding to the latest breaking news and securing newsjacking opportunities such as reaction to the evolving energy strategy, COP 27 and battery manufacturing in the UK.

Over a 12-month period we achieved a readership of over 8 million across target titles to a PR value of £135,000 – including broadcast coverage on BBC Newcastle and GB News.



PORT OF TYNE

O became the Port of Tyne's PR partner in spring 2024, brought on board to set a clear strategy at a time when the port had a clear vision and a lot to say. The approach to PR needed to be bold and ambitious, both for the port and the wider region, of which it's a huge champion. In six months, our PR programme exceeded expectations and placed over 150 media features, largely in North East regional media, as well as key nationals and trade titles.

Content has covered all key focus areas for the port, including progress made towards its vision to be the UK's first completely sustainable smart port, and opportunities it is creating for its local community and wider North East as a key part of the region's infrastructure.

“It's a pleasure working with the team at the Port, to tell the big stories of regional innovation and sustainability. There are huge things happening here in the North East that we should all be really excited about.”





3

SKILLS

Our regional economy is changing, and skills for future industries need to be at the forefront if we are to achieve our goal of 'a successful North East'.

Innovation and collaboration with employers are seeing our region's universities, schools and colleges adapt to the need for a new talent pipeline with the introduction of specialist courses for our emerging industries; from eSports to immersive technology, renewables to offshore wind.

O has worked with a wide range of schools and colleges, both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities, employer-facing initiatives and the not-for-profit youth sector to help drive up aspiration and access to careers for our young people, it's a topic we have campaigned for over 20 years and continues to be a huge part of the impact we try to achieve.

Launched the region's first ever

MASS YOUTH ASPIRATION CAMPAIGN

Launched the region's biggest-ever

ENTERPRISE SKILLS CAMPAIGN

to encourage youth start-ups

Connected over 100 North East businesses to our regional

YOUTH TALENT PIPELINE

through schools and community partnerships

Spoken at over 50 events as part of our

GROW YOUTH TALENT PROGRAMME

and engaged with over **100** students in the first year of our new agency programme

*Helped raise funds so around 3,000
young women in the North East had*

ACCESS TO EMPLOYABILITY

and skills support with The Prince's Trust during and post pandemic



NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

O has been the PR partner for Newcastle College and its group company NCG since March 2021, supporting its ambition to grow regional awareness, engage industry stakeholders, and drive positive PR around its impact on students, businesses, and the wider North East economy.

Over the last three years, we have secured over 300 pieces of media coverage across regional, trade, and national press. This has included high-profile funding announcements, major milestones such as Newcastle College University Centre securing indefinite degree-awarding powers and NCUC celebrating its 10th anniversary with 10,000 graduates. Our role has been to differentiate Newcastle College in a competitive education landscape, spotlighting what it does differently and why it matters.

We've delivered a proactive PR programme that engages local and business media with news

of the College's skills initiatives, partnerships, and strategic developments. This has ensured that key messages from the College's 10-year strategic plan are reaching the right audiences whether it's employers looking to invest in workforce development, prospective students choosing their next steps, or regional stakeholders shaping the skills agenda.

We continue to be the College's PR partner, leading its press desk, and have recently completed a campaign project for its first CGI video-led student recruitment campaign for NCUC which has over 100,000 views.



We wanted to try a completely new idea for one of our University Centre campaigns and decided to embrace CGI which really helped us to stand out. We had amazing feedback so we're really pleased we did something a little different to build our brand awareness.



Nicola Chapman, Marketing Operations Lead at Newcastle College

GENERATION NE

Generation NE, a £4.5 million youth employment programme in the North East, was a partnership between five local authorities and the North East LEP. Thanks to a team of dedicated business advisors it empowered the region's SMEs to future-proof their workforces whilst tackling youth unemployment by supporting young people into sustainable jobs.

We launched the project with an exclusive roundtable debate, which marked the arrival of Generation NE in the region and brought together key business representatives and leaders in the youth employment agenda to discuss the issues that matter most to SMEs in the North East when it comes to future-proofing their workforce.

