

## General UK and North East business news

The North East's unemployment rate fell to 6.2% in the period from November to the end of January, leaving the region well above the national rate of 5% but significantly below London's rate of 7.2%. The numbers of people claiming unemployment benefits increased by more than 2,500 to 120,395: <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/unemployment-falls-north-east-signs-20234235>

Data from EMSI shows that the three regions which have seen the lowest rise in claimant counts are all in the North of England — Tees Valley (61.1%), North East LEP (65.8%) and Humber (78.1%): [https://www.economicmodelling.co.uk/2021/03/24/claimant-counts-furlough-and-employer-demand-in-the-lep-regions-and-devolved-nations/?utm\\_campaign=UK%20Blog%20Posts&utm\\_content=159227054&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter&hss\\_channel=tw-520145956](https://www.economicmodelling.co.uk/2021/03/24/claimant-counts-furlough-and-employer-demand-in-the-lep-regions-and-devolved-nations/?utm_campaign=UK%20Blog%20Posts&utm_content=159227054&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&hss_channel=tw-520145956)

North East family run businesses are being offered a new support programme, Evolve Digital, run by TEDCO Business Support in partnership with Innovate UK. The four-month programme will help businesses future-proof through the use of new digital technologies: [TEDCO launches programme to help family businesses embrace digital technology | UMi \(weareumi.co.uk\)](#)

The North East England Chamber of Commerce's latest economic survey has found that cashflow, UK and export sales, funding and supply chain issues are big issues with companies in the region: [North East businesses face multiple challenges as they mark year of lockdown - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Leisure firm The Apartment Group has launched a recruitment drive to fill around 400 posts as it prepares to reopen venues. The business operates in venues across the North East: [Leisure firm The Apartment Group launches drive to fill 400 posts amid major reopening programme - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Dogger Bank Wind Farm, the world's largest offshore wind farm, will create more than 200 direct jobs in the North East. Designs have now been released with the wind farm being built at the Port of Tyne: [Designs unveiled for wind farm operations base that will bring 200 jobs to North East - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

A year in lockdown: challenges and opportunities for six North East companies: [A year in lockdown: challenges and opportunities for six North East companies - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Eighty new DWP Jobcentres will be opening in the next 12 months including one in Newcastle: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/full-list-80-new-jobcentres-23774545>

## General North East events

Keep an eye on The Mussel Club. Their free online events sell out very quickly: <https://www.themusselclub.com/events>

North East LEP free webinar on March 26<sup>th</sup> from 10,30am to 12pm about ESF Information: Inclusive Labour Markets & Skills for Growth funding (specifically aimed at supporting the existing SME workforce): <https://www.northeastgrowthhub.co.uk/events/webinar/esf-information-event-inclusive-labour-markets-skills-for-growth-funding/>

Free Dynamo webinar raising awareness about the lack of diversity in the tech sector across the North East and supporting SMEs on April 14<sup>th</sup> at 10am:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_IrqdrQ7vRT2Spvn7DVpEhQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IrqdrQ7vRT2Spvn7DVpEhQ)

Dynamo 21 - annual conference showcasing the IT and tech sector in the North East. Free attendance for registered charities. June 17<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 4.30pm:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/dynamo-21-tech-leads-the-way-in-a-challenging-world-tickets-141270490841>

## Northumberland

North Tyneside Council has been asked its views on proposals for a battery factory in Blyth that could create 3,000 new jobs: [North Tyneside Council to have their say over plans to bring 3,000 jobs to Northumberland - Chronicle Live](#)

Northumberland is among nine parts of the county that will see ultra-fast broadband delivered to the area as part of the government's Project Gigabit scheme:

<https://www.northumberlandgazette.co.uk/business/consumer/new-project-set-to-deliver-ultra-fast-broadband-to-rural-northumberland-3178276>

## Northumberland events

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Cramlington every Monday from 7pm to 11pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-cramlington-tickets-62975377048?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Network B2B - Hexham Business Networking Breakfast – Every Tuesday from 7.30am to 9am: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hexham-business-networking-breakfast-tickets-35967290133?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

The Weekly Business every Wed from 12.30pm to 1.45pm: [The Weekly Business - Online networking event for Alwick \(findnetworkingevents.com\)](#)

## North Tyneside

North Tyneside vegan food business Nourish Bud has secured £25,000 to expand its operations: [Tyneside vegan startup secures five-figure investment to take bite of national market | Bdaily](#)

## North Tyneside events

Network B2B virtual networking. Every Tuesday 7.30am to 9am:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tynemouth-business-networking-breakfast-tickets-31484342516?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

## Newcastle

Black and White Engineering has increased its workforce by 44% - with new staff in its London, Edinburgh and Newcastle HQ: [Engineering firm grows workforce by nearly half with Newcastle and London expansion | Bdaily](#)

