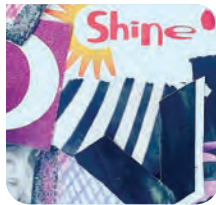


CONVERGE

www.yorksj.ac.uk/converge



Prospectus: Academic Year 2024/2025



Est.
1841

YORK
ST JOHN
UNIVERSITY



CONVERGE
CONNECTED
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NHS

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust



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Welcome to Converge

Welcome to another year at Converge!

In this prospectus you will find information about our course subject areas, with links to further details on our website. We also want to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in Converge for their ongoing support and enthusiasm, and most importantly our Director, Professor Nick Rowe, who will be retiring in August 2024. Nick founded Converge in early 2008, starting with some short courses in theatre based at York St John University. Sixteen years on, and Converge now welcomes over 200 Converge students from the local community every term. We are proud that our courses are led by York St John University students and graduates, and many of our courses are also taught by people with lived experience of mental health illness, who have themselves been through the Converge journey.

We are thrilled that York St John University are keen to secure the future of Converge and have appointed the following roles:

- **Simon Procter, Professor of Mental Health Service Partnership.** Simon will be the Director of Converge, overseeing our day to day running as well as supporting new funding bids and strategic partnerships.
- **Amy Skinner, Associate Professor of Co-production and Mental Health.** Amy will be linked to the Institute for Social Justice at York St John University and will work directly with the Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT), to continue building our body of research and evidence supporting the work of Converge.

We look forward to welcoming Simon and Amy to the team in September 2024!

About Converge

Courses are provided free of charge and are open to adults (18 years of age and older) currently receiving support for their mental health, or who have experienced mental health issues. Our courses are supported by university students as part of their degree programme, and we run across the academic year from September through to June. Courses are taught by university students and graduates, as well as people who have come through Converge following an experience of mental ill health and progressed to become tutors on our programme.

The principles of Converge

To work together as artists and students.

To build a community where we learn from each other.

To engage and enhance the university and wider community.

To provide a supportive and inclusive environment.

Respect others, value yourself.

Meet the Team



Emma McKenzie
Converge & Discovery Hub Team Lead

Emma supports the leadership of Converge and manages The Discovery Hub. The Discovery Hub is the individual support team within Converge. We support people to make steps into the university as part of a recovery journey, as well as assisting with opportunities for future progression. Emma is also completing a PhD in Humanities.



Holly Sloan
Converge Office Coordinator

Holly is responsible for overseeing the administration of Converge. She joined the team in 2018 after completing a BA in Drama: Education and Community, where the focus of her work was on theatre and mental health. Holly is currently studying an MSc in Project Management at York St John University.



Helen Kenwright
Converge Creative Writing Lead & Tutor Support

Helen joined Converge as a volunteer in 2016, and now leads Creative Writing and Tutor Support. She's also lead for our publications team, which produces our student anthology, Creative Writing Heals every year.



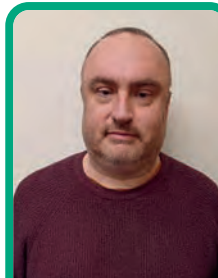
Elaine Kelly
Project Coordinator and Creative Writing Tutor

Elaine began working with Converge while studying at York St John and has been a creative writing tutor since 2017. She also coordinates our off-campus projects, including the development of Converge learning opportunities in collaboration with other organisations.



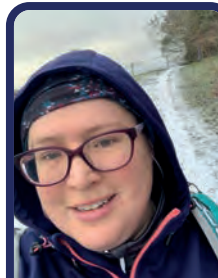
Kate Walker
Converge Administrator & Volunteers Coordinator

Kate provides administrative support in the Converge and Discovery Hub offices as well as coordinating the Volunteers.



Paul Wort
Converge Admin Assistant

Paul has been a Converge student since 2015, participating in a wide range of different Converge courses. He worked as a Converge Administrator between 2018 and 2020. In 2024 he rejoined the staff team on a casual basis, providing weekly admin support to the Converge office.