A sustained PR campaign followed with stakeholder briefings, business success stories, seasonal comments and business events, and in just six months the programme received over 100 media mentions across TV, radio, print and online.

100 
pieces of press
coverage



NATIONAL SKILLS ACADEMY FOR PROCESS INDUSTRIES

Based in the North East, NSAPI was one of 10 launched as part of the UK Government's drive to up-skill the UK workforce, in partnership with employers.

We created a marketing strategy that would take the Academy from its Ministerial London launch event to its regional launches across the

Midlands, North East, Yorkshire & Humber and North West and ensure positive comprehensive national and regional exposure in its sector.



HOUSING

You only have to look any direction across the North East skyline to see how the way we live has changed in recent years. The rise of 'generation rent' has given way to BTR (build to rent) Quayside apartments designed with community in mind, whilst desirable areas have seen a property boom in locations like Tynemouth and Yarm, and newbuild communities have sprung up in hotspots like Kingston Park and Ouseburn.

Our region boasts 6,500 hectares of development land (InvestNewcastle) and a desirable £222,217 average house price (Rightmove, 2024), with coast and countryside just half an hour from most city centres, meaning a thriving property sector is vital to our region's success.

Commercial development has seen business zones like Quorum, Cobalt and Helix attract investment and drive innovation, whilst hubs like Hoult's Yard and Boho have seen growing entrepreneurial communities develop in sectors like creative, digital and gaming.

Shovel-ready projects remain a priority for investment if our region is to continue to meet its aspirations.



Have worked across

36 

residential developments
in the region

Supported the launch of

20 

hubs and new
business communities

Told

1,000s 

of stories to the UK to
showcase life in the North
East from culture to tourism,
transport to destinations

MILLER HOMES

For over a decade, our brief was to share all that is great about living in a Miller home in the North East, celebrating not only the award-winning teams behind the bricks and mortar but also the sustainable communities that the leading housebuilder was developing.

We helped to embed Miller Homes into local communities by partnering with charities, schools and local businesses to help generate awareness of Miller Homes as an outstanding house builder and an organisation that cares about its surroundings.

After launching the first ever Miller Mums group at one development, mothers and their children were encouraged to hold regular get-togethers and we even helped as Miller Homes rehomed a young family of hedgehogs.

To further encourage footfall to Miller Homes' sales centres we introduced wildlife campaigns, photography competitions, educational visits, weekend break competitions, charity bake sales and an incentive scheme aimed at local employers.

We also established a Summer of Sport competition which ran over many years to offer grassroots sporting clubs across the North East the opportunity to win much-needed funding.





LAMBTON PARK

In 2019, we helped to launch a new luxury development, Lambton Park, to the North East. A different development to the rest of the Miller Homes portfolio, this needed a new approach to engage with a completely new audience with different drivers and needs.

We partnered with high-end influencers from across the region and used their channels and expertise to bring to life what living at Lambton Park would be like; from the intricate detail that went into every home design, to the sprawling countryside that would serve as your backyard, the influencers brought their own style and flair to the campaign. This was accompanied by a wrap around press and social media campaign which highlighted every aspect of the build, from first conception through to final sales.

We also worked alongside the national marketing teams to produce monthly social media toolkits and optimised blog posts, designed specifically to raise awareness and support consideration of a Miller home.

Month on month, Miller Homes was at the heart of the North East and Teesside news agenda, with regular coverage in key regional titles, while creating meaningful ways for North East audiences to engage with the brand through the website and social media.

ALLSOP

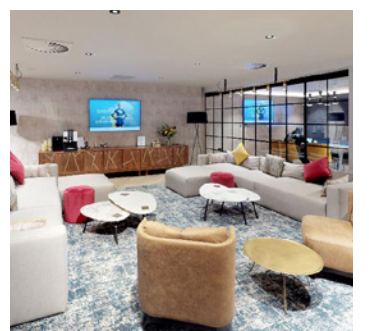
We worked with national estates business Allsop and their client Moorfield to launch two high-profile build to rent developments and show young professionals how they could 'live life extraordinary' by renting.

