SUNDERLAND MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION
June 2026

Compiled from stories published online in June 2026



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SUNDERLAND MAGAZINE

DIGITAL EDITION

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Every photo is numbered with its page. Spot a face, turn to the number.

On the cover: Yarn Bombing Celebration Marks Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens Redevelopment Programme, page 6. Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council.

This is a look-back edition, put together in November 2026 from stories that appeared online in June 2026. Sunderland Magazine's first digital edition was published in November 2026.

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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland's Visitor Economy Hits Record £657.5 Million as Tourism Continues to Grow

Sunderland's visitor economy reached a record-breaking £657.5 million in 2025, with rising visitor numbers and increased spending helping to cement the city's growing reputation as a hub for major events, culture, entertainment and leisure.

New tourism figures reveal strong growth across the sector, with spending on food and drink making the largest contribution to the local economy, underlining a particularly successful year for Sunderland's hospitality industry.

The data for 2025 comes from STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Model). It is released each year to capture the impact of tourism on towns and cities across the country.

These latest statistics show that:

Sunderland saw around 7,365,000 day visitors (up 1.5% from 2024)

Tourism generated £657.5 million for the local economy, a 6% increase on 2024

Food and drink was the biggest contributor to direct economic impact (38.3%).

The new data comes as Sunderland continues

"The latest STEAM figures highlight the strength of the city centre offer and the importance of partnership working across businesses and sectors."

to implement its 10-year Tourism Strategy, launched in 2025. The strategy brings together businesses, attractions, cultural organisations and public sector partners through the Sunderland Tourism Alliance.

It sets out a shared ambition to grow the visitor economy, increase overnight stays, attract new audiences and ensure tourism delivers lasting benefits for local businesses, communities and residents across the city.

Sunderland City Council's Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Heritage, Cllr Ciera Hudspith, said:

"Tourism is such an important part of our city's economy, and it is encouraging to see the sector thrive. "These latest STEAM figures show the growing strength of Sunderland's visitor economy and how our booming food and drink industry is attracting more people to come and spent their time and money in the city, and world-class events like the opening of Women's Rugby World Cup in 2025 are having a real positive impact on our city. "While these results are encouraging, they also highlight the opportunity ahead of us. Through the Sunderland Tourism Alliance and our 10-year Tourism Strategy, we're working with partners across the city to encourage visitors to stay longer, spend more and discover everything Sunderland has to offer."

STEAM figures include the number of visitors to attractions, event attendance figures, retail spend in the city and away fans (but not home fans) attending SAFC Home matches.

Hotel occupancy and bed stock figures count towards the overnight visitors.

A number of high-profile events and developments helped drive visitor numbers and spending throughout the year. These included the opening match of the Women's Rugby World Cup, which brought tens of thousands of visitors to the city and significant national and international exposure. The Sunderland New Year's Eve fireworks also proved hugely popular, attracting one of the city's largest public event audiences in recent years.

Cultural venues and attractions also reported strong performance. Sunderland Empire recorded significant growth in attendance and major west end titles such as Hamilton, and Mary Poppins; becoming one of the largest visitor attractions in the region and continuing to draw audiences from across the North East and beyond.

Marie Nixon, Theatre Director at Sunderland Empire and member of Sunderland Tourism Alliance, said:

By Sunderland Magazine Online 19 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderlands-visitor-economy-hits-record-657-5-million-as-tourism-continues-to-grow**

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Yarn Bombing Celebration Marks Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens Redevelopment Programme



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Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens has launched an ambitious four-year redevelopment and activity programme, running from 2026 to 2030.

Led by Sunderland City Council, the project is backed by major investment from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Wolfson Foundation and other partners.

As part of this transformation, a wide-ranging programme of events and community activity has been taking place across the city since Easter, with the recent yarn bombing celebration in Mowbray Park Community Garden offering a vibrant example of how residents are already helping shape the future of the museum. On Wednesday 27 May, Sunderland's creative community came together to transform the garden into a colourful, blossom themed installation. Led by Susan Gibson and Michelle Hill from local crafting groups The Knitting Hinnies, Howay Crochet and Canny Crafters, alongside Museum staff and visiting families, more than 300 handcrafted knitted and crocheted flowers were installed throughout the space.

By Zoe Online 24 June 2026

Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/yarn-bombing-celebration-marks-sunderland-museum-winter-gardens-redevelopment-programme**

Your turn

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Sunderland Foster Carers Honoured For Life-Changing Support



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Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

Sunderland's foster carers have been honoured for the life-changing support they provide to children and young people across the city.

Some of the city's carers have been recognised for their long service and commitment at a special awards breakfast. Milestones celebrated ranged from five years to 45 years of fostering, demonstrating the lasting impact carers have made over generations.

Among those recognised was Pauline Metcalfe who, having first read about fostering in her local paper, has spent 45 years providing stable, loving homes to children and young people in Sunderland. During the awards breakfast, guests heard how Pauline has supported children through adoption journeys, reunification with their birth families, and the transition to adulthood.

Pauline was also recognised for her commitment, caring nature, empathy, and for creating a space where young people feel able to speak openly.