Ruth Lambley
CERT Co-ordinator

Ruth is the coordinator for the Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT), a group of researchers/evaluators with lived experience of mental health difficulties. Ruth has been involved with Converge since 2017. She is also a PhD researcher at York St John exploring co-production in mental health research.



Hazel Rowe
Student Support Practitioner

Hazel joined Converge in 2019 and works in the Discovery Hub, supporting Converge students to help them access courses. Hazel is a qualified Occupational Therapist who also offers Coaching to Converge students to assist with widening opportunities and future progression.

Meet the Team



Paul Botting
Associate
Practitioner

Paul joined Converge as part of the TEWV partnership in 2017. He has run horticultural therapy in many different locations over the last 45 years and is currently working out of Poppleton Community Railway Nursery, providing supportive volunteering experiences in all sorts of media, including craft, writing, woodwork and gardening.



Karen Wilson
Learning and
Access Worker

Karen joined the team in 2015 and has been actively involved as a Learning and Access Worker for the Discovery Hub ever since. Karen takes a keen interest in connecting people to training, education and employment.



Robert Bennett
Learning and
Access Worker

Robert joined Converge in 2019 and helps individuals to access Converge courses as well as further opportunities within the broader community. He is also a member of the Converge Evaluation and Research Team and is passionate about answering some of the big questions about mental health and wellbeing. Independent of Converge, he also runs Brighter Futures, a Selby based group supporting people with mental health issues.



Ellie King
Learning and
Access Worker and
Origami Tutor

Ellie joined the Discovery Hub team as a Learning and Access worker in 2022. She also teaches our Origami course and supports the Leaded Glass course.



Lee King
Learning and
Access Worker and
Leaded Glass Tutor

Lee joined The Discovery Hub as a Learning and Access Worker in 2018. Lee supports people to access Converge courses as well as undertaking outreach work. Lee is also the Converge Leaded Glass tutor, teaching students how to create a stained-glass art piece.



Aaron Soon
Learning and
Access Worker
and Music Tutor

Aaron joined Converge in 2017 as a YSJ Student Volunteer while studying BA (Hons) Music: Education and Community. He progressed to become a Music Facilitator and Events Organizer for both Converge and Emerging Voices Music Charity, and completed an MA in Music Education at the University of York. In 2023, Aaron also joined the Discovery Hub as a Learning and Access Worker.



Converge Student Story: Cate

What can I say about Converge. This is perhaps one of the most inspirational organisations I have ever had the pleasure to be involved with. There are so many great opportunities available. I signed up to the Creative Writing Inspirations Course (by post) in 2023. The feedback on my writing is always constructive and prompt and I feel privileged to have now been invited to write a piece for the book Creative Writing Heals 7. So much opportunity has come my way from having participated in this course and confidence in my ability to write has soared. Thank you Converge.



York St John University Campus

York St John University is a campus where modern buildings meet Victorian architecture. When you become a Converge student, you will have full access to specialist learning spaces, as well as the catering outlets and our beautiful award-winning gardens.

Creative Centre

The York St John Creative Centre is a purpose built three-storey creative space for Music, Theatre and Computer Science. The building is home to a professional theatre, a theatre rehearsal studio, recital rooms, editing suites and specialist music and media studios. The Creative Centre is also one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in York with its innovative design and sustainable construction.

Fountains Learning Centre

Fountains Learning Centre is home to over 220,000 books and more than 92,500 journals, as well as printing resources and access to Windows PC's. The library also provides both independent and group study spaces. Enrolled Converge students can contact the Converge office to request a library card, which gives you borrowing rights in the library and 24-hour access to use the computers.

The Quad

The Quad is the oldest building on campus, built in 1841. It is a peaceful and tranquil space, well looked after by our fantastic grounds team. The Quad is home to a dance studio, theatre studios and media production spaces.

Teaching Spaces

Ripon Wing: Spacious, airy classrooms used by the university primary education programme to practise teaching. Most of the Converge art courses are based in Ripon Wing 006 due to its large size and access to facilities such as sinks and drying racks.