The Forge was the North East's first Build to Rent apartment development, all about style, community, convenience and location on the Newcastle Quayside and The Trilogy is a similar concept in the Castlefield area of Manchester.

We managed all media announcements from build to completion to regional property titles, created exciting content for all social media channels, arranged launch parties for residents and influential contacts in both cities, engaged local social media

influencers and provided studio services to create visual content from interiors and video tours to animations for social media.

The developments featured in key publications such as The Negotiator, Property Investor News and regional property pages in Newcastle and Manchester, and helped build a vibrant and active social media community, as well as managing its launch events, media tours and influencer stays - driving brand awareness and attracting residents to snap up their properties.





CULTURE

A region of storytellers, the North East is home to a hotbed of creativity, from one of the UK's oldest libraries the Lit & Phil inspiring literary enthusiasts since 1793, to the recent announcement of funding into the future of our growing TV and Film industry with Sunderland's Crown Works Studios.

Whether it's getting kids into reading at the National Centre for Children's Books - Seven Stories in Ouseburn or experiencing the best music performances under the curved dome of The Glasshouse, seeing the Turner Prize beam live from Gateshead's Baltic or watching the thousands of hopefuls take part in the annual Great North Run - we have enjoyed watching our region's cultural life put on a show with something for everyone.

Mayors from across the North recently announced plans to unite under the banner of "Great North", setting out a new vision to champion their regions and unleash the full potential of the North on the world to achieve our goal of **'an international North East'**.

Our cultural scene puts our region on a national and international stage like no other, showcasing our ambition and attracting visitors and investors to grow our economy.

Supported our clients
to deliver more than

£50M

in economic impact
for the region

Told stories that
have attracted

5M

visitors to the North
East for large events

Worked on more than

50

culture venues, initiatives and
events across the region



SEVEN STORIES



In 2018, we helped the National Centre for Children's Books launch their 'Life Changing Stories' campaign, aimed at raising £7,000 through crowdfunding to support fully accessible events for children with special educational needs and disabilities. The campaign surpassed its goal in just 30 days, enabling the museum to create inclusive, sensory experiences for these children to immerse themselves in their favourite stories.

In addition to the crowdfunding initiative, we worked with the museum's marketing and curation teams to increase footfall for key exhibitions, which were promoted through strategic PR and social media campaigns that targeted regional, national, and trade media outlets.

We also developed a social media strategy that increased

digital engagement across the museum's platforms. Media coverage appeared in top outlets including The Bookseller, ITV, BBC, and local newspapers, driving more visitors and boosting the museum's cultural presence in the UK. As a result, the museum was able to expand its programme for families with additional needs, while significantly increasing its visibility and online engagement.

NORTHERN PRIDE



O was the PR lead for 2024's annual Northern Pride Festival. Last year's event, Pride in the City, saw a city centre takeover with satellite events happening across Newcastle for the first time. Record numbers saw over 82,000 people engaging with the joy of pride, supporting a positive economic impact of circa £4m.

To raise awareness around last year's festival, we led a packed PR programme sharing key updates to Northern Pride's target audience of people living in the North East region, delivering important announcements and messaging around the festival's plans, partners and supporters. Coverage placed across news publications, radio, TV, social media and regional

lifestyle newsletters in the lead up to Pride weekend, on the day and post event, including BBC News, ITV News and BBC Radio Newcastle. This all supported in driving huge excitement around the LGBTQIA+ celebration. In total we achieved a PR value of £1.7m and reached an audience of 29.8m.

We're excited to be supporting Northern Pride again this year!



BRITISH MASTERS

We were excited to be the regional agency behind one of the North East's biggest ever sporting events as the British Masters arrived at Close House, Northumberland for the first time.

Thanks to our social media crew the noise around the event created over 8 million page views on EuropeanTour.com and attracted three times the Sky Sports Golf viewers for the Presidents Cup Sunday coverage.

In the lead up, our media team worked with the European Tour to ensure a consistent stream of breaking player announcements, local partnerships and PR stunt activity kept our regional media updated with event news.

