

# Together we're Recycling Lives

Recycling Lives Charity & Social Enterprise  
**Impact Report 2023/24**



  
recyclinglives™  
charity

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# Changing lives

Meet Naomi, Jimmy and Paul ... In our latest Impact Report, we're proud to share their stories and the way their lives, and those of their families and communities too, have been changed or touched by our work. It's all thanks to the **chances offered**, the **support given**, and the **resources supplied** by our teams, along with the partners underpinning our work.

As well as changing their lives, this work **created £24.2m social value** for communities and the taxpayer in 2023; comprising:

- **£8.26m** from our rehabilitation work in prisons
- **£2.96m** from our new rehabilitation project, ACE
- **£884,000** from our new specialist support offering
- **£303,000** from our residential programme
- **£11.8m** from our food redistribution work

**£24.2m**  
social value

**6%**  
reoffending rate

**70%**  
employment rate

**2.45m**  
meals delivered

**1,029t**  
food diverted from waste

**1.5m**  
waste electricals recycled





# Together we're Recycling Lives

*"Each year I am asked to sit and reflect on the previous 12 months - the challenges we've faced, and the difference we've made. The opportunity to look back always fills me with pride on what the team have achieved and how many lives we have helped to change for the better."*



*"As you will read in the pages that follow, this last year has been no different."*

*"What drives us here is the desire to make sure we continually go the extra mile, ensuring everyone we come across gets the best possible chance in life. The team's ability to be proactive, innovative, and reactive all at the same time never ceases to amaze me."*

*"So, it's our team who I want to pay testament to here. I count myself as one of the luckiest Chief Executives around, as the team I work with are so dedicated and passionate. Never short of an idea or a plan or a way of fixing things where many others would have an 'it's not my job' attitude. Thank you to every single one of you."*

*"The same goes for our trustees. Supportive and caring but not intrusive into the day-to-day work. They allow us the freedom to decide what's best and trust us to make those decisions. The space to be creative and innovative is vital to prevent the team from being stifled. They give us space and the confidence to be so."*

## We empower people, equipping them with skills and resources to change their lives for the better.

*"Much of our work would be impossible without our amazing volunteers. Our food redistribution work, for example, simply would not function. We have a core of eight permanent staff there but, in reality, we need around 20 people every day to make everything work."*



*"I'm constantly amazed and humbled at the wonderful people who give up their free time for no other reason than wanting to help those in need."*

*"Our community café, ACE and the Suppers Up club are equally reliant on volunteers. That group, some of whom come in every day, are the unsung heroes of the third sector and we are truly grateful for them all."*

*"Finally, a thank you to our sponsors and partners. Making ends meet is often the hardest part of running a charity so the support we receive from businesses, funders, donors and other partners is crucial."*

*"Please enjoy the report. It is a labour of love in more ways than one. Have a read, but please don't then leave it on the side to gather dust or just sitting in an email inbox. Pass it on to someone who may not normally read it."*

*"They might be our next volunteer, donor, sponsor or corporate partner, which would be great. Or, they – or someone they know and love – might even need our help and reach out to us off the back of it, which would be even better."*

**Alasdair Jackson OBE**  
**Chief Executive**

# Rehabilitating offenders

## Reducing reoffending



Meet Gina, Naomi and Kris. These are just a handful of the people we have supported – people experiencing exclusion, prejudice or inequality due to histories of criminality, unemployment, addiction, homelessness, or poor mental health: *“Addiction and jail was a life ingrained in me from being a little kid – no boundaries, no responsibility,” Gina explains. “But it wasn’t me. I saw I was worth more than that.”*

We empower people like them to change their lives by:

- ✓ Delivering professional, personalised support and advocacy covering housing, health, finances and more
- ✓ Offering training opportunities, paid work placements, and employment support
- ✓ Offering in-house, supported accommodation or support to secure and sustain tenancies
- ✓ Creating a supportive community of like-minded peers

*“To change people’s mindsets, you have to change their settings,” Naomi says.*



“Recycling Lives gave me the chances I’d never been given.”

As well as helping people like Gina, Naomi and Kris to live happier, healthier, and independent lives, we created **£12.4m social value** across our rehabilitation programmes in 2023/24.

Our rehabilitation work in prisons and the community, new rehabilitation project, ACE, new specialist support offering, and our residential programme all created savings for the taxpayer, across the criminal justice system and welfare, health and housing services, while also generating value for participants and communities.

Here’s how we did it . . .