Cordukes Building: Large, bright teaching spaces based near the Quad and next to Ripon Wing. Each classroom is equipped with a PC and projector screen. Converge Creative Writing courses are usually based here.



Fountains Learning Centre



Built in 1841 - The Quad

Our Teaching Methods

We currently offer courses in person, online and by post.

Our aim is to deliver courses that reach the standard of first year degree studies and focus on the practical and fun aspects of learning. We don't ask for any previous qualifications to access Converge, but we do expect Converge students to come with a willingness to learn and develop their skills. Our courses are non-accredited, so you will not be assessed or marked on any work that you do. Courses are between 6 and 12 weeks in length, and sessions are usually no longer than two hours at a time. Converge students can apply for up to 4 courses each term.

Converge courses are taught by university students, graduates and people who have previously been Converge students and have progressed to become tutors with us. Our courses are supported by Converge student and university student volunteers. More information about volunteering opportunities can be found on page 24.



Converge Connected is our online and postal course provision.

Online courses either happen over Zoom, or through independent learning modules via our online classroom.

Our postal courses involve course content being posted to a Converge student's home address along with any materials needed to complete the course (where appropriate).

All Converge Connected courses are followed up by an individual tutor who will check in on your progress and give feedback either during the Zoom session, via email or via post.



Applying for courses

As with any course of study, it is essential that Converge students complete an application form to enrol on our courses. You can complete an application form independently, or with support from our team.

Procedure

- Contact the Converge office to be added to our mailing list by emailing converge@yorks.ac.uk or calling 07764 337 116 (Holly) or 07779 544 874 (Kate).
- Each term, a publicity pack containing a confirmed list of courses taking place is sent out by post and email to our mailing list. When you receive this, choose the courses that interest you and complete an application form.
- List your chosen courses in order of preference, so that we can aim to give you your first choice. There is no limit on how many times you can apply for a course. However, if you have already completed a course once, we may prioritise new applicants to give everyone a fair chance to try different subjects.
- Once you have completed your application form, return it to Converge either by post, email or by bringing it to one of our Open Days.
- You can also download the form from our website and email or post it back to us.

What happens once I have completed an application?

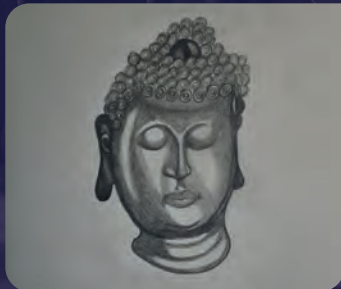
- We will process all returned forms and count how many people want to do each course. We receive around 200 forms each term, so please don't worry if you don't hear from us straight away. It usually takes a few weeks to complete the course allocations process.
- Once we have finished allocating places on courses, we will get in touch with you via email, text, or post to let you know which courses you have been allocated a place on. This is done on a course-by-course basis, in order of course start dates. We will aim to let you know at least one week prior to the course starting.
- Please note that, due to limited places, you may not be offered your first choice of course but we will do our best to make sure you get a place on one of your first two choices. For this reason, you are expected to make a real commitment to attend your courses, and to let us know if there are any sessions you cannot attend.
- Where students join after the start of the course, one-to-one enrolment appointments can be arranged by contacting us.

Art and Design

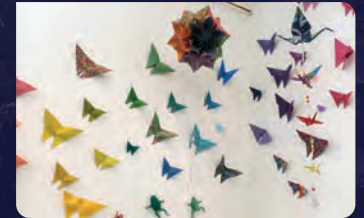
Explore a diverse range of creative possibilities through our practical art courses. You can discover different art forms like mixed media, drawing on life and leaded glass.

Our on-campus art courses are held in dedicated classroom spaces at York St John University. We also offer art courses as part of our Converge Connected programme, where you will be sent a pack of art materials in the post to enable you to participate in the course at home. As a Converge student, you will fully embrace the university's atmosphere and resources while pursuing your academic goals.