Working with the regional press, we secured a number of successful campaigns which saw British Masters' takeovers on Metro Radio, adverts placed on Classic FM and Smooth Radio, and full page coverage appeared in the likes of The Journal, The Chronicle, Sunday Sun and further afield.

The event achieved over 22 million social media impressions – the highest ever for the British Masters – with almost 70,000 spectators attending the tournament and £472,552 raised for the local charity Graham Wylie Foundation.

22M

social media impressions



FESTIVAL OF THRIFT



The UK's annual celebration of scrimping with style, the Festival of Thrift returned to its founding host site, Lingfield Point in Darlington in its third year, which formed part of a weekend of celebrations as Darlington also marked the 190th anniversary of the world's first passenger steam train.

From Festival news and programme updates to profile pieces on the Festival directors, our PR team shouted about the rise of thrift, what it means to live in a sustainable way and how reusing, recycling and upcycling can be fun, save money and benefit the environment.

Extensive national and regional media coverage included the

likes of The Sunday Times, Daily Mirror, Sunday Express, S Magazine and Waitrose Magazine as well as on BBC Breakfast TV. In total we achieved nearly £1.5 million worth of PR coverage and created a 20% increase in the Festival's social media following and with 45,000 visitors attending over the course of the weekend.

45,000

visitors across a single weekend



FENWICK



As an O client for almost a decade we support Fenwick with hyperlocal activations, iconic brand collaborations and their infamous Christmas window reveal. Below is just a snapshot of some of our results.

Bistro Greggs

We helped launch Bistro Greggs, an iconic collaboration with Fenwick, in a one-of-a-kind pop up. The brands teamed up for the first time to open a French-style restaurant serving bespoke iterations of Greggs' favourite menu items, paired with Fenwick Food Hall wines and signature cocktails. We sourced, secured and managed 90 guests for the press and influencer VIP preview night, with a total following of over 1.5 million. The event gained widespread coverage across Instagram, X and TikTok, which in turn supported sold out bookings plus a thunderclap effect with consumers jumping on the hype on social media.

Fenwick Christmas Window

From building regional hype to the launch event itself, we support Fenwick with the annual Christmas window reveal with PR, experiential moments, guest list and creator collaboration. Last year

we invited several regional press and people of influence including the social teams at NE1 and NG1 to the highly anticipated window reveal. For the reveal and window theme, we achieved widespread media coverage across traditional print, digital and broadcast, with a regional reach of 27 million, plus national and trade PR coverage. We also reached a 748k hyperlocal following from social content from our influencers on the night.

Hyperlocal Activations

Alongside regional experiential events and new brand launches in store, we support footfall to key attractions in store, from Santa on the Roof to Roof Thirty Nine, their stunning rooftop restaurant. For the launch we invited regional influencers from across the North, with a total following of 1.6 million, to celebrate and sample Roof Thirty Nine's new spring menu. The event saw widespread coverage across creators' Instagram stories and main feeds.

27M

PR reach

NEWCASTLE NE1

NE1 is the Business Improvement District Company on a mission to make the best city in the world – Newcastle – even better. O was appointed as NE1's creative agency in 2024, to support its marketing team in showcasing Newcastle as a vibrant, unique and culture filled city, encouraging people to visit more, stay longer and engage in more activities to help the city to thrive.

Central to this is NE1's free to attend events and campaigns, including Newcastle Restaurant Week, Screen on the Green, Summer in the City and Newcastle's Christmas, all of which have become much-loved fixtures in the city's events calendar. O devised the creative strategy for each campaign, giving them a fresh look for 2024. Each one began with a detailed strategy, considering the

latest consumer trends and data, to lead us to impactful creative concepts to work across both digital and OOH platforms.

What a privilege it is to work on campaigns supporting the prosperity of our home city! 2024's campaigns were record-breaking, with each one surpassing the previous year's figures on visitors to the city and economic impact. Some highlights being...

