



## Happy March from ICOS!



Hello and welcome to the late March newsletter.

In this newsletter, we will share some exciting events coming up and some exciting events that have happened. We will also share the impact of our ICOS Women project and our Human Factor project.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter.

### **What has been going on in our ICOS Community?**

**Since the last newsletter we have:**

- We have dealt with 94 queries, ranging from support with council tax support, support with Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and support surrounding employability (accessing employment and training).
- Our one to one activities have engaged with 4 new clients, from countries such as Sudan, Afghanistan, Poland and Iran.
- We have organised a number of activities, improving social inclusion, wellbeing, intercultural understanding, and helping the environment in the local area. Including 4 environmental activities, including clean ups and maintenance activities, centered on Backhouse Park, Sunderland, and the wider St Michael's ward area.

- We have provided 7 families with material support or external referrals to access free clothing and food, and external grants, as well as energy and food vouchers and free sim card.



### **Upcoming Events:**

🌿 ✨ Join the **Pieroginie Collective**  
**Creative Workshops this March!** ✨ 🌿

Looking for a welcoming space to relax, connect and get creative? **Come and spend your Friday evenings with us at St Michael's Community Centre (SR2 9JT) at 17:30.**

- 💜 Meditation & wellbeing
- 🎨 Creative activities
- 👨‍🍳 Cooking together
- 🌍 Cultural activities
- 🍪 Community feasting

These sessions are all about creativity, community cohesion and wellbeing — all women are welcome!

- 📍 Every Friday during March
- 🌸 Sessions delivered through the ICOS Women Project with artist Sabina Sallis.

📩 To register, contact Julia:

📞 07942583833

📧 [julia.wysocka@icos.org.uk](mailto:julia.wysocka@icos.org.uk)

#Community #Wellbeing  
#CreativeWorkshops #Sunderland  
#WomenSupportingWomen  
#CommunitySupport #CulturalActivities  
#ICOS #CreativeCommunity



## Boulmer to Craster Wellbeing Walk

Tuesday 31 March 2026

9:30am @ ICOS, 14 Foyle Street,  
Sunderland, SR1 1LE

For booking, contact [daniel@icos.org.uk](mailto:daniel@icos.org.uk)



ICOS Community Foundation North East VONNE HEALTH & WELLBEING 'NE North East Combined Authority NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL ECONOMIC COMMISSIONER

# Wellbeing Walk

Boulmer → Craster  
(~4 miles)

Tuesday  
31 March  
2026

Follow a gentle coastal path from **Boulmer to Craster**. Experience quiet sands, rugged headlands and sweeping sea views as the Northumberland sea air guides you along the shore.

• FREE TRANSPORT • FREE LUNCH

**Meeting & bus pick-up:**  
9:30 am  
ICOS, 14 Foyle Street,  
Sunderland

**BOOK NOW!**  
[daniel@icos.org.uk](mailto:daniel@icos.org.uk)

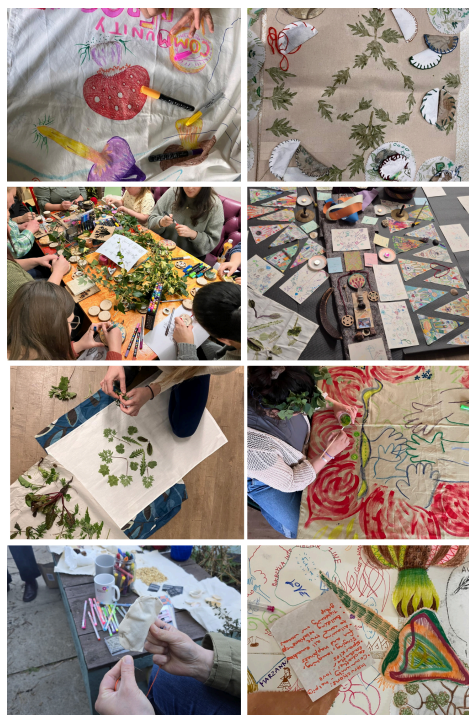
## Pieroginie Community Feast

Saturday 28 March 2026

5-7pm @ St. Michael's Community  
Centre, Stannington Grove, Sunderland,  
SR2 9JT

