Foreword

Newcastle University is widely known around the world for its vision to be a world-class civic university and to achieve excellence with a purpose. Indeed, the primary feature of a civic university is its sense of purpose – an understanding of not just what it is good at, but what it is good for. It pursues this by making an explicit link to the wider social and economic domain, aspiring to help tackle some of the societal challenges of our time. It sees itself as delivering benefits to groups, networks and communities, who are regarded not as passive recipients of the university’s knowledge and resources, but are valued as sources of knowledge and knowledge-exchange in their own right.

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal (NISR), established at Easter 2012, will help to realise this vision. Of course, it cannot be a front-line agency. Rather, NISR will engage in the process of renewal as a partner and ideas generator in three ways. First, we intend to be a thought leader in social renewal. Second, we will engage in the production and dissemination of high-quality research and scholarship that informs policy and practice at all levels, governmental and non-governmental. Third, we intend to work on selected projects on a co-production basis with partners to improve the practices and effectiveness of social renewal. Our intention is to explore new ways in which a research intensive university – its staff and students – can connect with society in order to make a difference. This approach is central to Newcastle University’s mission to be a civic university actively engaged in the affairs of its City, region, nation and world.

The Institute has made an excellent start in its first year of operation. Now that a strong team of theme champions has joined the Director and his staff, I look forward to the future with confidence.

Professor Charles Harvey
Pro-Vice-Chancellor,
Humanities and Social Science Faculty
The old certainties and big assumptions about the world order that have governed our thinking since the end of the Second World War no longer seem valid, and there is a need for fresh thinking about how best to respond to the mighty challenges of the age such as government debt, faltering economic growth, rising unemployment (especially amongst young people), communities in decline, and rising inequalities in income, health, education and wealth. For many people, the failure to provide convincing responses to these challenges has exacerbated their sense of powerlessness, which in turn threatens to undermine politics and the legitimate authority of government.

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal is a means of enlisting all the expertise of Newcastle University (in research, teaching and learning, and engagement) in helping to address these challenges. NISR is not another research unit, cloistered in its own building: it is a means of cross-cutting all the Schools and Faculties of the University, bringing all our resources to bear. Most activity in Newcastle University can be seen as related to social renewal and it is important that everyone feels able to contribute to this societal challenge.

Notwithstanding this, NISR must be focused in the investment of its limited resources, and must develop a coherent intellectual underpinning of the concept. Managing this inherent tension between breadth and focus, pluralism and coherence, is a central task for me as NISR Director.

I hope that the following pages will give you an impression of what we are trying to do in the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal, and of what we have already begun to achieve. You can find much more information on our website [www.ncl.ac.uk/socialrenewal](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/socialrenewal)

Professor Mark Shucksmith OBE
Director, Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal

In Britain and in many other countries we face challenges of great magnitude to which there are no simple or obvious answers. These include globalisation, technological change, population growth and migration, escalating demand for energy, foodstuffs and other raw materials, and the unevenness and perturbing effects of capitalist economic growth.

Newcastle University seeks to deliver its vision of a world-class civic university through focusing on three societal challenges. Universities have always created knowledge through curiosity-driven and peer-reviewed research, and Newcastle University is proud of its achievements and world standing in this regard. In addition, though, we wish to help contribute towards addressing the big issues of our time. We wish to ‘make a difference’, regionally, nationally and globally. The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal was established specifically to help focus our efforts on the challenge of how people, communities and societies can thrive when faced with rapid, transformational change.

**Aims and Principles**

The Challenge: How can people, communities and societies thrive when faced with rapid, transformational change?

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal has two primary aims:

I. To contribute to the understanding and practice of social renewal, giving the social renewal theme institutional expression and acting as the vehicle for promoting, organising and communicating the University’s breadth of work in this regard;

II. In pursuing this, to contribute toward realising Newcastle University’s vision as a world-class civic university, promoting knowledge exchange with external partners while also contributing to (and reflecting upon) changes within the University itself.

**Principles and Values:**

Newcastle University is committed to fundamental values of:
- academic freedom; the pursuit of knowledge and understanding;
- a sound academic disciplinary base; a methodology based on reason and evidence; social responsibility; and transparency.