Summer Restaurant Week attracted over 60,000 diners, generating

£1.2M

in economic impact

Over

95,000

people attended Screen on the Green, an increase of 45,000 from the 2023 campaign, generating an economic impact of £2.8m

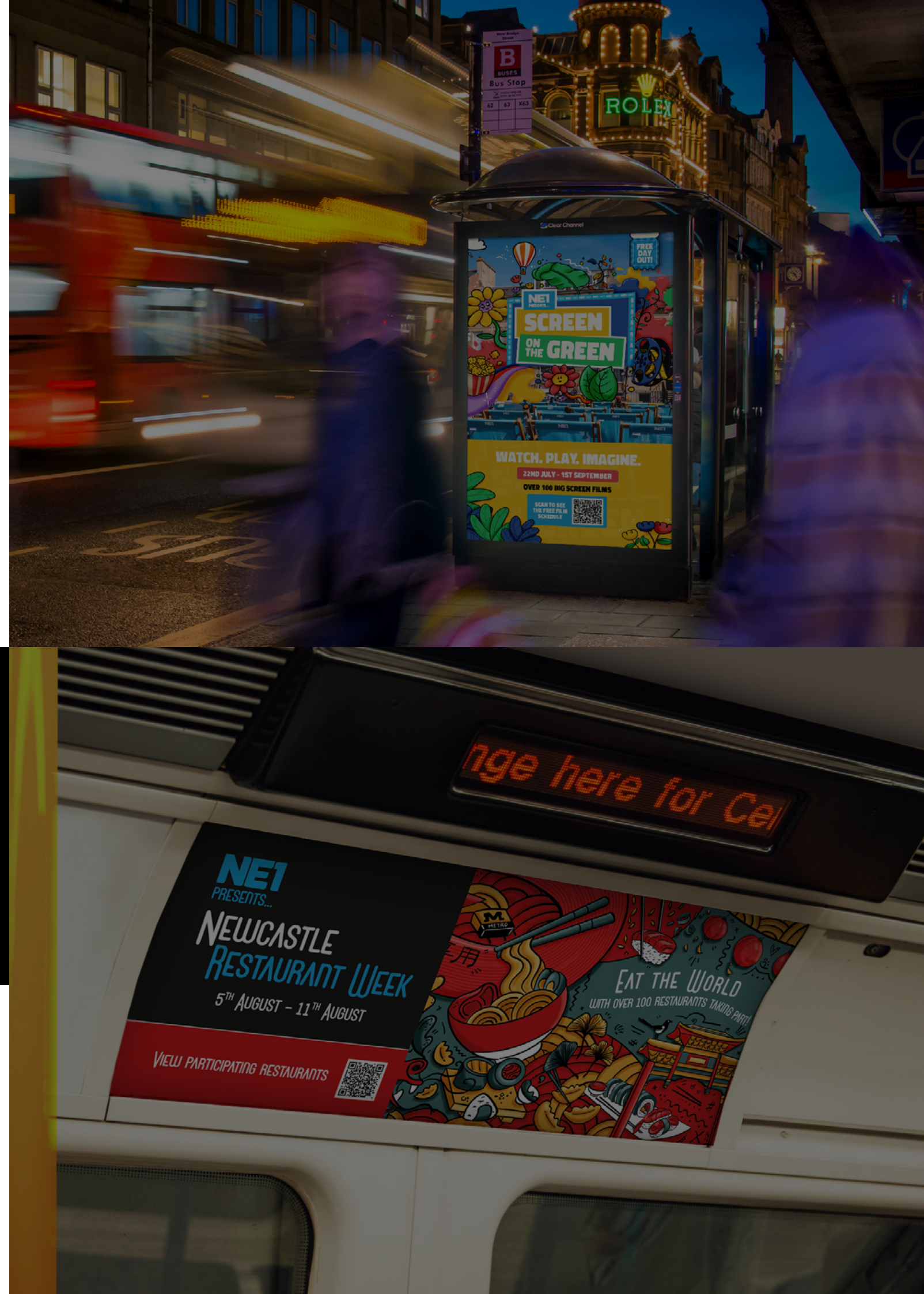
Christmas saw a 28% increase in visits to

1.7M

supporting a 60% increase in economic impact which rose to £90m

Working with O has elevated our campaigns, and by extension our city centre events, to another level. Their creative routes have been fresh, vibrant, and with levels of detail which made the assets must-see. Their work celebrated the city both organisations love, and the results have been excellent. We can't wait to begin on the next iterations as we continually strive for improvement and growth.