For more information and booking,  
please look at the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pieroginie-community-feast-tickets-1984907804676?aff=oddtcreator>



## Helmsley Castle and Rievaulx Abbey

Sunday 29 March 2026

9am @ ICOS Office, 14 Foyle Street,  
Sunderland, SR1 1LE

Suggested donation £5

For booking, contact [daniel@icos.org.uk](mailto:daniel@icos.org.uk)

ICOS Community Foundation North East VONNE HEALTH & WELLBEING NE North East Combined Authority NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

**SUNDAY**  
**29 MARCH**  
**2026**

Step into history at **Helmsley Castle**, stroll through the beautiful **Walled Gardens**, and explore the awe-inspiring **Rievaulx Abbey**.

**Free entry!**  
suggested donation £5

**Meeting Spot:**  
ICOS Office  
at 9:00  
**(free transport)**

Book your spot now!  
✉ [daniel@icos.org.uk](mailto:daniel@icos.org.uk)

## Previous Events:

### Seeing Blue – The Wild Oysters Project:

Please click on the image for more information



### A Space to Create Exhibition:

Please click on the image for more information



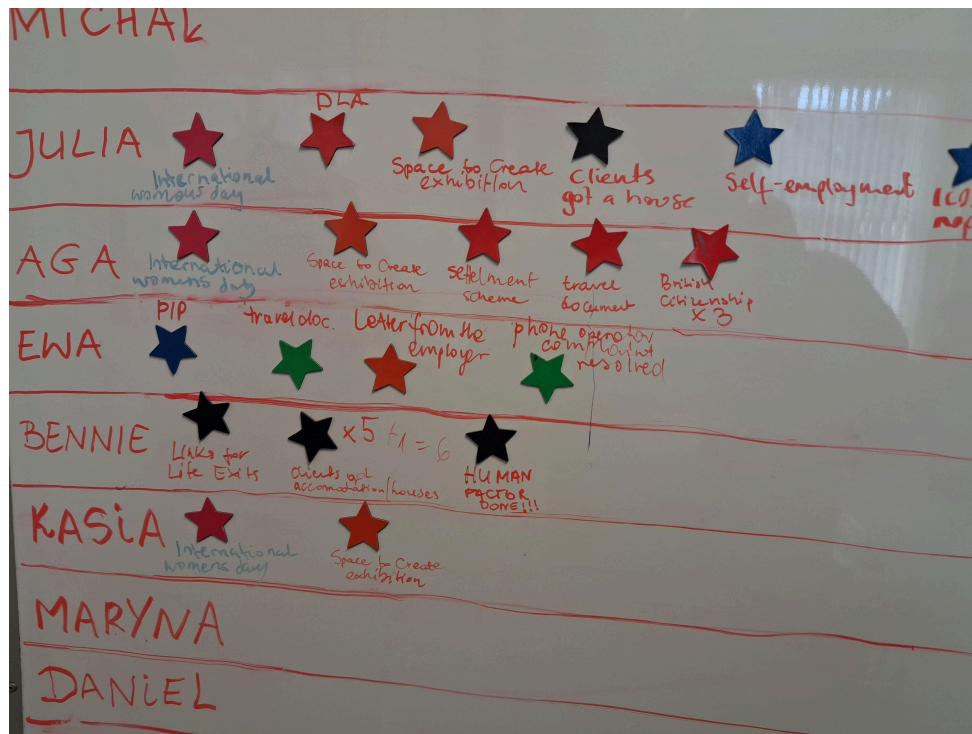
### Day Trip Adventure - North Yorkshire:

Please click on the image for more information



## Our Staff Stars:

Well done to our amazing staff members!



## The Giving Lottery:

Go here: <https://www.givinglottery.org.uk/support/icos>

Or scan the QR code!