We do this by:

- ✓ Helping people to navigate systems and services like prison, probation, welfare or healthcare
- ✓ Creating or connecting people to skills development or employment opportunities
- ✓ Offering wrap-around support for every aspect of people’s lives – work, home, finances, family, health and wellbeing

*“I never would’ve dreamed I’d have a managerial job and a mortgage. That was never going to happen before prison,” Kris reflects. “Recycling Lives gave me the chances I’d never been given.”*



# Prisons programme

Our prison-based work has expanded in recent years, now working across 11 prisons and our own community workshop.

Our offering is simple but comprehensive – we give participants all the support they need to identify and address the challenges, behaviours or limitations which increase their risk of reoffending.

In six of the prisons, we manage our own workshops, allowing our team to work with and support participants five-days-a-week as they complete recycling work. This meaningful work is central to our offering, creating opportunities for participants to develop transferable skills and earn an enhanced wage to save up ready for release. We facilitate participants being able to securely set aside at least 40% of their earnings. With our own presence in each prison we can build trusted relationships with participants, to identify their needs, ambitions and any obstacles, then work together to overcome these.

## ✓ Working in:

HMPs Kirkham, Lancaster Farms, Buckley Hall, Hatfield & Sudbury men's prisons, and Styal women's prison.

In our community workshop we use the same recycling work to offer opportunities to men undertaking release on temporary licence (ROTL) work placements, people completing community service, and people referred by probation. The workshop is also open to anyone working with our other programmes.

The recycling work includes processing and dismantling a range of waste electricals or household items, from TVs to boilers. This work keeps plastics, metals or glass in circulation or repurposes items ready for resale.

Across our newer prisons, the setup differs as we support men and women engaged in prison-run workshops. The support offering is the same though, offering practical support and advocacy, and work is still a central tenet to engagement. Implementing this new way of working has presented some challenges, often requiring more time to build trust with participants, but our team have adapted the programme and created new ways of working with prison staff to deliver the same personalised, successful outcomes.

## ✓ Working in:

HMPs Humber, Wealstun, Sudbury & Berwyn men's prisons, and HMP Foston Hall women's prison

Once participants are released our through-the-gate support covers every area of their life. This includes everything from meeting people at the gate when they're released, to supporting through job applications and interviews, as well as sourcing housing, managing finances, signposting to specialist services, and even providing smart phones or tablets, toiletries, food parcels or household essentials where needed.

No matter the setup, our aim is always the same - to equip and empower participants with skills and opportunities that will reduce their risk of reoffending. For many this means moving into paid employment, securing tenancies, and living independently. For some, work isn't a priority and improving mental health or maintaining abstinence from substances is essential first. We work closely with each participant tailoring our support to meet their individual needs.

## Impact - 2023

**273**

people supported

**79**

people released

**70%**

secured employment on release

**94%**

didn't reoffend

**£8.26m**

social value created - by creating savings for public services across criminal justice, welfare, health and housing

**1.56m**

waste electrical or household items dismantled, recycled or refurbished

## ^ Growth

In Spring 2024 we started working in HMP Berwyn, supporting men engaged in prison-led workshops, and opened our second recycling workshop in HMP Kirkham, where we opened our first workshop back in 2012.

## Richard's story

**“Lots of people don't get the kind of vital support I got, that's where they get recalled.”**

Richard is one of dozens more men we've been able to support since expanding and adapting our offering, to work with prison-led workshops.

While he had a wealth of work experience under his belt, he had faced a series of setbacks due to mental health problems. Being able to better manage this, including having support to secure and learn to live with a correct diagnosis, has been central to his success. He is now working full-time and rebuilding relationships with his children.

*“I had to do a full rebuild, both for my homelife and my mindset,” Richard says.*

*“When it came to release, Rick picked me up at the gate and had got me some accommodation sorted, and toiletries and a quilt and that, so it was all set up perfectly.*

*“Then they helped me to get back into work. I'm a HGV mechanic, fully trained, but without RL it wouldn't have happened as quick as it has.*

*“The main thing, though, was help with my mental health. That was the big factor of why I went to jail. To get proper assessments, the right diagnosis and the right medication has made all the difference. Recycling Lives support in that was like an anchor, but without holding me down.*

*“You get out and your head's not in the right place. That's where people get recalled - because they don't have that vital support. I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for Recycling Lives Charity.”*