Ben Whitfield, Director of Communications at Newcastle NE1



TRANSPORT

From the introduction of the Pop Card to the arrival of e-scooters, EV charging stations on our roads and our first fully electric train operator – the changes we have seen in recent years to improve access and sustainability across our transport systems cannot be overlooked. Better transport makes a difference to the lives of everyone, from improving our health, protecting our environment and growing our economy.

In 2022 the North East had the highest percentage of transport related social exclusion compared to other regions across the UK at 31.5%, but looking forward, our new combined authority's key focus of 'a connected North East' in the coming years sees projects in its plan include major improvements to regional walking, wheeling and cycle routes, new train stations, extensions to Metro, increased bus operations and a variety of major road and rail investments.



We have worked with Lumo since July 2024, managing their PR and event activities to enhance its awareness and reputation across the UK as a pioneer in eco-friendly travel.

We run their press desk and creative PR campaigns, as well as handling their regional, national and trade media relations to drive conversation and brand love.

Recently, we provided support for Newcastle Pride, including facilitating a giant Wheel of Fortune attraction, engaging the public, and managing the events team. Our work helped elevate Lumo's

involvement, aligning them with a key community event. 'Other campaigns include 'Plane vs Train', MetroCentre's Rail Safety Initiative, and the Great North Run.

The press stories we have shared so far have resulted in a readership of over 15 million and an average ROI of £31:£1, significantly boosting Lumo's presence in the market.

It's great to work alongside another local business sharing our passion for creativity, innovation and celebrating the contribution we make to the region's economic, cultural and environmental success story.

Richard Salkeld, Head of Communications and Partnerships at Lumo

METRO POP CARD



Tyne & Wear Metro system underwent one of the largest communication exercises the North East has experienced when it launched the biggest smartcard initiative outside of London.

O worked with Nexus to start a smartcard revolution to introduce the benefits of smart travel, starting with the first consumers to receive the new smartcard – under 16 year olds. As students were on their journey home from school, O's 'Get Street Smart' urban dance road show promoted the message directly into their hands, supported by a social media campaign that would reach parents as well as young travellers.

Pop Card's arrival in the North East would impact everyone that uses the Metro system, so we knew we had to steal headlines and get people talking.

Our first challenge was holding a big media unveil on a Metro platform, which we managed with

stakeholders and the region's press by timing a fully branded Pop train's arrival out of the tunnel in front of live film crews and photographers.

Next we needed to get creative for the public and ensure they were able to ask questions about the new way to travel. As soon as we knew that the launch was in February we suggested a big unveil on Valentine's Day, we came up with the concept of a 'Pop the Question' public roadshow.

A roadshow team armed with all the answers travelled around the network with Pop balloons, lollies and goodie bags and were able to both excite and inform the public of what the Pop Card arrival meant for them.

O showed a deep understanding of public transport issues and of the potential for smart travel as a concept. Their creative thinking stood out.

Huw Lewis, (former) Head of Communications at Nexus



GO ULTRA LOW

We worked closely with the North East Combined Authority to create a brand identity for their campaign, targeting families, older couples, and businesses considering ultra-low emission vehicles.

Using a variety of tactics, we placed impactful stories in regional and trade publications across the UK. Key stories included the launch of an Accelerator grant programme for local businesses and the unveiling of the UK's fastest charging station in Sunderland, further promoting the Go Ultra Low North East message to fleet managers and business decision-makers.



HEALTH

One of the biggest health concerns to emerge in recent years has been the rise in mental health, with 1 in 4 people now experiencing a mental health problem of some kind each year in England.

O has worked with a range of public and charitable organisations to help tackle the health challenges our region faces, from supporting charity If You Care Share with its comms to launching the first ever region-wide mental health campaign, Time to Change in the late 2000s.

