

# Funding Report 2025.



# Welcome.

**The North West of England is an amazing Region for so many reasons; however, it also has a number of social issues within its diverse geography.**

For example, Liverpool is one of the most deprived cities in England, having a major impact on young people and NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) rates.

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2025, Liverpool is ranked the 9<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England for average deprivation score and 12<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 296 local authorities overall, showing that deprivation is widespread across the city.

We know many young people are growing up in areas affected by poverty, unemployment, and limited opportunities.

As a result, they are more likely to struggle with education, access to training and employment.

Deprivation can lead to lower educational attainment, fewer career opportunities and higher NEET rates, especially in inner-city areas such as Everton, Anfield, and Kirkdale.

Young people living in deprived areas may also lack role models in stable employment and have fewer local opportunities, which can negatively affect their future life chances.

Our Foundation empowers the hero organisations providing young people at risk of becoming, or currently, NEET to build a brighter horizon and future.

We are so proud of the work we have achieved through our partners to date and so grateful to you all for the support you have given us.

It's through your generosity we are able to offer the help we do, so **thank you.**

## **The Trustees**

## The Arete Foundation.

Empowering the heroes,  
impacting young lives.



**Since 2021 we have provided funding for North West organisations that support young people who are at-risk or who find themselves NEET.**

Our funding supports young people to build a sustainable future, fulfil their potential and unlock opportunity.

Focus is given to charities and projects offering tangible impact, employment and education outcomes.

Our national grant programme supports The King's Trust in furthering their programme provision for those aged 11-30 from disadvantaged communities, or facing adversity across Liverpool, Manchester and the North West.

Our funding helps develop essential life skills, access job opportunities and further potential.

We particularly support The King's Trust's Explore programme, which is tailored to reach the most at risk and disengaged young people between 16-25.

Through one-to-one support, group sessions and outdoor activities the Trust builds self-esteem, wellbeing and raises aspirations to promote access to opportunity and to support positive futures.

We are proud to be a founding Liverpool Patron of The King's Trust, championing young people across our communities, against a background of surging youth unemployment, growing rates of young people in and leaving care, and a youth mental health escalating crisis.

Through our long-term grant awards we also support a range of charities supporting young people who are at risk of, or find themselves with, NEET status across the North West.

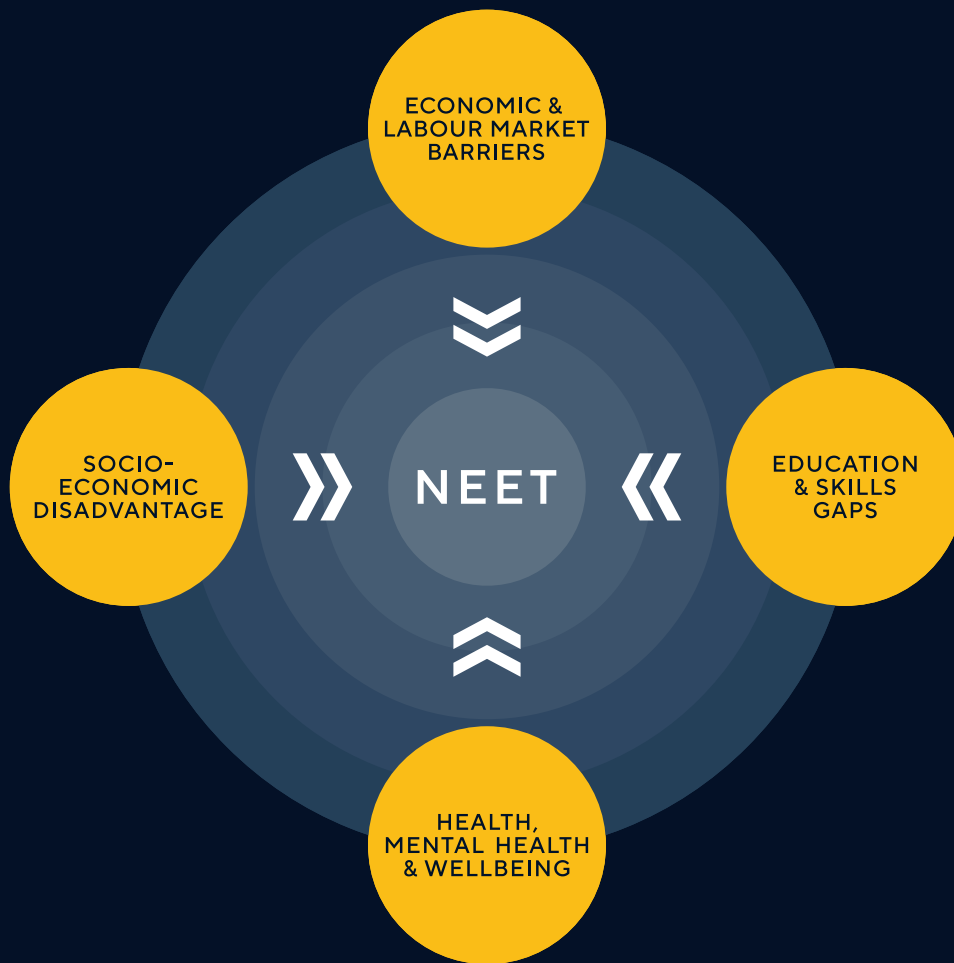
We prioritise support to organisations that can demonstrate tangible impact, employment and education outcomes.