In its own work, the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal will value:
- academic freedom
- respect for, and tolerance of, diversity of views
- knowledge and understanding based on evidence and scholarship
- knowledge exchange
- debate as a formative process
- reflexivity and transparency
- a concern for social justice and social responsibility

**Social Renewal:**

**Public Sphere**

Deliberative Democracy; Citizenship

**Processes of Social Renewal**

Forces of change deriving both from outside and within

**Thriving in context of rapid change**

**Prosperity**

Economy; Wellbeing; Quality of Life

**Social Justice**

Fairness; Social inclusion; Equality; Compassion
**Theme Champions**

Our Theme Champions perform three important roles:
- **Animate and draw people together around their theme, promoting new ideas.**
- **Plan and deliver specific projects which will have demonstrable impacts.**
- **Represent the theme of social renewal within and beyond the University.**

**Arts and Culture in Social Renewal**

Dr Venda Louise Pollock, Senior Lecturer and Head of Art History, School of Arts and Cultures

This theme explores the role and value of arts, culture and heritage in social renewal. One aspect of this is the contribution of art and culture to the local and regional economy, to shared identities, and in collective imaginings of place.

**Digital Innovation**

Professor Peter Wright, Professor of Social Computing, School of Computing Science

Society is increasingly dependent on advances in digital technologies, and Newcastle’s researchers are at the forefront of shaping our future for everyone’s benefit. This theme explores the social and ethical implications of technological innovation.

**Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

Theme champion to be appointed

Innovation and entrepreneurship are fundamental to building the prosperity which is integral to individuals’, communities’ and societies’ ability to thrive in times of change. Our academics explore new approaches to business and enterprise including social enterprises, sustainable enterprises and family businesses.

**Health and Inequality**

Dr Suzanne Moffatt, Senior Lecturer, Institute of Health and Society

This theme explores the fundamental issue of inequality in society, and the relationship between health and people’s health.

**The Past in the Present**

Professor Matthew Grenby, Professor of 18th Century Studies, School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

This theme explores what we know about the past and how that can be meaningful for the present and suggest ways forward for the future. This can be investigated through historic literature, music, archives, artefacts or public records.

**Learning for Change**

Professor Liz Todd, Professor of Educational Inclusion, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences

Education and lifelong learning are vital to social renewal. In this theme we investigate what kinds of learning are transformational. We consider not only the way teachers teach but also the importance of involving families, young people, teachers and society in the learning process.

**People, Place and Community**

Professor Mark Tewdwr-Jones, Professor of Town Planning, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Community, identity and place are central to meeting the societal challenge of how to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing world. In the places where people live or work, a key question is how can they join together to imagine their future collectively and to pursue a shared vision?

**Social Justice and Injustice**

Professor Kathryn Hollingsworth, Professor of Law, Newcastle Law School

The idea of justice and in particular how the law, economy and civil society operate to facilitate, or inhibit, social inclusion and fairness, particularly in a time of austerity is considered in this theme.

**Wellbeing and Resilience**

Dr Karen Scott, Lord Richard Percy Fellow, Centre for Rural Economy

This theme investigates how we interpret and measure wellbeing and how this can be pursued. Also, what makes communities and societies more resilient and better able to negotiate process of change. Is measurement of wellbeing possible or desirable?

**Citizenship in the 21st Century**

Theme champion to be appointed

This theme explores the relationship between citizens and the state, and how this is changing as we enter the 21st Century.

**Institute of Social Renewal Ambassador**

Emeritus Professor John Goddard OBE

John heads a Civics University Study Programme, helping a group of leading European universities reflect on what it means to be a civic university. In the past year he has been invited to talk about the civic role of universities in twenty international events and acts as advisor to various parts of the European Commission and UK Government.

**RSA Launch Event**

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal was officially launched on 7th February 2012 with a keynote speech by Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Matthew Taylor highlighted the potential the new Institute could have:

“The challenge is how do we enable people to be the kinds of people they need to be to create the future they say they want. RSA would love to be part of something really amazing, not just for Newcastle, but to be a beacon for the rest of the world about what can happen when universities and civic leaders and business leaders work together to close that social aspiration gap and to help to create the citizens we need to create the future we want.”

