

County Durham Pound **Conference 2026**

# **Stronger Together: Connected for Impact**

#CDPC26

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**WILLMOTT DIXON**  
SINCE 1852



## **PROGRAMME & EXHIBITOR GUIDE**

**Thursday 1 October 2026 | Radisson Blu, Durham | 08:30-14:00**

*A day focused on collective action, shared priorities and lasting impact across County Durham.*

**#CDPC26**

## Conference programme

|       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08:30 | <b>Registration, Refreshments &amp; Networking</b><br>Arrival, networking opportunities and exhibition viewing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 09:00 | <b>Progress, Partnerships &amp; Possibilities</b><br>Opening reflections from <b>Richard Carroll, Chair of County Durham Pound</b> followed by a showcase of local impact stories                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 09:20 | <b>Creating the Conditions for Change</b><br><b>Phil Pollard, Group Director of Karbon Foundation and Customer Engagement</b> explores how the newly launched charity is strengthening social purpose by bringing people, organisations and resources together to create greater opportunities for communities.                                                                               |
| 09:45 | <b>Driving Opportunity Through Social Value</b><br><b>Kate Gong, Senior Social Value Manager, Willmott Dixon</b> will explore how social value, procurement and partnership working can be used to create employment pathways, strengthen local supply chains and deliver greater impact for communities.                                                                                     |
| 10:10 | <b>Social Value in Action: Improving Health, Reducing Inequalities, and Generating Inclusive Economic Growth Across County Durham</b><br>Panel discussion hosted by <b>Michael Weadock, Director and Broadcaster, 3 Point Media</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
| 11:00 | <b>Refreshment Break &amp; Networking</b><br>Opportunity to connect with delegates and exhibitors                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 11:30 | <b>The Power of Volunteering</b><br>Volunteering changes lives. <b>Val Kilner, Co-Director of Aspire Learning Support and Wellbeing (CIC)</b> , explores how volunteering creates opportunities, builds resilience, strengthens communities and acts as a gateway to skills, confidence and employment, demonstrating the unique role of the VCSE sector in delivering lasting social impact. |
| 12:00 | <b>Connections into Action</b><br>Led by <b>Kate Burrows, Executive Director, Durham Community Action</b> , this collaborative session will bring together perspectives from across sectors to identify practical opportunities for collective action, stronger connections and lasting impact for communities across County Durham.                                                          |
| 12:55 | <b>Closing Reflections</b><br><b>Richard Carroll, Chair of County Durham Pound</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 13:00 | <b>Lunch, Networking &amp; Exhibition</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 14:00 | <b>Conference Close</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

## Meet our exhibitors

Our exhibitors bring together practical support, expertise and opportunities spanning employment, health and wellbeing, social value and the VCSE sector. Please take time to meet them during registration, the refreshment break and lunch.

### Aspire Learning Support and Wellbeing

Award-winning women's services providing learning, support, wellbeing and volunteering opportunities.

**Website:** [aspire-northeast.co.uk](https://aspire-northeast.co.uk)

### Bridge Creative

Inclusive employment, training, work experience and community support for autistic adults and adults with learning disabilities.

**Website:** [bridgecreative.org](https://bridgecreative.org)

### Building Heroes

Construction training and employment support for the Armed Forces community and other learners.

**Website:** [buildingheroes.org.uk](https://buildingheroes.org.uk)

### Business Durham

Durham County Council's business support service, offering tailored advice, funding guidance, premises and connections.

**Website:** [businessdurham.co.uk](https://businessdurham.co.uk)

### Durham Community Action

Support, advice, training, volunteering and representation for community organisations across County Durham.

**Website:** [durhamcommunityaction.org.uk](https://durhamcommunityaction.org.uk)

## Meet our exhibitors continued

### **DurhamWorks / DurhamEnable / Employability Durham**

Employment support for young people, disabled residents and others facing barriers to work, alongside support for inclusive employers.

**Website:** [durhamworks.info](https://durhamworks.info) | [durhamenable.info](https://durhamenable.info)

### **Hiyed CIC**

Supported employment, internships, Access to Work guidance and tailored help for people facing barriers in working life.

**Website:** [hiyed.co.uk](https://hiyed.co.uk)

### **Office of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner**

Works to help make County Durham and Darlington safer, stronger and more resilient to crime and anti-social behaviour.

**Website:** [durham-pcc.gov.uk](https://durham-pcc.gov.uk)

### **Pioneering Care Partnership**

A North East charity creating opportunities to improve health, wellbeing, learning and life chances.

**Website:** [pcp.uk.net](https://pcp.uk.net)

### **Point North Community Foundation**

Connects donors with local causes and awards grants that fight poverty and enrich lives across the North East.

**Website:** [pointnorth.org.uk](https://pointnorth.org.uk)

## Meet our exhibitors continued

### SmokeFree County Durham

Free, tailored stop-smoking support, specialist advice and access to quit aids for people who live or work in County Durham.

**Website:** [smokefreecountydurham.co.uk](https://smokefreecountydurham.co.uk)

### Social Value Portal

Tools, measurement, validation and guidance to help organisations manage and report social value.

**Website:** [socialvalueportal.com](https://socialvalueportal.com)

### Wellbeing for Life

Personalised advice and support to help County Durham residents make positive changes to health and wellbeing.

**Website:** [yourwellbeingservices.uk](https://yourwellbeingservices.uk)

### Willmott Dixon

Conference sponsor and construction partner focused on creating brilliant buildings, improving lives and enhancing the environment.

**Website:** [willmottdixon.co.uk](https://willmottdixon.co.uk)

**Thank you to all our speakers, panellists, workshop contributors and exhibitors, and to Willmott Dixon for sponsoring the conference. Your time, expertise and support have helped make the day possible.**