Enrich your artistic journey with our experienced tutors, who have extensive knowledge and experience in the arts. They are passionate about sharing their expertise and will provide guidance, support and inspiration throughout your creative exploration. You will also have the opportunity to exhibit some of your work at our end of term events.



Scan the QR code to see the up-to-date list of our Art and Design courses:



Converge Student Story: Gemma

I have completed two courses with Converge. Firstly, I did Art: Mixed Media. Then when I lost my job, I decided to apply to do a BA in Fine Art which I will be starting in September. The second course which I wasn't sure about was Creative Writing. I had never done this before and absolutely LOVED IT. I wrote a novel in April just for fun. Both courses had enthusiastic teachers and structured the courses in a way that was manageable. I say DO IT!

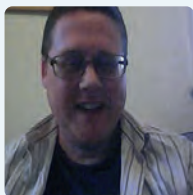


Creative Writing

We offer a range of courses, online and on campus, for all writers, whether you're a beginner, a re-starter or an experienced wordsmith.

Our courses are low-pressure and focused primarily on the pleasure of writing and developing skills through practise. You aren't expected to share your work (though you may be invited to if you wish) and our classes are about developing students' creativity with words rather than spelling and grammar.

Every Creative Writing student will get an opportunity to prepare a piece of work for publication in our annual anthology, 'Creative Writing Heals'.



Converge Student Story: James

I have a recurring mental illness and Converge has been a big help to me. I've been taking part in the Converge creative writing courses for three years. I am a distance learner who began with postal packs which explains everything very easily. I set time to do Converge creative writing and it has given me a routine. Distance learning is a big help as I suffer from panic attacks on top of everything else when I'm in a busy place. The Converge staff have been very supportive and my different tutors are all excellent. I would highly recommend Converge to anyone experiencing mental health conditions. The Creative writing course gives you the opportunity to submit a piece for the Converge Creative Writing Heals book. It feels great to see a piece you have written in the book!



Scan the QR code to see the up-to-date list of our Creative Writing courses

Music

Our music courses offer a range of skills development from singing in a group to songwriting, playing instruments, composition and music production.

Most music courses take place in either the Chapel or the Creative Centre. You may also be invited to take part in our Christmas and Summer Sharing events.

In addition to online and on-campus courses, 1-2-1 music tuition is offered. Converge students do need to pay for tuition at a rate of £14 per 30-minute session. However, there may be funding available through Emerging Voices Music Charity for Converge students who may not be able to afford 1-2-1 tuition. Please contact the charity for more information.

Regular open mic nights, showcase concerts and recording opportunities are offered throughout the year in partnership with Emerging Voices Music Charity. Further information about Emerging Voices Music Charity can be found on page 30.



Scan the QR code to see the up-to-date list of our Music courses



Social Science and Study Skills

Social Science

Our social science courses range across various disciplines, including philosophy, politics, sociology, social policy and spirituality. These courses encourage productive discussion and reflection, exploring a variety of perspectives.

We encourage our students to express their response to what they learn in creative as well as critical and academic ways.

Social science courses may be offered on campus or online.




Study Skills

Our study skills courses are designed to support students who are new to university study, or would like a refresher. They can also be useful preparation for any students wishing to progress to a degree course. Primarily offered online, these courses include self-study modules as well as classes on Zoom.

Topics include critical thinking, research skills, organisational skills for study, reading and writing skills, how to prepare and deliver presentations and how to use references and citations.



Scan the QR code to see the up-to-date list of our Social Science and Study Skills courses:



*"I have never
done a course
like this before...
it was a delight
to be part of."*

Theatre and Performance

Practical courses which will introduce you to the different styles of theatre, staging, devising, improvisation, monologues, comedy, character development, and script work. No previous experience in theatre or performance is necessary to take part.

Our theatre and performance courses are offered online as part of our Converge Connected programme, and on-campus at York St John University.