We also award donations to 'good causes' across the year, in addition to our formal grant programmes, and have funded 10 different organisations across 2025.



**Our  
landscape  
of need.**

## Why it matters.



**Current statistics suggest 948,000 young people aged 16–24 are NEET in the UK, 12.8% of that age group.**

In the North West, the percentage is higher than the UK as a whole: **14.9% of young people (128,000) are currently NEET.**

So why are we seeing higher rates of NEET young people in the North West?

### **Economic & Labour Market Barriers**

The North West offers less labour market opportunities to young people, compared with some other English regions.

As a result, the region sees higher unemployment and inactivity rates than national averages.

Entry-level jobs have declined, making it harder for young people to gain experience.

There is also uneven job growth; pockets of high unemployment remain in post-industrial towns and cities.

### **Educational Attainment & Skills Gaps**

Young people with lower qualifications or basic skills (particularly English and Maths) are more likely to become NEET.

Low educational attainment is a specific and structural issue in the North West, resulting in higher NEET rates. We see the issue further compounded by deprivation and labour-market conditions.

The North West consistently has lower GCSE attainment than England overall, particularly in English and Maths, directly increasing the risk of becoming NEET.

Importantly, the North West has a higher concentration of deprived communities, especially in post-industrial urban areas.

Higher deprivation indexes are closely linked to lower school attainment, higher exclusion and persistent absence, and earlier disengagement from education.

This means educational disadvantage is geographically concentrated, rather than evenly spread.

The problem is compounded across the North West as young people with low educational attainment are increasingly facing barriers to employment markets, due to the lack of entry level jobs.

**>> 1 IN 8 YOUNG PEOPLE (16-24) IN THE UK ARE NEET**  
WITH AN **EVEN HIGHER** PROPORTION IN THE NORTH WEST



## Health & Wellbeing Challenges

Mental health and long-term health issues are among the most frequently reported reasons for NEET status among young people.

Mental health problems (anxiety, depression, self-harm) can make sustained participation in education or work difficult. Long-term illness or disability often limits availability for training or employment.

Studies show that health-related factors are increasingly cited by young people as barriers to entering the labour market.

The scale and concentration of health-related barriers are higher in the North West.

The North West consistently reports higher rates of long-term illness and disability than the England average.

Young people in the region are therefore more likely to report being unable to work or study due to health reasons, increasing economic inactivity rather than short-term unemployment.

This directly feeds into NEET classifications where young people are not actively seeking work or training.

The region has above-average rates of anxiety, depression, and serious mental illness, particularly in urban and post-industrial areas.

Mental health difficulties are a leading self-reported reason for young people being NEET nationally. The effect is magnified in areas with higher deprivation, like parts of the North West.

Compared with England overall, health-related reasons for inactivity play a more significant role in limiting young people's engagement in the labour market in the region, increasing the risk of longer-term disengagement.

## Socio-economic disadvantage

Socio-economic disadvantage is a particular challenge in the North West, where higher levels of deprivation, lower household incomes and weaker labour market conditions intersect to increase the risk of young people becoming NEET.

These structural factors help explain why NEET regional rates are consistently higher than the England average.

The North West has a disproportionately high number of neighbourhoods in the most deprived deciles in England.

