



IT-Acumen

Not only does IT-Acumen support Acumen with all our IT requirements, they also have a shop in the centre of Horden, from which they deliver IT support to individuals, companies and community organisations.



Wheels 4 Work

Wheels 4 Work has continued to grow and offer transport solutions including forklift truck training and the leasing of scooters for those returning to work.

Bloomin' Marvellous Nursery & Landscapes (BML)

As a social enterprise, BML make a significant contribution to the local communities around Horden where they are based. The five strong team, who are mainly from the local area, create and maintain gardens, support Horden's entry into Northumbria in Bloom and visit local schools to work with the children and encourage family learning.



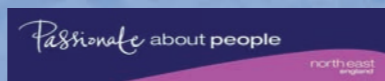
The Green Leaf Café

Since the Green Leaf Café was opened by Acumen in 2005, it has gone from strength to strength and now offers a comprehensive outside catering service in addition to a full range of hot and cold snacks. In 2007 the café became a separate social enterprise run by Lisa Bradley and her team.



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Acumen receives funding from a range of sources including: - The Northern Rock Foundation, East Durham Local Strategic Partnership-Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Jobcentre Plus European Social Fund Co-finance, Community Loan Fund North East, Single Programme, One NorthEast through the County Durham Sub Regional Partnership, North Peterlee Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, The National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund and a range of charitable and grant making bodies.



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Celebration and Anticipation

It has been an amazing four years since Acumen Development Trust was founded in 2003. As a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity whose purpose is to achieve social and economic regeneration through learning, employment and enterprise, we have been able to spread our core work from its origins in East Durham to the rest of the North East and more recently into Cumbria. Our superb teams of community engagement, learning, employment, recruitment and enterprise staff have developed an excellent reputation for their work and have made a real difference to the lives of over 5000 people. They have worked in partnership with hundreds of other groups and organisations to engage people from our local communities, many of whom have never worked or tried learning as an adult. They have then supported them through the journey into learning, employment or starting a business with an extremely high level of success.

As a social enterprise itself, Acumen has started a number of social enterprises in the East Durham area. We are very proud of the way in which local people have taken the lead in running social enterprises that meet the needs of the local community. Bloomin' Marvellous Nursery and Landscapes create and maintain gardens and also support Horden in Bloom as well as family learning, school gardening activities and community projects. Wheels 4 Work provides a scooter leasing scheme for people returning to work, and also delivers forklift truck and other transport training. The Green Leaf Café offers a seven day a week service to people in Horden and the surrounding area from the café in the Welfare Park, where they make delicious broth!

IT-Acumen provide all of Acumen's IT support and supply, service and repair computers for a range of customers including local community groups and centres. People Acumen is our new recruitment agency which is delivering employment solutions for small employers. We are also at the very start of an exciting potential enterprise, Easington Youthbuild, which will train young people for a place in the construction industry as well as providing affordable housing solutions in East Durham. We have now grown into an organisation with a turnover in excess of £3 million and a staff of over 80. Our Corporate Resources Team supports this work and has successfully brought in new finance and management information systems as well as helping us achieve low risk ratings with our funders. We have a real desire for continuous

improvement and want to become a true learning organisation. The ideas we have for the future are exciting and ambitious and we hope to achieve them with the support of our friends and partners. These ideas include: Possibility Place, a centre for self-belief and employability; supporting the third sector in delivering employability work through a supply chain model; developing various properties in East Durham; rolling out People Acumen across the North East and working in other areas of the UK where we are invited to develop our work. **Thank you for all your support in our first four years and please join us on the next exciting phase of the Acumen journey.**

Kate Welch OBE
Chief Executive

Shona Harper
Chair of Trustees



Social and Economic Regeneration through Learning, Enterprise and Employment

Community Engagement

Our team of community engagement staff arrange fun and informal community activities aimed at jobless people and their families. During these activities, our team take the opportunity to network and encourage individuals to make the first steps towards learning, employment and enterprise.

Recent events have included:

- community fashion shows
- educational visits for parents with their children
- family fun days
- Bloomin' Marvellous in Horden, Wheatley Hill and Haswell.



Learning New Skills

Learning with our One 2 One Learning team is informal and usually takes place out in community venues. Learning is at the pace of the individual and support is given to help people achieve their full potential. Learning can be one to one, or in small groups and includes:

- literacy and numeracy - improving skills for life to pass nationally recognised qualifications
- other qualifications - the team also help people to access other courses, including, health and safety, food hygiene and community based initiatives such as Healthy Challenge
- confidence building - many people who have been out of work for some time, or have been house bound due to ill health, find that their confidence is in need of a boost. One 2 One Learning help them to achieve this.

Employment & Enterprise

Individuals then work with an employment adviser or a business coach to move closer to achieving their goals. For some this means:-

A New Job...

With support from Acumen which included help to complete her CV, advice on filling in application forms and access to training, lone parent Elaine Richardson, from Peterlee, found a new job and has also won two awards for her hard work since she took up her role with Asda.

After spending 18 years bringing up her children, Elaine was daunted at the prospect of returning to work and said: "I was very wary at first but my adviser made me feel at ease, she was always on the end of the phone and she helped to relieve my fears and worries.

"Working with Acumen has given me the confidence I needed to take the step from being unemployed into work. I love working and my life has changed so much, I used to feel 'stuck in a rut' on benefits."



Network Management

Acumen works in a unique way and offers a network of support, working in partnership with other agencies, organisations and community groups to ensure a holistic package of support is given to meet individuals' needs. Working in partnership has many benefits, however the focus is always about doing the right thing for the individual or community.

The Aim High Network brings together the partners that are working to engage the residents of Easington District and support them when they take their first steps towards entering employment, learning, training, volunteering and enterprise.

Wansbeck Works! is a multi-agency partnership approach to tackling worklessness within Wansbeck, Northumberland. It aims to bring about a transformation in the way local partners work together to help local residents into training, employment and enterprise.



Aftercare & Retention

Once in work, People Acumen offers the employee and employer further support to overcome any issues and ensure retention.



Job Placement or Self Employment

If employment is the chosen route, People Acumen can help individuals to access vocational training and find employment in their local area. People Acumen is our new social recruitment agency that is genuinely different. As a social enterprise, the service cares more about helping people to find the right job and employers to find the right people and is not driven by targets and profits.

...Or A New Business

When Chris Watt, from Horden, saw a gap in the market for fancy dress in the local area, she contacted Acumen Business Coaching. Chris, a people person with fantastic sewing skills, decided that "Krazy Kapers" was going to be the future and she wanted a shop in Horden so people didn't need to travel to Hartlepool or Sunderland. Chris, whose shop has been open for two years, has been so successful that she has taken on two staff and diversified into children's dancewear. Sometimes when an individual makes a commitment to finding a job, starting a new business or even after they've taken their first steps and achieved this, they realise that they need more skills or support to remove barriers preventing them from achieving long-term success. Acumen provides ongoing support to help people stay in work or sustain their business.

Key Achievements Facts & Figures

From April '06 to December '07 we have supported:

- 2976 people to take part in a learning programme
- 416 people to achieve qualifications
- 1357 people to move into employment
- 337 people to move into self employment
- 3685 adults to engage in community engagement