# JOIN OUR WEEKLY LOTTERY!

Play for a chance to win up to £25,000  
and support our fundraising every week



-  Tickets cost just £1 a week
-  Every entry helps support our community projects
-  Win up to £25,000 in the weekly draw



 Scan Me



INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY  
ORGANISATION  
OF SUNDERLAND



## Volunteer for ICOS Women:

Hello lovely ladies!

We are currently looking for volunteers to support ICOS Women events and activities 😊

If you would like to help us create a welcoming space for women and children, support community sessions, or assist during workshops and events, we would love to hear from you 😊

Volunteering with us is a great way to meet new people, gain experience, and make a positive impact in the community.

If you're interested, please get in touch with us for more information. 🧑🏻

- ICOS Women team ❤️



# JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

ICOS WOMEN

We are looking for volunteers to support ICOS Women and help with our women's events and activities. This role is a great opportunity to gain experience, support the community, and be part of an inspiring team.

If you are organised, motivated, and passionate about supporting women, we would love to hear from you.  
Please send your CV to apply to  
[agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk](mailto:agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk)



**JOIN US TODAY** 📞 07563357064 @ [agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk](mailto:agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk)

## **NHS Healthier Together:**

The NHS Healthier Together app and website help parents when a child is unwell.

With this free service, you can:

- Get easy health advice
- Find advice for pregnant women, babies and children
- Know when your child can stay at home

- Easily contact your GP online
- Know when to go to A&E

The app is simple and safe to use.

Download the free app today.

Search “NHS Healthier Together” on the App Store or Google Play or visit <https://www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk/>

Need more info or support using the app? Send an email to [arianna@icos.org.uk](mailto:arianna@icos.org.uk)

## HELP FOR SICK CHILDREN

### NHS FREE APP



### THIS APP HELPS



HIGH  
TEMPERATURE



COUGH



PAIN



BREATHING

### THIS APP SAYS



STAY AT  
HOME



CALL  
GP



GO TO  
HOSPITAL



NHS 111  
ONLINE

EMERGENCY?  
CALL 999

### HOW TO USE:

1



OR



NHS HEALTHIER TOGETHER

2



[WWW.HEALTHIERTOGETHER.NHS.UK](http://WWW.HEALTHIERTOGETHER.NHS.UK)

3

IT'S FREE!

for info: [arianna@icos.org.uk](mailto:arianna@icos.org.uk)

**NHS** Healthier Together

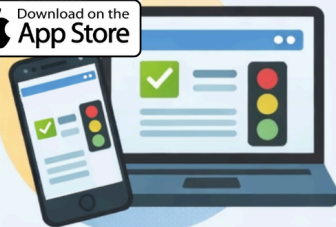
**CHILD  
UNWELL?**



**GP  
HARD TO  
REACH?**



Get help from the Healthier Together app and website!



**FREE SUPPORT  
SESSIONS!**

**WE CAN SHOW YOU  
HOW TO USE IT**

**[www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk](http://www.healthiertogether.nhs.uk)**

for enquiries: [arianna@icos.org.uk](mailto:arianna@icos.org.uk)

### **ICOS Women Project:**

“Meeting loved ones from ICOS is my care for depression.” ❤️

This is why we do what we do. Over the last 6 months, ICOS Women was funded through Creative Lives to deliver creative activities for mums with children. It has been more than

just a craft club—it's been a sanctuary. We've painted, cooked, upcycled, and celebrated our way to a stronger, more connected Sunderland.

From Quiet Observers to Community Leaders ✨

We involved 110 adults and 74 children!!!

Take Paulina and Milena, two of the incredible women who found more than just "crafts" at our sessions.

- Paulina arrived feeling isolated and shy; today, she is a cornerstone of our volunteer team, ensuring every woman feels welcomed.
- Milena joined us seeking safety and support after a difficult time; now, she helps shape our future on the Project Steering Group.

The Impact at a Glance:

🌟 66% reported improved wellbeing (recharging those "mental batteries"!); 🌟 75 people made brand-new friends in their community. 🌟 51% walked away with a massive boost in confidence. 🌟 17 amazing volunteers led the way, proving that arts and culture are the best cure for loneliness.