**Claudia Jones Memorial Lecture**

Claudia Jones was a Trinidadian journalist and activist who moved to England in 1955 after being deported from the US as a communist. Here she campaigned against racism and discrimination, founding the first newspaper for Black British people, and also founding the Notting Hill Carnival in 1959. She is named on the list of 100 Great Black Britons, and is remembered each year by the NUJ’s Black Members Council in an annual lecture.

In October 2012 to mark the 45th Anniversary of Dr King’s Honorary Degree from Newcastle University, the Claudia Jones Memorial Lecture celebrated the legacy of Dr Martin Luther King. This year’s lecture departed from the usual single speaker format to feature voices from the worlds of journalism, academia and politics to fully celebrate the wide reach of Dr King’s legacy.

**Martin Luther King**

Newcastle University has a strong tradition of celebrating civic responsibility through the Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law. In November 1967 Dr Martin Luther King was made an Honorary Doctor of Civil Law by Newcastle University, the only university in the UK to honour the inspirational campaigner in his lifetime.
In line with the University’s civic mission, the goal of Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal is to maximize the impact of the University’s work through its research, teaching and engagement activity in order to deliver tangible benefits to society. Our engagement with the community is pivotal to ensuring that our academic and professional activities have genuine economic, social and cultural benefits. We are proud to work with a variety of organisations, community and voluntary groups, businesses and policy makers. Their involvement makes our work richer and better informed about societal needs.

Spotlighting Issues in the Community
Research with Impact
A key role for us is to use our research to bring about awareness and change. For example, the research of Professor Shucksmith and colleagues in the Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) on the challenges facing rural communities has informed part of the Adonis Independent Economic Review of the North East. The Centre for Rural Economy’s Northern Rural Network promotes knowledge exchange and networking with around 1,600 people in rural communities across the North of England. Also, Professor Shucksmith gave evidence before the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee and was invited to deliver the Annual Rural Affairs Lecture for the General Synod in the House of Lords.

Working with Communities
Building Regional and National Links
During the launch year, we have built relationships with key stakeholders. Regionally these include Newcastle City Council, Gateshead Council, Northumberland County Council, North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP), Newcastle Council for Voluntary Services, Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland and ippr North. Nationally we are working with National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA), Town Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation amongst others.

Our academics have been approached for their knowledge and expertise to get involved in practical activities to assist with the material delivery of social renewal, and have also been invited as experts to give evidence and perspective at various national platforms.

Involving Communities
Great North Build
In March and April of 2012, members of the public were able to construct a giant Lego town to explore some of the major issues that impact on people’s everyday lives. How does a city plan for a growing population? How can urban design improve the environment and what makes somewhere a good place to live? Almost 10,000 visitors came along to the exhibit and around 110,000 Lego bricks were used!

Honouring Communities
Community Champions Awards
In November we were delighted to support the Evening Chronicle Community Champion Awards, and honour the region’s unsung heroes. The Institute sponsored the Community Champion category which Institute Director Professor Mark Shucksmith presented to Pauline Newton for her work helping the elderly in her Cottam neighbourhood. Professor Shucksmith said: “The challenge of social renewal is to find ways in which people, communities and societies can thrive in times of rapid, transformative change… The nominees and winners of the awards are doing this from the grassroots up and as cuts to services become ever deeper, the role they play in supporting people and places will be more and more valuable. I have nothing but admiration for their dedication and energy, and sponsoring the Community Champion awards makes me very proud. I think we can all agree that without people like these, our region would be a much poorer place to live.”

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Innovation, Obsolescence and Urban Redevelopment
Unpacking ‘Creative Destruction’ in Visions of a City for All
This workshop held in May 2012 explored how to develop socially relevant and sustainable housing and community opportunities. It was attended by a variety of different stakeholders (e.g. Your Homes, Gentoo, Cyrenians, Groundworks, SMCOPA, Elders Council, self-build architects, women’s network and community group consultants).

Great Debate
‘Whatever Happened to Equality?’
This event was part of the national ESRC Festival of Social Sciences in November 2012. Whatever Happened to Equality? was a day of active debate and documentary-making for young people. The young people discussed ideas of equality, equity and difference in the context of our present ‘age of austerity’.