Speaking about reaching the milestone, Pauline said:

By Sunderland Magazine Online 23 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-foster-carers-honoured-for-life-changing-support**

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SUNDERLAND

Armed Forces Day Marked In Sunderland With Weekend Celebrations



Photo supplied by Sunderland City Council

Sunderland will pay tribute to the dedication and bravery of the Armed Forces this weekend as the city marks Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27 June.

The Armed Forces Day flag was raised at City Hall on Friday morning (26 June), where it will fly throughout the weekend as a symbol of respect and gratitude.

Mayor of Sunderland, Councillor Robert Hutchinson, hosted the flag-raising ceremony, welcoming veterans, serving personnel, civic leaders, and members of the public.

He said:

By Sunderland Magazine Online 27 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/armed-forces-day-marked-in-sunderland-with-weekend-celebrations**

SUNDERLAND

The Bridges and OUT North East Bring Pride Celebrations to Sunderland



In partnership with OUT North East, The Bridges Shopping Centre is bringing Pride celebrations to the heart of Sunderland this June with a free, family-friendly event in the city centre.

On Saturday 6 June 2026, Central Square at The Bridges will come alive as Sunderland Pride takes over for a day packed with colour, creativity and community spirit.

The event is open to everyone with no booking required, no entry charge and a full day of activities for all ages.

Families can unleash their creativity at arts and crafts stations and create Pride-themed masterpieces to take home. And add some sparkle with free face painting and dress-up fun, helping everyone shine and show their pride.

By Zoe Online 1 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/the-bridges-and-out-north-east-bring-pride-celebrations-to-sunderland**

SUNDERLAND

A Climbing Wall, Dolphins, and a Project Quietly Changing Sunderland's High Streets



There's a version of that night where I didn't go.

The Market Collective event was at Adventure Sunderland in Roker, a place close to my heart, and one I'd been avoiding since losing someone I love earlier this year. Add a climbing wall (heights are my biggest fear) and the fact I've never liked networking, and I had every excuse not to go.

I put my big girl pants on and went anyway. I'm so glad I did.

The vibe was unlike any networking event I'd been to. No agenda, nobody waiting their turn to sell at you. Just real people there to get to know each other, have a laugh and a proper natter. Refreshing, right?

By Sunderland Magazine Online 17 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/a-climbing-wall-dolphins-and-a-project-quietly-changing-sunderlands-high-streets**

SUNDERLAND

Major Step Forward for Sunniside Regeneration as Sunderland Council Signs New Partnership Agreement



Sunderland City Council has reached a significant milestone in its ambitions to transform Sunniside, after signing a Pre-Development Agreement with Muse, alongside supply chain partners working through the ECF partnership.

The agreement builds on the Council's Sunniside Place Strategy, launched in 2024, and the progress already made in the area, including the Nile + Villiers housing development and the National Esports Performance Campus, both of which have been spearheaded by the Council.

The Pre-Development Agreement has been made possible through the Developer-Led Framework, which Pagabo manages on behalf of Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust.

By Zoe Online 22 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/major-step-forward-for-sunniside-regeneration-as-sunderland-council-signs-new-partnership-agreement**

In brief



SUNDERLAND

More Stalls Than Ever as Sunderland Food and Drink Festival Takes Over the City Centre

Food lovers are set for a global culinary adventure without leaving the North East as the Sunderland Food and Drink Festival returns this weekend (5–7 June).

By Sunderland Magazine Online 2 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/more-stalls-than-ever-as-sunderland-food-and-drink-festival-takes-over-the-city-centre**



SUNDERLAND

Summer of Pride Continues with Packed Programme Across Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead

A vibrant weekend of Pride celebrations is set to take place across the region on 13 and 14 June, with a packed programme featuring everything from drag performances and live entertainment to music and dancing.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 11 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/summer-of-pride-continues-with-packed-programme-across-sunderland-south-tyneside-and-gateshead**

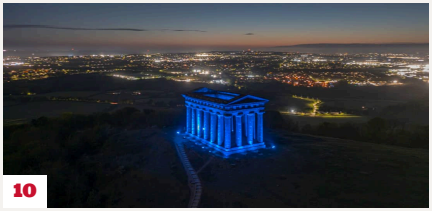


SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Promotes Beach and Water Safety During Drowning Prevention Week

Families across Sunderland are being encouraged to learn more about water safety ahead of the summer months.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 16 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-promotes-beach-and-water-safety-during-drowning-prevention-week**



SUNDERLAND

City Landmarks to Shine Blue as Sunderland Marks Carers Week 2026

Sunderland is marking Carers Week by recognising the invaluable contribution of unpaid carers and highlighting the support available to them across the city.

By Zoe Online 10 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/city-landmarks-to-shine-blue-as-sunderland-marks-carers-week-2026**

In brief



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SUNDERLAND

Business Support Leader Paul McEldon Announces Retirement from North East BIC

The chief executive of one of the North East's leading business support organisations has announced plans to step down after more than two decades in the role.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 8 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/business-support-leader-paul-mceldon-announces-retirement-from-north-east-bic**



11

SUNDERLAND

Applications Open To Add Names To Sunderland Memorial Wall

Friends and families of servicemen and women who lost their lives in active service after the Second World War are being encouraged to come forward to ensure their loved ones are commemorated.