**Gate pick up**  
Key workers like Rick meet participants at the gate on their release date

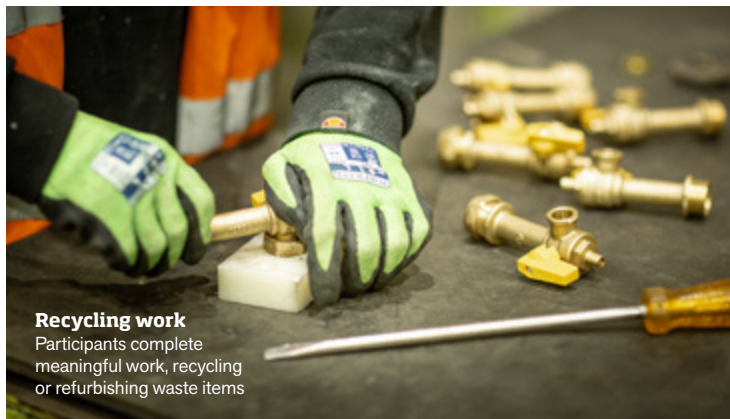
## Achieve programme

Achieve is a probation-led programme which we are a delivery partner for across Lancashire and Greater Manchester. It offers participants an 8-week paid work placement. Our team source placements with employers, suited to each participant's skillset, experience and ambitions then provide wrap-around support throughout. Wages are funded by the European Social Fund and CFO3.

The Renew Hub offers a start point for Achieve participants in Greater Manchester. Men and women completing placements at the site - run by water and waste management business SUEZ - refurbish electrical items from household waste recycling centres, saving goods from going to waste by making them suitable for resale. In Lancashire, Achieve participants complete similar work in our own community workshop [Page 8].

### Jack & Luke's stories

**“The placement gave me the stability I really needed... It's helped me in every way.”**



**Recycling work**  
Participants complete meaningful work, recycling or refurbishing waste items

Jack and Luke have both moved into work as a result of their paid work placements at the Renew Hub.

*“There was no guarantee you'd get a job but I suppose I just did well,”* reflects **Luke**, who progressed into a permanent position with

*Suez. “I'd been in jail a few times but it was just a pointless way to live, going round in circles. I didn't want to reoffend, that's why I went to the Renew Hub. It was daunting, but they were great guys there. I learned a lot from them.”*

The opportunity offered a change of direction for **Jack** too: *“After prison I was struggling with communication, life, ambition... I was even debating relapsing into criminality,”* he admits. *“Then I was put on to Recycling Lives and Renew. It provided me with stability which was really important for me at that time. Now I'm working, going to therapy, and I'm being social. Life's really picked up.”*

*“I used to always be stressed and angry,”* Luke adds. *“But I don't feel like that no more. It's helped me in every way, actually. People are proud of me now. I'm pretty proud of myself too.”*

## Commercial partnership Here for good

### Recycling Lives Services

Recycling Lives Services shares its name, values and some of its history with our Charity & Social Enterprise, supporting our mission and operations for 15+ years.

Today this partnership offers two-way benefit. The business provides space for us to operate in in Preston, including housing our residential facility and Training Kitchen, and donates directly to support the delivery of our food redistribution operations in Cumbria. Our team oversee the delivery of recycling contracts on behalf of the business, creating valuable opportunities for programme participants as they process waste electricals within our prison and community-based workshops. We also support the business to deliver its own ROTL programme.

*“The Charity understands business needs as well as charitable goals.”*

Adrian Murphy, CEO of Recycling Lives Services, says: *“Our work with Recycling Lives Charity and Social Enterprise (RLSE) is mutually beneficial. We are very much aligned in terms of using recycling as a force for good and share a long history of helping people and planet as well as a name.”*

*“Now, as we are expanding our business, we're confident RLSE can help us keep pace with the need to process more material and deliver even broader social value for our customers.”*



*“We know that RLSE are flexible and understand business needs as well as charitable goals in a way that many other charity partners just wouldn't.”*

*“Being able to deliver authentic social value in partnership with RLSE helps us secure and retain work with our customers and also helps to change lives for the better. It also helps us in our B Corp mission to use business as a force for good.”*

**Force for good**  
Participants like Craig benefit from commercial partnerships creating meaningful training and work opportunities



## Jimmy's story

**“I can progress here but still get support too if I need it.”**



### Role model

Jimmy at work, mentoring others and being guided by his manager, Andy

Jimmy is a role model for new starters on our programmes, having been supported by various elements of our rehabilitation work himself.