Newcastle life sciences company QuantMDx Group has raised funding of £11m. The funding will be used to complete manufacturing of the company's coronavirus detection system, Q-POCTM: [Newcastle life sciences firm raises £11m for rollout of "ground-breaking" Covid detection system | Bdaily](#)

Newcastle-based National Innovation Centre for Ageing is looking at how 'gita robots' could encourage older people to walk more, giving them increased confidence and lessen the effects of isolation: [Newcastle leads way with study into how robots can help older people - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Accenture's latest UK Tech Talent Tracker has recorded a massive 450% increase in demand for robotic skills in Newcastle: [Demand for robotics skills jumps 450% in Newcastle, report says - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Tech company Xplor has secured investment from a US payments firm, allowing 200 jobs to be created. The firm will set up an office in Newcastle city centre: [200 jobs created in Newcastle as global payments firm picks city ahead of nine others - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Newcastle-based intranet firm Oak Engage has been working with Five Guys to help connect its international workforce during the pandemic: [Newcastle tech firm works with Five Guys to keep staff engaged during lockdowns - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

Aurora Care Group has announced it is looking to expand with new care home acquisitions: [Newcastle care group aims for expansion following sale of care home | Bdaily](#)

### **Newcastle events**

Network B2B virtual networking. Every Wednesday 7.30am to 9am:  
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jesmond-networking-group-tickets-35967868864?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Newcastle every Monday from 7pm to 11pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-newcastle-upon-tyne-tickets-62987210442?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

### **South Tyneside**

IQA Elecnor is to launch Invest South Tyneside's new Business Talk programme on April 9<sup>th</sup>:  
<https://www.businessnewsnortheast.co.uk/spanish-firm-delivering-50million-north-east-fibre-network-launches-new-business-talks-programme/>

Four new business and community support officers are preparing to help residents and businesses in South Tyneside as lockdown restrictions ease:  
<https://www.shieldsgazette.com/news/politics/council/new-team-to-help-south-tyneside-shops-pubs-restaurants-and-attractions-reopen-as-lockdown-restrictions-ease-3176584>

### **South Tyneside events**

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in South Shields every Monday from 7pm to 11pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-south-shields-tickets-62987972722?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

## Gateshead

Gateshead pharma firm Shield Therapeutics is gearing up to launch its lead drug in the US after raising £4.2m: [Gateshead pharma firm ramps up US launch with extra £4.2m from open offer - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

A Lighthouse Lab that will process hundreds of thousands of coronavirus tests has opened on Tyneside. The centre at Baltic Park in Gateshead, one of three new labs around the UK, is operated by Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and has created 650 jobs: <https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/lighthouse-lab-opens-gateshead-process-20246844>

## Gateshead events

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Gateshead every Monday from 7pm to 11pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-gateshead-tickets-62987719966?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Business support and networking events from Codeworks covering Gateshead and the North East for businesses in the areas of Digital Media Technology: <https://www.thebestof.co.uk/local/gateshead/business-guide/feature/codeworks/>

Advance notice. Thinking Digital conference on May 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>: <https://thinkingdigital.co.uk/>

## Sunderland

Sunderland creative agency Ignifi has been acquired by London agency Selbey Anderson. Ignifi employs 25 staff and provides services including marketing, creative, design and digital, and is expected to achieve revenues of £2.5m this year: [Sunderland creative agency Ignifi is snapped up by growing London marketing group - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

According to Dojo analysts, Sunderland is the best place in the North East to start a remote business: <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/19184238.sunderland-best-north-east-start-remote-business/>

## Sunderland events

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Sunderland every Monday from 7pm to 11pm: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-sunderland-tickets-62986965710?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

## Durham

Durham-based tech firm Honcho has partnered with Admiral to offer Admiral MultiCar insurance on its platform: [Durham insurtech launches multicar partnership with insurance giant | Bdaily](#)

County Durham fintech firm Quva has been launched with aim of digitally transforming the way private equity firms, venture capital funds and angel investment networks currently manage the end-to-end investment process:

<https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/business/19186919.county-durham-fintech-firm-launched-transform-investment-sector/>

The Durham Business Recovery Grant has awarded £119,000 to four businesses across County Durham - Hudson Media Services, electrical and mechanical engineers IVIC LTD, Quarry Burn Restaurant and the Morritt Hotel and Garage Spa:

<https://www.eastdurhamnews.co.uk/2021/03/22/peterlee-company-among-those-to-benefit-from-business-durham-recovery-grant/>

### **Durham events**

I DO LIKE MONDAYS! Free networking event in Durham every Monday from 7pm to 11pm:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i-do-like-mondays-free-networking-event-in-durham-tickets-62738252803?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Business Drop In Clinic April 8<sup>th</sup> via Business Durham, 1pm to 4pm:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/business-drop-in-clinic-8th-april-tickets-146982184671?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>