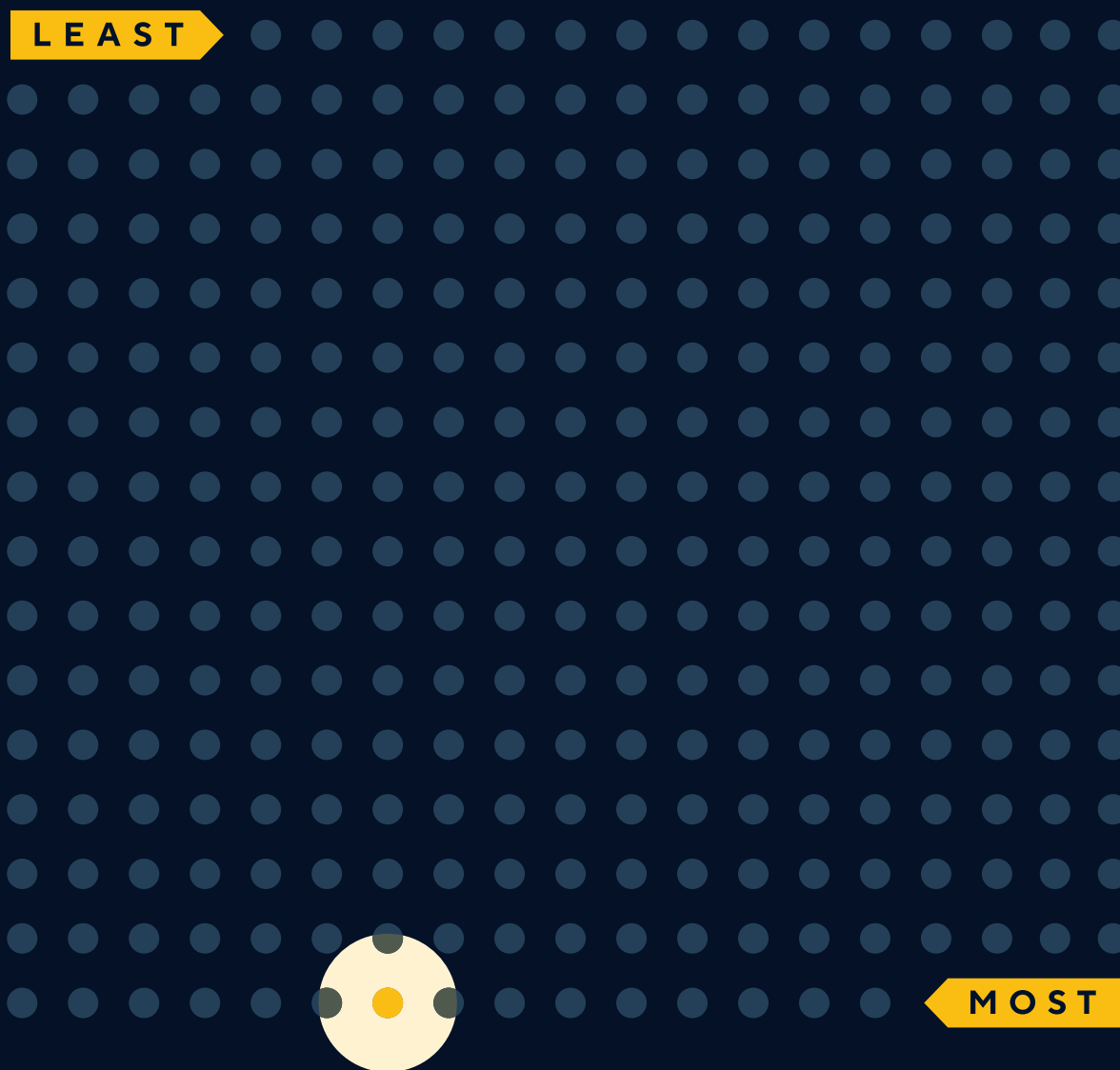
Many communities across the region continue to experience the legacy of industrial decline, with lower household incomes, poorer health, and weaker employment opportunities.

In addition family and caring responsibilities, including young caring roles and early parenthood, are more common in deprived communities.

This can restrict young people's ability to participate consistently in education, employment or training.

Taken together, these interconnected structural factors mean that young people in the North West face greater cumulative barriers, making NEET a more persistent and region-specific challenge than in many other parts of the country.

**LIVERPOOL**  
9TH MOST DEPRIVED LOCAL AUTHORITY IN ENGLAND (OF 296)







**How we've  
helped.**

## Long-term partnerships formed in 2025.

The Arete Foundation has formed long-term partnerships with a number of organisations over the past year.