By Sunderland Magazine Online 26 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/applications-open-to-add-names-to-sunderland-memorial-wall**



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SUNDERLAND

Sunderland Bus Driver Kevin Moses Retires After 30 Years of Dedicated Service

Kevin Moses retires and parks his bus for the final time after 30 years serving Sunderland communities

By Zoe Online 7 June 2026
Continued at **sunderlandmagazine.com/sunderland-bus-driver-kevin-moses-retires-after-30-years-of-dedicated-service**



11

NEWCASTLE

Blyth Tall Ship Launches Hands-On Woodworking Courses in Unique Maritime Setting

From creating handcrafted keepsakes to building traditional paddles and wooden bodyboards, Blyth Tall Ship is giving people the opportunity to learn practical woodworking skills in a distinctive maritime setting.

By Newcastle Magazine Online 9 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/blyth-tall-ship-launches-hands-on-woodworking-courses-in-unique-maritime-setting**

In brief



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NEWCASTLE

Tilly Raper to Run Great North Run Four Years After Life-Changing Road Collision

A young woman whose life was saved following a serious road traffic collision is taking on the Great North Run to raise funds for the air ambulance charity that came to her aid.

By Zoe Eastman Online 5 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/tilly-raper-to-run-great-north-run-four-years-after-life-changing-road-collision**



12

NEWCASTLE

North East Grassroots Sporting Heroes Honoured at Unsung Hero Awards

GLL, the charitable social enterprise and worker-owned co-operative behind Better leisure centres across the North East, has once again played a key role in recognising and celebrating the individuals who make grassroots sport thrive throughout the region.

By Zoe Eastman Online 16 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/north-east-grassroots-sporting-heroes-honoured-at-unsung-hero-awards**



12

NEWCASTLE

North Shields Photographer Gaby Zak Announces Biggest Exhibition Yet Celebrating the North East

A photographer who relocated from Reading to North Shields to capture the spirit of the North East is preparing to stage her largest exhibition to date, showcasing the people, places and everyday moments that define life across the region.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 11 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/north-shields-photographer-gaby-zak-announces-biggest-exhibition-yet-celebrating-the-north-east**



12

NEWCASTLE

MICHELIN Guide Chef Showcases Community-Grown Produce At Jesmond Restaurant

A Newcastle restaurateur featured in the MICHELIN Guide is working closely with his community to source the finest ingredients for his customers.

By Zoe Eastman Online 28 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/michelin-guide-chef-showcases-community-grown-produce-at-jesmond-restaurant**

In brief



Photo: Steve Brock Photography

NEWCASTLE

Blyth Community Champions Honoured at Annual Civic Awards Ceremony

Dedicated volunteers, community champions and local organisations were honoured for their outstanding contributions to Blyth during the town's Annual Town Meeting at the Market Pavilion.

By Sara Janiszewska Online 4 June 2026
Continued at **newcastlemagazine.com/blyth-community-champions-honoured-at-annual-civic-awards-ceremony**



DURHAM

City of Durham Show Returns After 25 Years to Celebrate Local Talent and Community Spirit

Gardeners, bakers, crafters and community groups from across Durham are being invited to take part in the long-awaited return of the City of Durham Show this September, as a team of local residents brings the cherished event back to life.

By Durham Magazine Online 10 June 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/city-of-durham-show-returns-after-25-years-to-celebrate-local-talent-and-community-spirit**



Photo: barbara king

DURHAM

Red Sky Foundation Donates £60,000 Heart Scan Machine for Children at Darlington Memorial Hospital

Children and families across County Durham and Darlington are set to receive quicker access to vital heart assessments following the donation of a new specialist echocardiography machine by the Red Sky Foundation.

Online 11 June 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/red-sky-foundation-donates-60000-heart-scan-machine-for-children-at-darlington-memorial-hospital**



Photo: "HMS Trincomalee at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Hartlepool" by Anthony Foster, geograph.org.uk (geograph.org.uk/photo/8306735), CC BY-SA 2.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0), cropped

HARTLEPOOL

HMS Trincomalee: The 19th Century Warship That Found a Home in Hartlepool

HMS Trincomalee holds a unique place in British maritime history as the oldest warship still afloat. Built in India in 1817, the vessel has called Hartlepool home since 1987 and serves as the centrepiece of the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

By Barrington Kirkham Online 3 June 2026
Continued at **hartlepoolmagazine.co.uk/hms-trincomalee-the-19th-century-warship-that-found-a-home-in-hartlepool**

In brief



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DURHAM

Durham Brass Festival Adds Walking, Cycling and Dance Events for 20th Anniversary

Music fans can prepare to dance, walk and even cycle to the rhythm this summer as a brand-new feature joins the line-up for Durham Brass Festival.

By Durham Magazine Online 3 June 2026
Continued at **durhammagazine.co.uk/durham-brass-festival-adds-walking-cycling-and-dance-events-for-20th-anniversary**

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