Social Renewal in Action
In our first year we held 41 events on campus and in the region. These involved relevant communities of interest on a wide range of topics in support of social renewal. They ranged from how to address anti social behaviour, perspectives on homelessness and inequality, through to explorations of feminism; from investigating the implications of decentralisation of public services and ideas of localism, to work with local schools and the Extended Schools’ Learning Network to develop capacity in community-orientated schools.

Quayside Lives – The Past in Our Future
Newcastle University Robinson Library worked with Key Stage 3 Humanities students from two local schools to reveal the rich history of Newcastle’s quayside and the range of special and historic artefacts held by the Robinson Library. This was a superb way of bringing to life for young people the changes that have occurred in the city over centuries and more recently and the exciting opportunities that the future can bring.

The Business of Prisons
A workshop with North East prison governors and national representatives from the prison service and other related services looked at the positive effects of involving businesses in contracting work from the prison community. Led by James Timpson, Chief Executive of family firm Timpson and Newcastle University Business School, it showed how working prisons enable upskilling of the prison community and give a sense of purpose for the prison in its environs. Three north prisons have since set up business centres and empowered prisoners to run internal services such as horticulture and laundry as a means of gaining business skills.

Simply Cracking Good Stories
Research shows that when we read for pleasure we become more and more adept at reading. For immigrant adults with little or no schooling in their adopted language, progress can be slow. To improve language proficiency for immigrant adults, The Simply Cracking Good Stories project began to meet the need for more high-quality, accessible fiction by teaching non-writers how to write short fiction books. The books created are available to buy and the story writing workshops are now being delivered overseas.

Young Disabled People and the European Academy for Childhood Disability
This project was started in 2012 and activity continues into 2013, culminating in the European Academy for Childhood Disability 2013 being hosted by PEALS research centre. PEALS are making a film to illustrate the importance of sport to young disabled people’s lives and the dynamics around inclusion and exclusion. Researchers have been working with groups of students in three North East schools to develop the film. The film will be presented at the European Academy. Speakers at the Academy will include the English Federation of Disability Sports, as well as two athletes who competed in the Paralympics London 2012.

Action 2012 Award Ceremony, December 2012.
James Timpson OBE.
Joseph Hillier heads, part of the artwork on campus.
Claire Tomlin signs copies of her acclaimed biography Charles Dickens: A Life after giving a public lecture.
School children design a poster celebrating the history and culture of the Newcastle Gateshead quayside.

Two Speed England
Creating a More Balanced Country
This event was jointly run between the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal. Two years after the general election, the seminar took stock of the Coalition Government’s policy changes – including regeneration funding and the radical reforms to planning, housing and benefit provision – and explored how communities, local government, universities and businesses in North East can get the best outcome.
Innovations that Benefit Society
Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal was delighted to work with Newcastle University Doctoral students and the ACTION Project Team on the Action 2012 competition funded by EPSRC. Multi-disciplinary student teams competed to develop business ideas around social renewal. It was great to see our students grappling with topics that affect society and being committed to make such positive contributions. The competition was very successful with two really innovative and worthwhile businesses winning and taking runners up place;

**Winners**
Buggiwalk – healthy guided walks for new parents to increase self confidence and wellbeing.

**Runners Up**
Bridgeboard – interactive technology for use in community settings to share information news and views.

Social Renewal in the Curriculum
Many of our taught modules at undergraduate and postgraduate level contain a social renewal element. It is important that students are able to see the positive impacts that Newcastle University’s research is having upon the challenges that society faces.

We will be working with module leaders to develop a suite of materials and case studies of ‘social renewal in action’ to enrich the student learning experience. The undergraduate module delivered by the Careers Service ‘Exploring Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Employability through addressing Societal Challenges’ is a superb example of applying transferable skills to real world problems.

Student Led Action
Newcastle University is proud that its students get involved in extra curricular activities such as volunteering and work placements within the city. Excellent examples include the Street Law project within the Law School where law students meet with young people to share information on their legal rights, and the SCAN programme (Student Community Action Newcastle) which delivers volunteer led activity around the North East.