He was referred to the ACE Project by probation and began attending the weekly MAP Group sessions. When he lost his zero hours work, he asked for employment support. While he waited for a place to become available on the Achieve programme's paid work placements he volunteered in the community café. The eight-week paid placement in our community workshop then led to a permanent, paid position in our team.

*“The first thing Jon [from the ACE team] helped with was housing for me and my mum,” Jimmy explains. “We were just in a one-bed flat. I was on a sofa bed. So they got us on the waiting list for housing and a month or so later we were into a two-bed house. When they sorted that my mum said, ‘stick with them!’”*

*“Then I asked Jon if he could help with work. He said I could do Achieve but there was a wait on that so he offered me some volunteering in the meantime – that was better than doing nothing.”*

*“I volunteered in the café for about 10 weeks then started on Achieve. To be earning made me more motivated. From there they moved me into the warehouse full-time, working on recycling.”*



*“After a few weeks they said a job had come up. Andy, the manager supported me with the interview.”*

*“Now I'm full-time. I feel like it was the volunteering that made the difference. That got me in a good routine.”*

*“This isn't a dead-end job. You can progress and do other things. I like everyone I work with too. They've got me in for my forklift truck course and I've done my first aid, banksman, and fire marshal training already.”*

*“I still talk to Jon where needed, he's a good guy. I'm very grateful to him. I wouldn't be as happy without all the support I've had.”*



# Residential programme

## Impact - 2023

**14**  
men supported

**4**  
men completed, moving into work and housing – plus 7 men signposted to alternative services

**£303,000**  
social value created - by creating savings for a range of public services, across criminal justice, welfare, health and housing

Our residential facility is a unique setting offering support and stable accommodation for men experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Over the course of 9-12 month stays, residents receive a range of support and opportunities to help them regain their independence after time spent in prison, rehab, or homeless.

Residents share a large communal living space and each have their own fully furnished en-suite bedroom. All complete a range of training courses and work placements with a view to moving into employment and independent housing. Along the way they are supported to secure bank accounts, ID and certifications, access tenancy management, budgeting or cookery courses, and work with specialist support. Each participant's journey is unique, based on their own needs and ambitions.



**Structured support** – Key workers like Kat offer one-to-one support while residents progress in training and work placements

## Paul's story

Paul moved into the residential facility determined to change his life. During a 12-month stay, he made friends for life, and completed work placements before settling into a job at our Food Redistribution Centre [Page 25].

*"My turning point in life was getting off drugs but then I needed to move away from where I was," Paul says.*

*"I saw the residential as a way to do that and get myself housing. In the end, I've had more positives out of it than I ever thought I would.*

*"The camaraderie with the other lads was the stand-out part for me. The staff help you with opportunities but it's the other lads in there that build you up. It's good to have people you can rely on and talk to.*

*"Things didn't always go to plan for me in the residential, things that would've thrown me off course in the past, but with support I stuck with it and things have come good.*

*"Now I've got my own flat, and I'm working and contributing, not claiming benefits. I'm standing on my own two feet, and it feels good."*

# ACE

ACE is one of our newest programmes, added to our offering to allow us to support a wider cohort of people. Its team work with people with multiple and complex needs whose histories of offending are linked to substance misuse, mental health challenges, or homelessness.

The team delivering ACE (Assisted Community Engagement) are all experienced professionals, including some with lived experience of the challenges facing the men and women they support. They guide, support and advocate participants with housing, health, finances, working with services and more.

ACE also facilitates peer-to-peer support, running MAP Group (Members After Prison), a weekly mutual aid session for people to share insights or advice to inspire and support one another.

Members of MAP Group share their experiences at public events too, joining ACE's team to present to young people or professionals. Delivered in public sector workplaces, education settings or youth projects, these talks are intended to be motivational or cautionary, educating on the factors that lead people into such lifestyles or sharing the realities of addiction or criminality.

Mick is an active member of MAP Group. As well as attending the weekly sessions and starting volunteering for his own benefit, he volunteers alongside ACE's team in the community, sharing his story to inspire and educate others.

## ^ Growth

ACE's team began working in HMP Preston in 2023, supporting men through-the-gate at the prison's Release Hub.