From Hapa Zome printmaking to our vibrant Carnival celebrations, we've proven that when women support one another, magic happens. 🎨🌟

#ICOSWomen #SunderlandCommunity #CreativeWellbeing #VolunteerStories  
#StrongerTogether #ArtsForHealth #sunderland

We are grateful to Creative Lives for their generous funding!

## **Human Factor (2025 – 2026 – 6 months' project):**

The Human Factor (Digital) project was a high-impact initiative delivered by the International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS). It was specifically designed to bridge the digital divide for migrant communities across Sunderland, focusing on digital inclusion in health to enable clients to access services through the NHS app, or prove their immigration status online.

Despite facing significant operational challenges and reduced funding, the project successfully moved 32 individuals from digital exclusion to meaningful independence through 117 targeted support sessions.

### **Empowering Sunderland's Migrant Communities**

Participants in the project often faced intersecting barriers, including language support needs, restricted immigration status primarily asylum seekers and refugees—and a lack of basic hardware. Many clients arrived with "Digital Exclusion" issues, such as an inability to access the NHS App, forgotten credentials, or no internet data. The project addressed these challenges transforming technical hurdles into life-changing digital literacy. It supported cl

### **Key Achievements and Impact**

The project achieved remarkable results against its core outcomes, demonstrating that targeted support can create immediate and lasting change:

Out of 32 participants surveyed, 24 individuals confirmed that the specific issue they arrived with was completely resolved.

Confidence and Skill Gains: 21 participants reported feeling more confident and independent using online systems like the NHS App and Universal Credit.

Universal Connectivity: 19 clients reported improved access to data, removing the primary structural barrier to digital health services.

Improved Wellbeing: participants noted an improvement in their overall wellbeing, proving that reducing the stress of navigating complex systems has a direct positive impact on mental health. Clients have also reported improved housing and financial situation, indicating additional benefits of the project.

Exceptional Feedback: The support was highly valued by the community, receiving an average satisfaction rating of 9.8 out of 10.

Beyond Health: A Gateway to Inclusion

While the project focused on digital health—helping users order repeat prescriptions and book GP appointments—it served as a vital gateway to broader social inclusion. Following the support, 77% of participants increased their online activity to over 20 hours per week, using their new skills to manage utilities, access learning platforms, and stay connected with their community.

The Human Factor project demonstrated that even with limited resources, providing migrant people with the right digital tools is a powerful instrument for integration, health, and personal autonomy.

We are grateful to the funder- the NHS North East and Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) for funding this project.

A case study of this project can be accessed [here](#).

## **We Feel Safe Project:**

More information can be found on:

<https://icos.org.uk/we-feel-safe-2/>

## INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATION OF SUNDERLAND

### WE FEEL SAFE PROJECT

YOU DESERVE SAFETY, STABILITY AND SUPPORT.

*NOW OPEN FOR REGISTRATION*

[EWA.FILIPIAK@ICOS.ORG.UK](mailto:EWA.FILIPIAK@ICOS.ORG.UK)

07729448159



### WHAT SUPPORT CAN YOU ACCESS?

**Immigration Advice (IAA Level 1)**

Help to understand your immigration options and next steps.

**Housing Support**

Assistance with housing applications and finding safe accommodation.

**Benefits & Entitlements**

Support with benefit claims and understanding what help you are entitled to.

**Employability Support**

Tailored help to identify your strengths, access training, and move towards work.

**Counselling & Wellbeing Support**

Specialist one-to-one counselling and group wellbeing activities to support: trauma recovery, mental health, emotional resilience.

THE WE FEEL SAFE PROJECT OFFERS PRACTICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY MODERN SLAVERY AND WORK EXPLOITATION.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT RECOVERY INVOLVES MANY PARTS OF LIFE, NOT JUST ONE ISSUE.



COMMUNITY FUND

### Volunteer with ICOS:

Make a difference from our front desk at ICOS 🌻

ICOS is looking for friendly, organised Reception Volunteers to be the first point of contact for people visiting our office in Sunderland city centre (14 Foyle Street, SR1 1LE).

**You will:**

Welcome clients and visitors, helping them feel comfortable and supported.