We are presently taking on a short term student work experience placement to help explore student perception of our work and identify activities to involve even more students in the theme of social renewal.

We look forward to discussing her ideas with the Students’ Union.

Honorary Degrees
In December 2012 we honoured four of the world’s most eminent social and political figures with an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law Rakesh and Sunil Bharti Mittal, Shami Chakrabarti and Lord Garry Runciman all became special honorary graduates of Newcastle University for their outstanding contributions to societies in the UK and across the world.

Newcastle University chose to award honorary degrees for work relating to social renewal to four individuals whose interests represented communities most affected by social, political and economic change.

Brothers Rakesh and Sunil Bharti Mittal are two of India’s leading businessmen and philanthropists. The Mittal brothers are passionate advocates of the right to a good education, and share the belief that businesses must give back to the society in which they operate.

Shami Chakrabarti Director of Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties) has been described as ‘the most effective public affairs lobbyist of the past 20 years’. Since becoming Liberty’s Director she has written, spoken and broadcast widely on the importance of the post-World War II human rights framework as an essential component of democratic society.

For me, social renewal is about empowering people so that they can do more for themselves and come together and do more for their community.

Garry Runciman is one of Britain’s most eminent sociologists who originated the concept of ‘relative deprivation’. He was awarded a CBE in 1987, and is widely regarded as one of the country’s leading sociological theorists.

Honorary Degree Reception
We celebrated the Honorary Degrees by holding a reception to showcase the diverse range of research which has been carried out under the banner of Social Renewal.
Looking Ahead

The Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal is building on these achievements as we go through 2013. We have ten initial priority themes and our Theme Champions and Ambassador will play a vital role in leading these, adding insight and embedding the work of the Institute within Schools and Research Centres across the University.

Already they are generating and encouraging many exciting projects. For example, in 2013 NISR is supporting the ‘Inspirational Women of North-East England’ project, led by Professor Helen Berry and Dr Joan Allen from our School of History, Classics and Archaeology. This celebrates historic women in this region who have changed society. By doing so, the project seeks to inspire today’s girls and women to follow in their footsteps.

We have been proud to attract a speaker with internationally renowned credentials, Professor Michael Sandel (famous for his Harvard course ‘Justice’), to deliver the second annual Chris Patten Social Renewal Lecture. This lecture on ‘The Moral Limits of Markets’ took place on the 9 May 2013 in the historic King’s Hall, and attracted a packed house of 650 attendees.

Amongst the other highlights already in 2013 have been the prestigious awards of the TED prize to Professor Sugata Mitra and the Bertebos Prize to Professor Philip Lowe. Professor Sugata Mitra, whose research inspired the film ‘Slumdog Millionaire’, was awarded the 2013 TED Prize of $1m to pursue a ‘wish that can inspire the world’, following in the footsteps of Bill Clinton, Jamie Oliver and Bono.

His wish is to support children all over the world to tap into their innate sense of wonder and work together, through the School in the Cloud which provides a self-organised learning environment with information and mentoring online.

Professor Philip Lowe, of the Centre for Rural Economy, was presented with the Bertebos prize 2013 by the King of Sweden, on behalf of the Royal Swedish Academy, in January. The award reflects Philip’s significant contribution to sustainable rural development, land use management, rural sociology and interdisciplinarity. Our congratulations go to both these distinguished colleagues.

NISR’s main priorities during 2012 have been to establish NISR and its public profile, and to engage with colleagues across the University to explain NISR and to capture their expertise, enthusiasm and potential. The interest and engagement from colleagues has been exciting and bodes well for the future.

With the appointment of the theme champions and support staff we can move to a new phase, oriented more towards action and towards external engagement. This will be supported by the establishment of an External Advisory Board.

This promises to be an exciting period in NISR’s development, particularly given the pressing social and economic challenges which face us at the present time. We intend that there will be opportunities for members of the public to get involved in research with us, as we learn how to reach out better beyond the walls of academia and to build successful, mutually rewarding knowledge exchange partnerships.

In 2013 we will pursue our aspiration of ‘excellence with a purpose’ with vigour, so helping to realise Newcastle University’s inspiring vision of a world-class civic university.