TIME TO CHANGE



Working for the North East Strategic Health Authority, Big Lottery & Comic Relief, we brought Time to Change, England's largest mental health anti-stigma campaign to people in the North East.

To launch the campaign our Live! experiential team took to the streets bringing mental health workers, celebrities and real-life case studies together with the public in towns across the region – asking them to sign a pledge to end mental health discrimination.

The local case studies starred in adverts across the Tyne & Wear Metro system, every regional daily and weekly title, radio stations, a range of schools and college projects and employer events.

Outstanding success resulted in a commission to run the January Blues campaign where random blue people appeared 'out of the blue' in

busy cities throughout the region, causing viral spread on social networks and media coverage.

We then organised an inaugural one mile 'March March' throughout three major cities in the region to stamp out stigma – literally, and a Time to Talk sofa campaign that toured rural towns with real case studies and mental health advisers on hand to open up the subject of mental health at a hyperlocal level.

As well as generating more than 2,000 pledges, an additional awareness reach of around 223,370 people in the North East, smashed the initial 15,000 target.

O brought the campaign to life and far exceeded expectations as to what could be achieved with a relatively small budget.

Kerry McQuade, (former) Project Manager at North East Strategic Health Authority



Independent
Last seen 20:29

place
crazy.
20:13

it be to rent
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20:22

ld
ent
20:26

ld Just Say
e advice
people do it.
20:29

people be
independent.

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

NHS
Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Be Safe
Last seen 11:44

Did you see how Megan's
boyfriend was talking to
her the other night?
11:32

Yeah, he seems like a total creep,
she needs to stay away from him.
11:38

She loves him though and
I don't think she knows
where to get advice.
11:42

If she needs advice on where
to turn, she should Just Say.
11:44

If you need advice,
Just Say

Download Just Say today.
A new app designed to help young people be
happier, healthier, safer and more independent.

Download on the
App Store

GET IT ON
Google Play

NHS
Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Northumberland
County Council

Ergh, feeling
- sick of fee

I've got loads
exercise tips
you feel me

If you're
get a b

If you need advice,
Just Say

Download Just Say
A new app designed to help young people be
happier, healthier, safer and more independent.

NHS
Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Northumberland
County Council



2022 was the year Ryan Reynolds entered all our lives... CHUF is a charity client very close to our hearts, having worked together for several years to raise vital funds to support heart heroes and their families.

Ivan Hollingsworth, chair of the board of CHUF and dad to Seb, aged 13, was sitting by his son's bedside just four days after Seb had undergone open heart surgery at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. At a loss for a way to help while Seb recovered, Ivan typed out a tweet to get a Marvel Studios Superhero to send a message to Heart Hero Seb.

The next day he received a reply. Ryan Reynolds, star of Deadpool, sent a heartfelt personal video to Seb and the message "That scar is street cred for life!" then

even more well wishes flooded in from Marvel superstars Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson, Chris Hemsworth and Mark Ruffalo.

O's social media and press team sprung into action when overnight Seb became a worldwide sensation, and the story appeared in over 260 media outlets across the world. We then went on to create the 'My Scar Is My Superpower campaign', helping children and adults all over the UK to feel proud of their scar and the amazing superpowers they had.



NHS 'JUST SAY' CAMPAIGN

In 2019, we supported Northumbria NHS Trust with the launch of Just Say, an app designed to help young people in Northumberland be happy, healthy, safe and more independent. The aim of the campaign was to encourage young people to download the app, however focus groups showed that the target audience were reluctant to admit that they might need help at all.

From initial conceiving through to delivery, we worked closely with the project leads to ensure that the campaign resonated with the target audience. We focused the campaign around the concept of downloading the app to help a mate who was struggling. Language was colloquial and written with the audience in mind, avoiding words such as 'help' and instead offering 'advice' and 'support'.

From this concept we created a series of posters, social media assets, web banners and exhibition collateral.

We worked on a further four projects, directly from the success of this campaign, which included a large scale mental health campaign across North Tyneside, a recruitment campaign for community nurses and a series of animated videos.

SOCIAL IMPACT

‘A fairer North East ‘is one of our region’s biggest goals, and for the last two decades we have been involved at the heart of one of biggest challenges our region faces, supporting young people.