### A&K Community Hub

 NEET young care leavers

 Birkenhead, Wirral

### Landscape of Need

Birkenhead faces significant socio-economic challenges, with around 33% of neighbourhoods among the most deprived 10% in England and between 5.5–6% of young people aged 16–17 NEET, above the national average.

### Grant Purpose



Employability course for NEET young people leaving care. This course develops young people's employability skills, offers work experience and pathways into employment.

### Grant Summary

We are pleased to support A&K Football Education CIC, supporting its Young Care Leavers Employability Course for young people aged 16–25 who are care leavers or NEET.

This structured eight-week programme builds confidence, leadership and employability skills, alongside personalised support, tailored CV and job application guidance, and a two-week internship to provide meaningful work experience, helping young people progress into employment, education or training with greater confidence and opportunity.

## The Boathouse

-  NEET young people
-  Fylde Coast, Blackpool

### Landscape of Need

Blackpool has 40% of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% in England, one of the highest proportions nationally.

Several Blackpool neighbourhoods rank among the 10 most deprived in the country. NEET rates are significantly higher than national and regional averages.

### Grant Purpose

Accredited training and apprenticeships for NEET young people looking to build a career in youth work (an industry much in demand in the Blackpool area).

### Grant Summary


We are pleased to support Boathouse Youth, which serves young people aged 5–25 across Blackpool and the Fylde Coast, with a long-term grant to expand its Young Leaders' Academy and Young Professionals Programme.


These youth-led initiatives provide accredited training, apprenticeships and career pathways in youth work.

They are helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to build skills, gain qualifications and access employment while breaking cycles of deprivation and strengthening support for future generations.



## Inspire, Youth Zone

 NEET young people

 Chorley, Lancashire

### Landscape of Need

Chorley accommodates pockets of significant deprivation, with some neighbourhoods falling within the 10% most deprived nationally.

### Grant Purpose

STEM skills education and employability skills for NEET young people.

### Grant Summary

We have provided funding for its STEM-focused Maker Zone programme for young people who are NEET or at risk.



Through hands-on sessions in coding, robotics, engineering and digital creativity, alongside mentoring and employer partnerships, the programme builds confidence, skills and pathways into education and employment, creating brighter futures for local young people.



# Good cause donations made in 2025.

The Arete Foundation makes a number of one-off donations to good causes related to our funding priorities throughout the year. Some examples from 2025 are:

## Release Mates

-  NEET young offenders
-  pan North West

## Landscape of Need



Young people in the criminal justice system face multiple challenges: around 60% have low levels of literacy and numeracy, around 50% have neurodiverse conditions, and 1/3<sup>rd</sup> have learning difficulties or disabilities.

## Donation Summary

Release Mates operates Departure Lounges across prisons in the North West, providing a safe environment for those released from custody. This offers advice, guidance and support to help them transition back into society.

Our funding helps deliver personalised one-on-one support beyond the Departure Lounges, typically for three months after release but sometimes up to a year. The goal is to help individuals build a sustainable, fulfilling future, focusing on key areas like housing, education, and employment.

## HM Pasties

-  NEET young offenders
-  pan North West

## Landscape of Need


25% of young people in prison have experienced care and a high number have been expelled from school. Among young people in custody or the justice system, a large proportion were already disengaged from education, training or employment before offending, often with low qualifications or school exclusion histories.


## Donation Summary

We're delighted to support HM Pasties Foundation with a grant for its catering training programme, helping young people leaving prison in the North West gain skills and access paid employment in the food and catering industry.

By providing practical training, qualifications and structured support, it helps young people build sustainable careers, fulfil their potential and reduce reoffending.

## Shaftesbury YC

 NEET young people

 Birkenhead, Wirral

### Landscape of Need

Shaftesbury Youth Club (SYC) is located in a deprived area of Birkenhead, where many young people face significant socio-economic challenges and are often marginalised.


### Donation Summary


Open seven days a week, SYC offers a wide range of facilities, including sports amenities, community spaces, and educational resources such as astroturfs, allotments, computer rooms, creative art studios and safe social areas for young people aged 8-21.

The club also features a dedicated classroom where young people can complete their homework or receive academic support. Regular classes are held to further enhance their educational opportunities.

To support SYC's mission we made a donation towards improving classroom facilities, ensuring the resources remain current and continue to benefit young people to the fullest.

