

Centre for Social Justice and Community Action

Collaborating in research for social justice



For further information please contact:
Centre for Social Justice and Community Action
E-mail: socialjustice@durham.ac.uk or visit
www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice

The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action is grateful to Beacon NE for supporting its work and for funding this leaflet. Beacon NE was a UK Beacon for Public Engagement, a partnership between Newcastle University, Durham University and the Centre for Life, working to support, recognise, reward and build capacity for public engagement. Beacon NE was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England, Research Councils UK and the Wellcome Trust.





Our mission

The Centre for Social Justice and Community Action brings together staff, students, local people, communities and organisations for sustained collaboration in research, teaching, training and social and economic change for and with local communities.

Social justice – concerned with fairness, equality and participation – is a pressing issue. The Centre comprises researchers and community partners who investigate social justice issues in local, regional, national and international settings. We do this mainly through the approach of participatory action research (PAR) because, by working jointly with local communities, we can provide training and skills, create networks and share knowledge to support people in working towards a fairer society.

In the present period, 2010–2013, we are focusing on four themes:

- **asylum-seekers and refugees**
- **young people**
- **rural community development**
- **community action.**

We also undertake work in other areas if appropriate and our resources allow it. We now have a network of almost 500 community and voluntary groups, academics, researchers and postgraduate students actively researching social justice issues, campaigning and influencing policy together.

Research and action partnerships

We conduct high-quality, internationally recognised research using participatory approaches – researching with, not on, local people so that the benefits of research are shared. Recent examples include:

Young people, fear and hope in North East England

Funded by the British Academy and Leverhulme Trust, this multi-site project included the ACANE Art project in Newcastle, working with young people from local and refugee backgrounds to produce two public art exhibitions, a report for policymakers and a website.

Going with the flow – innovative approaches to countryside management

With funds from the Rural Land Use and Economy programme, a group of local people are leading a research project on the river catchment they live and work in. This is a trailblazing pilot to establish a new way of gathering knowledge and influencing policy.



Community-based participatory research – ethics and outcomes

Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and working with community partners and international advisors, this project has identified key ethical challenges in CBPR and recommended ethical guidelines.

Debt on Teesside – pathways to inclusion

Funded by Northern Rock Foundation, this action research project is a partnership with Thrive and Church Action on Poverty. It involves community mentors working with households that are struggling to make ends meet; research on attitudes towards debt; and community action on issues of common concern.

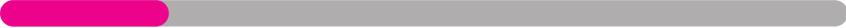
‘Race’ hate crime in the North East region

Supported by the Ministry of Justice and Durham University, this project is exploring the extent and nature of ‘race’ hate crime in the region, working with a range of local groups across the whole of the region and including urban and rural areas.

For more details of these and other current projects, and associated reports and publications, please visit:

www.dur.ac.uk/beacon/socialjustice





Promoting participation through training and events

The Centre runs events and training courses, often on a free basis, for community partners, alongside local workers, university staff and students. These have included Participatory Action Research, Asset-Based Community Development, Community Organising, Young People as Co-researchers, Socratic Dialogue and Conversations for Change. See our website for details of our current programme of events.

Making the most of student power

Durham has an amazing resource in its students, many of whom are undertaking detailed research projects, particularly as part of their postgraduate study. We harness these projects as far as possible for positive benefit to local communities. Undergraduates, Masters and PhD students have joined up with local organisations and people to produce high-quality research with real impacts. Examples include youth participation, refugee experiences and understanding how development can spread between communities.

Funding and commissioning projects

Current and past projects have been funded by central government, local government, research councils, charitable foundations and other non-government funders. We welcome enquiries from those who would like to develop new projects and help us to seek funding for these.

Staffing

The Centre is co-directed by Professor Sarah Banks, Professor Rachel Pain and Dr Andrew Russell. It can draw on experienced research staff in a wide range of disciplines across the University, including social policy, anthropology, geography, community development, sociology, leisure, politics, law, criminology, urban studies, health studies and business studies as appropriate.