Our on-campus courses take place in professional theatre studios at York St John University, including in our new Creative Centre. Converge students will have the opportunity to take part in our end of term Christmas

Sharing and Summer Festival, where you will get to perform in our professional auditorium. Converge students on our Converge Connected courses will also have the chance to create a short film or online performance to be shown at the end of term events.

Every theatre course is taught by experienced tutors with a breadth of industry experience. Following completion of the theatre courses, Converge students can progress to join Out of Character, a professional theatre company. Further details about Out of Character Theatre Company can be found on page 28.



Scan the QR code to see the up-to-date list of our Theatre and Performance courses:

Support at Converge

Do you struggle with anxiety?

Is it difficult going into a room of new people and making new friends?

Do you feel underconfident stepping onto campus for the first time?

Converge offer a range of support to help people accessing our courses to settle in and to engage in our programme. This might be as simple as having a friendly volunteer to sit next to in a class, right through to bespoke mentoring and support from our Discovery Hub Team.

If you think you might benefit from some support to attend, please email converge@yorks.ac.uk and we will arrange for an initial appointment with an appropriate team member to discuss your needs.

Support to Progress

Are you interested in training, education or employment opportunities?

At Converge we are keen to help people progress from our courses into independent activities in the local community. You might be interested to find out about other higher educational courses you can access, or how to use Converge to make the next steps into volunteering or employment. Please speak to your course tutor or any of the Converge team if you are interested in finding out more about progression opportunities from Converge.

The Discovery Hub:

For people still accessing community mental health care or struggling with complex needs Converge also has its own in-house support team: The Discovery Hub.

The Discovery Hub was established in 2014 and consists of health professionals and Learning and Access Workers employed by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust. We offer a hop on-hop off service to help people make the first steps into Converge and to engage with our programme. We can also support steps back into mental health support when needed.

If you think you or someone else would benefit from the additional support of the Discovery Hub, email discoveryhub@yorks.ac.uk or contact the Converge office.

Supported Volunteering in Horticulture

Converge are proud to work in partnership with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust to offer supported horticultural volunteering opportunities at Poppleton Community Railway Nursery (www.poppletonrailwaynursery.co.uk)

These sessions support the benefits of green spaces for mental health and wellbeing and offer a varied and ongoing programme of supported volunteering. No previous experience of horticulture is required to join these programmes, just enthusiasm to get involved.

Poppleton Railway Nursery is Britain's last surviving railway nursery. It is operated by a charitable group as a non-profit organisation. Supported sessions at Poppleton Railway Nursery operate on Mondays all day, Tuesday afternoons (craft session) and Thursdays (horticulture, woodwork training and a creative writing session).

Poppleton Railway Nursery is a useful venue for those wishing to build confidence before accessing Converge, or to compliment a Converge journey with a regular volunteering activity.

Please email the discoveryhub@yorks.ac.uk for more information



Converge Events

Open Days

Open days are held twice a year, in September for the autumn term and January for the spring/summer term. They are an opportunity for new and potential Converge students to meet the tutors, speak to Converge staff, find out more about courses and complete an application form. Our team are on hand to offer advice about volunteering and student support. We can also help you to complete your application form. Please contact the Converge office to find out about the next available open day.



Summer School

In June, we host a summer school week of one-off activities such as art, creative writing, sport, theatre, 'play in a day' and much more. We also run an Open Mic Night and offer the opportunity to watch a Playback Theatre performance. The Summer School is open to all enrolled Converge students, and prospective students who may want a taster of Converge before choosing to enrol for the autumn term. Contact the Converge office for further details about our next summer school.



Christmas Sharing and Summer Festival

Twice a year, at the end of each term, we hold a special event to celebrate the wonderful achievements of our Converge students. Our Christmas Sharing and Summer Festival are afternoons of performances and presentations by Converge students, staff, and university volunteers, showcasing the amazing work and projects our community has worked on during the year.

We also host an exhibition put together by the tutors of our art and design courses. Family and friends are invited to both events, as well as the wider community and people who are considering applying for our courses in the future.