## Open Door Centre

 NEET young people

 Birkenhead, Wirral

### Landscape of Need

In Wirral, youth unemployment slightly exceeds the national average. The most affected areas lie in the east of the borough, where high rates of unemployment align closely with patterns of deprivation.

### Donation Summary

The Arete Foundation is proud to support Open Door Centre's Bazaar Programme by funding the recruitment and training of its dedicated volunteers.

Open Door's Bazaar Programme is a free, eight-week peer support initiative that combines mindfulness, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and counselling to help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Designed for young people aged 14 to 35, the programme supports those who are NEET and proactively works to prevent others from falling through the cracks.

# The King's Trust Partnership.

## **We are a proud Liverpool founding Patron of The King's Trust.**

Like us, The King's Trust believes that every young person should have a chance to succeed, no matter what they're facing.

Over the last four years, The Arete Foundation has supported The King's Trust to deliver their NEET-focused youth programmes across Merseyside.

In particular, we have funded the Trust's Explore programme, which is tailored to reach the most at-risk and disengaged young people between 16-25.

Through a combination of one-to-one support, group sessions and outdoor activities, The King's Trust builds self-esteem, wellbeing and raises aspirations to promote access to opportunity and to support positive futures.

**"Thank you all again for your incredible, long-standing support, and the continued belief you put in young people and the work of The King's Trust."**

**Karen Webster, The Kings Trust**



**PROUD TO BE  
A PATRON**



# **Our 2025 fundraising events.**



## It's the Business.

Our annual event at the Arts School Restaurant in Liverpool brought together guests in support of The Arete Foundation and The King's Trust.

Attendees heard inspiring and insightful talks from Dr. Steve Finnegan on net zero and sustainability, Olympic gold medallist Sam Quek on mental resilience and her journey into broadcasting, and ex-Everton FC player Tony Grant on his impactful work supporting at-risk youth through the A&K Community Hub.

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the event.





## Tough Mudder.

A huge thank you to our 40 champions who took on 2025's Tough Mudder challenge for The Arete Foundation.

An incredible team of 40 people came together to tackle the Yorkshire Tough Mudder – a gruelling 15km course packed with 21 challenging obstacles.

We can't wait to see you brave the elements once again in 2026!



## The Arete Foundation Annual Golf Day.

The fifth edition of this annual event saw 72 dedicated golfers brave heavy rain at Blundells Hill Golf Club to raise funds for charities across the North West.

Guests were kept fuelled by HM Pasties and congratulations go to Axon Moore, the day's winning team.

The celebrations continued into the evening with a fun-filled 'bandeoke' experience.

Thank you to everyone who took part and supported the event, helping raise vital funds for The Foundation.





## The Diamond Ball.

Our annual Diamond Ball brought together supporters, partners, and friends for an unforgettable evening raising funds for The King's Trust and The Arete Foundation.

Guests enjoyed a drinks reception sponsored by Inspired Energy, an inspiring speech from Lewis Nickson on his journey with Poly UP and standout entertainment from Chesney Hawkes.

The night also featured a special raffle prize – a stunning diamond kindly provided by David M Robinson.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our charity partner, The King's Trust, and to everyone whose generosity and support made the evening such a success.

# Our 2026 Fundraising Events.

If you'd like to book a place, or have any questions on any of the fundraising events, please contact Mike Anslow via [mike.anslow@aretecp.co.uk](mailto:mike.anslow@aretecp.co.uk).

## Thursday 30th April

### It's the Business at The Arts School Restaurant, Liverpool

Guest speakers include ex-boxing world champion Johnny Nelson, ex-Scotland rugby captain Bryan Redpath and Travel Boss Jen Atkinson.

## Saturday 25th July

### Tough Mudder, Skipton, Yorkshire

Looking for teams of 4 for a muddy day out!

## Thursday 10th September

### Arete Foundation Golf Festival at Blundells Hill Golf Club, Rainford

Do you have a fourball looking for a fun all day event?

## Thursday 3rd December

### The Diamond Ball at St George's Hall, Liverpool

Headline acts for this black tie event are Atomic Kitten 1 (Natasha Hamilton and her band) and S Club 2 (Jo, Jon and their band).



A sincere **thank you** for all your support and contributions. You have made a meaningful difference in the lives of young people in our region.

If you'd like to make an individual or corporate donation, please **click here**.

For further details on The Arete Foundation please contact **[alexandra@thearetefoundation.org](mailto:alexandra@thearetefoundation.org)**