Answer calls and WhatsApp messages, passing enquiries to the right staff member.

Help with simple admin tasks such as scanning, printing and keeping our reception area tidy.

Share information about ICOS projects, events and activities with visitors.

**What you'll gain:**

Induction and ongoing training, including access to free online GDPR and safeguarding courses, plus Lamplight training.

The chance to support excluded and disadvantaged communities in a multicultural environment.

Travel/other agreed expenses reimbursed, and support with DBS and references.

**What we're looking for:**

Over 18, reliable and trustworthy, with good communication and basic IT skills.

Empathy, patience, and a willingness to learn.

Comfortable working with people from different backgrounds and able to respect confidentiality.

**When:**

Weekdays, mornings and/or afternoons, Monday to Friday (flexible around your availability).

**Interested?**

Email Agnieszka at [agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk](mailto:agnieszka.cielecka@icos.org.uk) or call 07563 357 064 to chat about the role and how to get involved.

#CommunitySpirit

#Volunteering

#SkillsForLife

#skillsdevelopment

**Volunteer at Backhouse Park:**

# BACKHOUSE PARK CLEAN-UP

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**  
**HELP PROTECT OUR GREEN SPACE!**

EVERY MONDAY 10 AM - 12.20PM  
EVERY FRIDAY 10 AM - 2.30PM

## TASKS INCLUDE

Picking up litter | Keeping trails and paths clear  
Clearing fallen leaves | Planting, trimming, pruning and weeding  
Removing invasive weeds and vines | Clearing the stream



FOR MORE DETAILS EMAIL  
[DANIEL@ICOS.ORG.UK](mailto:DANIEL@ICOS.ORG.UK) OR CALL 07783433674

 **EAST RANGERS**  
Clean and Green

 **ICOS**

**Nature**  
HUBS

**Sunderland**  
City Council

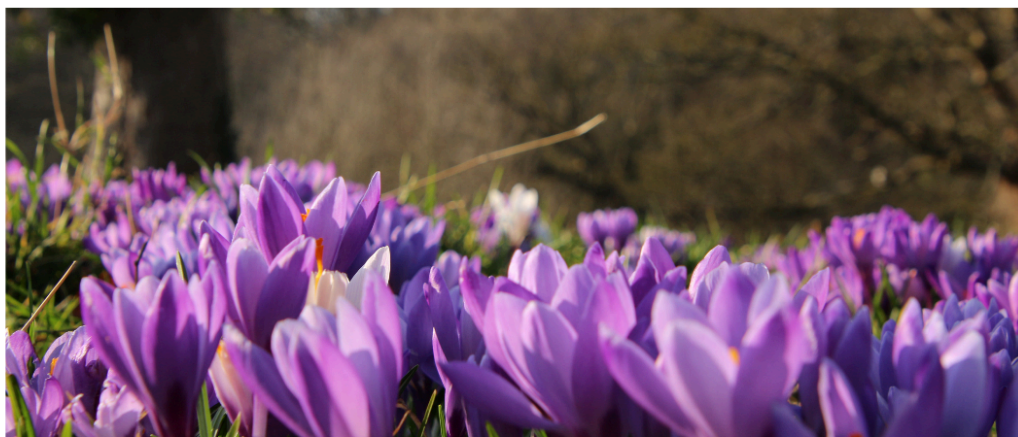


# JOIN US! VOLUNTEER WITH EAST RANGERS & ICOS

HELP TAKE CARE OF THE BACKHOUSE PARK  
AND MAKE IT A WELCOMING PLACE FOR  
EVERYONE

RYHOPE ROAD, SUNDERLAND, SR2 2EF

CONTACT [SAM@ICOS.ORG.UK](mailto:SAM@ICOS.ORG.UK)  
OR CALL 07856177778



Sunderland  
City Council  
Supported by  
East Area Committee

Nature  
HUBS

## **Support ICOS:**

Please consider donating to ICOS to support the work we do. Ways to donate can be accessed by the following link: <https://icos.org.uk/support-us/> or by clicking on the ICOS logo.



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