Volunteering Opportunities

University Students

Converge is centred on the opportunity for university students to get actively involved in the project and to be integral to the delivery and work of Converge. Converge provides vocational experience to university students that can enhance their studies as well as future employment opportunities. Volunteering opportunities are open to York St John University students and Northumbria University students.

Converge Students

Volunteering positions are available for Converge students who have accessed Converge for at least one academic year. Converge student volunteers follow the same pathway as university students and have access to all the same training and support from the Converge team.

Some of the benefits of volunteering for Converge are:

- Valuable work experience which can be included in a professional reference
- Personal and career development
- Access to training in mental health awareness and working with the public
- Opportunities to connect to a professional network relevant to your chosen subject field

If you would like to find out more about volunteering opportunities, email convergevolunteering@yorks.ac.uk or call 07779 544 874.



There are three key roles for volunteers:

1 Student Participant: Model ideal student behaviour by taking part in courses alongside Converge students. Volunteers actively contribute to the Converge community of learners by helping to bring new ideas and energy to sessions. Volunteer participants also support Converge Students to engage with course material and to access learning opportunities.

2 Shared Leadership Role: Under the guidance of the tutor, student volunteers are empowered to run and lead parts of a session. This is a great way to develop practical skills in workshop facilitation and leadership.

3 Course Facilitator: Experienced volunteers are welcome to submit course proposals to Converge. If accepted, this will give you the opportunity to volunteer to lead a course and be considered for paid tutoring roles.



What our volunteers say:



Kevin Keld

From Converge Student to Volunteer

I can quite clearly recall the day I sat in Holgate Student Information Centre at York St John University. I pondered what on earth I had let myself in for. I was told that my state of mind would greatly benefit from becoming part of Converge. Becoming a student with Converge has almost certainly been of immense benefit to my mental wellbeing. The progression from student to volunteer has opened avenues that I would never have dreamt were achievable. It gives me the perfect chance to say 'thank you' to the system that helped me so much.

Meg Hitchen and Heather Price

MSc Pre-registration Occupational Therapy Students at York St John University

We thoroughly enjoyed our Occupational Therapy placement with Converge. This placement lasted eight weeks, and we had the privilege of joining, and supporting, various courses throughout this time. These experiences ranged from a tea ceremony course to songwriting courses to life writing courses and supported us to reconnect with our creativity. We will carry these experiences with us into practice to bring creativity into our work as well as the principles of walking alongside people in their recovery journeys (i.e., doing with), rather than doing for them, to empower them in reaching their potential.



Converge Evaluation and Research Team



The Converge Evaluation and Research Team (CERT) is a small and friendly group of Converge students who carry out research and evaluations of mental health related community projects.

We welcome new members who are interested in what we do, and no experience of research is needed to join. We run a course in research methods each autumn, offer on-going training, and look into areas of specific interest to members.

What we offer

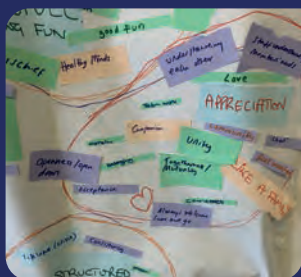
We produce bespoke evaluations of mental health services or community projects. This can be a springboard for service improvement. We conduct research through methods including interviews, questionnaires, art and poetry. We specialise in using inventive approaches to support people who find it hard to express themselves.

What makes us different

CERT stand out from other research teams across the UK. The insight we have from our own experience of mental health challenges informs our work. This allows us to:

- Provide support to people who find it difficult to express themselves.
- Involve service users in the research and evaluation process.
- Produce meaningful and relevant recommendations for service improvement.
- Create social change and empower marginalised groups.

To find out more, email: cert@yorks.ac.uk / r.lambley@yorks.ac.uk



Arts Network

OUT OF CHARACTER

THEATRE COMPANY

Out of Character was formed in 2009 as a theatre company of artists and performers comprising of people who access, or have accessed, mental health services. We are based at York St John and our company includes students who get involved as both actors and supporting volunteers. Our company is made up of a diverse range of ages, backgrounds and interests. Our interest in creating theatre and respecting each persons' skills is what binds us together. We always work collaboratively and with ambition.