In the last two decades young people have grown up in an environment like no other, from the rise of technology and social media putting them under increasing pressure, to the changing face of employment and necessity to be work-ready for a new North East industrial landscape, against a backdrop of what a recent report has called the “North East effect” holding back people in the region from good qualifications, well-paying jobs and other opportunities.

The research by the Government’s Social Mobility Commission highlighted that young people living in former mining, industrial and shipbuilding areas, as well as rural and coastal areas, have the lowest opportunities, while those in London and the Home Counties fare better.

Thankfully organisations exist to tackle the issue, from the work being done by Streetwise in Newcastle to provide hands-on support, to The King’s Trust Cheryl Centre off Westgate Road that supports young people from the entirely disengaged becoming more work-ready right through to programmes for budding young entrepreneurs.

8



THE PRINCE’S TRUST WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN

During Covid and beyond O worked pro bono with The Prince’s Trust (now The King’s Trust) to tackle an issue very close to our hearts. As a female-led business we were startled to hear that year on year The Prince’s Trust sees less women coming through their programmes than men, but they were 72% more likely to be adversely affected by the economic and social impact of the pandemic.

Mental health issues have been at their highest for years. The findings of The Prince’s Trust NatWest Youth Index 2024 suggest that young women are more likely to be struggling with low self-confidence, poor mental health and concern about the cost of living, with many young woman worrying that financial stability will always be out of their reach.

Almost three quarters of young women (70 per cent) always or often feel stressed, compared to 54 per cent of young men and almost half of young women (42 per cent) feel as though they don’t have control of their future, compared to 37 per cent of young men.

Our founder became the first ambassador in the North for ‘Women Supporting Women’, a campaign

to raise more than £10million to get more young women the support they so desperately need.

At the time of our work post-pandemic, there were over 55,000 young unemployed people in the region, a figure which saw us as the area with the highest youth unemployment in the UK at the time. The Prince’s Trust works with over 2,500 young people in the North East each year, only 41% of whom are young women.

Thankfully through its work with skills development, employability and work experience and the support of young entrepreneurs – The Prince’s Trust is pleased to report that 3 in 4 of all the young people they support locally go on to employment, education or training within six months.

HELLO...

As well as supporting community organisations directly, we have spent two decades developing our own commitment to the next generation of creative talent.

Working with O means working with the best in the business, from wise heads to emerging talent, we take learning and development seriously.

Our Ocademy has been running for 20 years, training our team in all the latest in marketing communications with mentoring, masterclasses and skills-based projects.

The first time we took that out into our community was when we created our “Opprenticeship” role for undergrads needing hands-on workplace experience while they study, which quickly grew into a graduate internship for young people to join our team each year.

Creating opportunity for all didn't stop there. Last year we rolled all our initiatives up into our grOw programme, where everyone in the agency supports young people in a variety of ways:

- ‘On the road’ is our schools and colleges speaking programme to showcase careers in the creative & digital industry
- ‘Open House’ is a regular event where people of all ages and backgrounds can come into OHQ and speak to our team for advice and inspiration

“ Since we opened our doors in 2005, we have always tried to help young people enter the creative industries, which has grown over the years into a big part of our culture and commitment to our community. We have enjoyed meeting hundreds of young people over the years and, by working with partners like NE1, Newcastle United Foundation and the Prince’s Trust we are achieving even further social mobility reach for our talent development work, to ensure our industry is as diverse and accessible as possible

Kari Owers, founder of O.

GROWING OUR COMMUNITY:

In our 20th year in business in 2025 we have donated 20 hours for each employee to be part of a mentorship scheme which supports emerging talent aged 18-25 each year by passing on knowledge and skills, helping them navigate the creative industry, build a network and access opportunities.

Designed for young individuals aspiring to pursue careers in strategy, marketing communication, PR & influence, event planning, design & creative, video production and more, we hope to grOw a creative community for the future.



**LET'S CREATE
YOUR FUTURE
SUCCESS**

**SPEAK TO US
TODAY**

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