We devise and write a range of projects both in York and nationally. Some of our work, but not all of it, is about mental health. Over time, we've created very personal pieces specifically for audiences interested in mental illness as well

as devising site-specific durational performances and performing scripted works and audio stories. Collaboration is really important to us, and we have recently worked with York Theatre Royal, Love Arts, Arts & Minds, the Wy-Fi project, other universities, the NHS and many medical schools. The company was the proud winner of the Excellence in Equality and Cultural Diversity in the York Culture Awards in 2018 and more recently in 2023 was awarded a Special Prize by The Eleanor Worthington Prize for our film 'Disability and Autonomy'.



The company is led by Artistic Director Kate Veysey and Associate Director Jane Allanach and supported by Assistant Director Hannah Munro. Sessions are split into two sections on the same evening; Out of Character Prepares, a workshop style skills focused session, and then (after an all-important tea break) Out of Character Production where we work towards a production or project. Recent productions include a site-specific modern-day production of A Christmas Carol (December 2022), a commissioned play by Paul Birch Shattered which was performed as part of Takeover at York Theatre Royal studio (May 2023) and Jack Thorne's play After Life which the company performed at York St John Creative Centre (December 2023) which transferred to the main house at York Theatre Royal in May 2024.

For more information about Out of Character, please email k.veysey@yorksja.ac.uk

Emerging Voices Music Charity

Emerging Voices is a registered charity that provides music opportunities to adults with lived-experience of mental ill-health.

We partner with Converge to support students to realise their musical aspirations, offering 1:1 vocal, instrumental and song-writing tuition and performance opportunities such as open-mic nights.

Through our record label, Emerging Voices Records, students can record, produce and release their own original work.

Off-campus, Emerging Voices currently runs the Harrogate Wellbeing Choir, a singing group for those with experience of mental ill-health in the Harrogate area.

To find out more please contact:

E: admin@emergingvoicescharity.co.uk

T: 07984 535629

Website: emergingvoicescharity.co.uk



"The concert was a source of pride for my son as the audience were very appreciative and he and his family cannot thank Aaron (tutor) enough for the effort, empathy and compassion he put into the project and the lessons"

Parent of Converge student.

"I love to sing, and the choir gives me a space to feel comfortable doing so without judgment. They're so fun and I look forward to them every week."

Harrogate Wellbeing choir member.

Registered Charity Number: 1183043

Converge at Northumbria

Converge at Northumbria University sits in the heart of the bustling campus and Newcastle city centre, bursting with creativity.

Our courses are free and open to anyone aged 18 + in the local community who receives support for a mental health issue or have experienced mental health issues in the past. Alongside academics, university students and industry professionals we deliver a rich and diverse range of courses across Theatre and Performance, Movement and Dance, Fashion, Fine Art, Creative Writing, Music and other opportunities. We work in partnership with local mental health organisations and cultural venues to offer bespoke and collaborative creative learning opportunities. All our courses are Northumbria student led and we work alongside them to create courses that they are passionate about and want to teach, meaning that no two courses are the same and each is unique. When enrolling onto a Converge at Northumbria course, you become a student of the university. This enables individual access to all the wonderful opportunities and support that we have here at Northumbria University.



Student Feedback:

"I learned more about myself. I haven't felt so much kindness in a long time, it feels free, and it's just so nice to be here."

"Joining Converge has helped me massively and has opened different avenues for future choices."

"It's so good to keep going and feeling like you're working towards something."

"It's been a good distraction from my worries."

"I lost my voice two years ago, so this is very out of my comfort zone and this has inspired me to write as well."



Our Campus: Northumbria University

Northumbria University is a modern university with a global reputation for academic excellence and was named UK University of the Year 2022 in the Times Higher Education Awards. When you enrol as a student of Converge at Northumbria, you also get access to our world class facilities and resources.

University Library

Our University Library, one of the best academic libraries in the UK, has around half a million print books, over 900,000 e-books and around 85,000 e-journals. This means you can even access these books at home!

Teaching Spaces

At Northumbria we make sure you have all the resources you need to realise your creative potential, whether that's our tailor-made rehearsal studios, performance spaces with lighting rigs and tech support, or our wonderful art studio spaces. Your workshops will be in spaces designed for those activities, so that you get the best experience possible.

Food and Drink

Northumbria University offers a host of catering options across both City and Coach Lane campuses. For example, located inside our Student's Union, Habita is our stylish and relaxed bar café, with drinks, Starbucks coffee, table and takeaway service, and a delicious menu. It's also home to fab regular entertainment!

For more information, and to find out what courses we have running this academic year please get in touch with us at:

Email: converge@northumbria.ac.uk

Mobile: 07468 700881

Tel: +44 (0)191 243 7393

Or follow us online at:

 facebook.com/convergeNU

 [@convergenu](https://www.instagram.com/convergenu)

 [@convergeNU](https://twitter.com/convergeNU)

 [Converge at Northumbria](https://www.linkedin.com/company/converge-at-northumbria)

International Connections

Since 2016 Converge has been growing international connections with universities overseas who are interested in our work.

This started with a partnership with the Pacific University in Oregon, when we partnered with their Occupational Therapy doctoral course to offer the opportunity for an exchange visit to take place every summer to support the running of the Converge summer school. Visiting students were given the opportunity to explore the work of Converge, to meet with our team and to design and deliver their own summer school programme for the Converge students. Pacific University also involved their students in delivering a smaller version of Converge at the Oregon campus. This work took place every summer between 2016 and 2023.

We are now supporting the discussion and development of Converge connections with Western Oregon University and Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia, to explore the prospect of wider international connections.

In the future we hope to give more universities the opportunity to work in partnership with Converge to:

- Explore combined research projects.
- Complete international placements to study abroad and learn from the unique and innovative approach at Converge UK. We accept students from a variety of degree programmes, including the arts as well as health related degree studies.
- Establish a Converge project with ongoing consultancy from Converge UK.
- Provide visiting internships.
- Contribute to ground-breaking work, innovating in mental health recovery.



What the students say:

"I have never done a course like this before... it was a delight to be part of."

"There are no obstacles as there's always a way around any challenges you may have."

"Success for one person might just be getting out of the house for a session or keeping regular attendance. For the next person it might be increasing confidence or learning new skills. Converge has the power to unleash the potential in its students that last a lifetime."

"There's real kindness and thought into how things are organised, how things are run, how things are communicated."

"I felt no pressure and at ease, even though sometimes it felt difficult. But the challenge helped me gain more confidence."

"The classes were super friendly and I like to think I have made some new friends from the experience."

"The tutor was very accommodating and made sure to spend 1-2-1 time with us, allowing for individualised learning."

"The tutor created a safe and congenial space which helped me overcome my anxiety."

"I have found Converge to be a tremendous help in my darkest hours."

"The tutor created a calm, quiet atmosphere to help us concentrate, and was very encouraging to everybody."

"Converge gives me hope that that there's a quality of life that I could have."

"The whole ethos of Converge and York St John is warm and welcoming."

"The allowance for mental health absence before and during sessions is excellent."

"It's a unique thing within a university facility, with university students and Converge students coming together. And it's like a symbiosis of two parties, which I think is better for both people."

Converge York

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converge.yorks.ac.uk/home



[/converge.york](https://www.facebook.com/converge.york)



[@ConvergeYork](https://twitter.com/ConvergeYork)



[@convergeyork](https://www.instagram.com/convergeyork)

"The tutors are approachable and encouraging. I have felt supported by all and it has been a pleasure to be part of such a creative group."

"To anyone considering this I would say go for it. You don't have to be anything other than yourself and it's great fun!"

With thanks to Mark Gowland Photography, Nick Small Photography, Sam Taylor Photography and HBA Graphic Design.

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