## Mick's story

*"When I was released, I came to supported housing in Preston. I'm not from round here so I needed to build up connections," Mick explains. "Somebody mentioned MAP Group so I went along one Tuesday and got a nice warm welcome.*

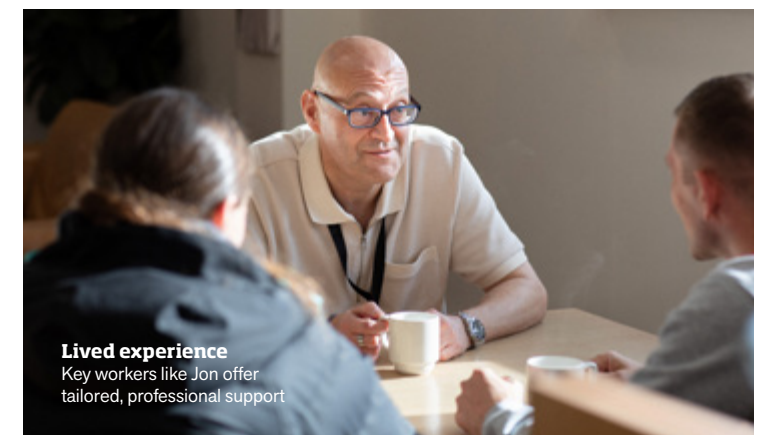
*"ACE's team then linked me up with volunteering opportunities at the Food Redistribution Centre and in HMP Preston too. I help the lads who are getting released with their*

*benefits, getting in with the doctor or dentist, getting food parcels or clothing, just general signposting.*

*I spent five years in there myself.*

*"My message every time is, it is possible to change your life.*

*"My story's nothing to be proud of, but if sharing it can change someone else's future - stop them from hurting others, using drugs or ending up in jail - that's good."*



**Lived experience**  
Key workers like Jon offer tailored, professional support

## Impact - 2023

**233**  
people supported

**91.5%**  
didn't reoffend

**£2.96m**  
social value created - by creating savings for the criminal justice and healthcare systems, and generating value for participants enjoying improved health and housing outcomes



# Specialist support

## Impact - 2023

**84**  
people supported

**1,521**  
one-to-one support sessions delivered

**£884,000**  
social value created - by creating savings for healthcare services and generating value for participants enjoying improved mental health

Our in-house specialist support offering ensures all participants can access professional, confidential mental health and wellbeing support.

The team is made up of experienced, qualified professionals with backgrounds in mental health and substance misuse services. They work with people experiencing a range of challenges, treating everyone holistically to identify the building blocks that will allow them to improve mental health, sustain abstinence, maintain a tenancy, rebuild relationships, and more.

Support is delivered through regular one-to-one sessions, coupled with advocacy or

guidance to work with statutory services, such as probation or social services, and can include referrals to additional support services.

## ^ Growth

The specialist support team are now sharing their expertise and experience delivering accredited training courses to other organisations



## Personalised support

Support workers develop trusted relationships with participants offering guidance and advocacy (Image shows other programme participants)

## Danny & Julie's stories

# "It's been hard. But with the team's support I had a way forward."

For Danny and Julie, support with their mental health has been essential to making and sustaining changes to their lives.

While all participants are supported for at least 12 months, some, like Danny, stay on our 'books' for years. Danny has worked with our specialist support team for four years since starting out in one of the prison workshops, benefiting from consistent support.

"I still have my problems," **Danny** shares. "But now it's actually been years that I've been crime free – the longest ever in my life. It's the first time I've ever finished a licence."

"Recycling Lives have really stood by me."

"I was a nuisance. My prison record was terrible. I'd be bounced wing to wing. But RL gave me a chance. The

workshop gave me a sense of routine and some savings too, that was massive for me. I had £2,000 when I got out, which is a lot when you've got nothing.

"I've no family but Rick and Faye are always there now. They'd bring me food parcels and help me to fill in forms, and Faye has given me support for my mental health."

"I've not gone into work. I'd struggle with that still. But it's really given me a lift up in life. It's the first time in a long time that I'm happy when I wake up."

For Julie, mental health support laid the foundations for her journey, alongside advocacy, practical support and employment support too.

"At first, you're dubious," **Julie** admits. "You've got all this stuff going on but think 'I don't need help from a charity'."

"But it was more like chatting to friends. I couldn't have got through it without Lucy, Matt or Jan."

As well as being supported to cope with the death of her dad, her mum's cancer diagnosis, and being separated from her young son, Julie was also supported to navigate the payments system to repay money under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA).

"They helped me with all of it. Matt got me information, Lucy sorted forms. Then when it was time to come home, Jan was there at the gate on my release date. It was so nice to see a familiar face. She'd got me a mobile phone too."

"Two days later, Lucy and Matt met me for coffee and Lucy helped me to set up a bank account, then they'd check in regularly."

"I found work on my own but Lucy talked me through disclosing my offence. Without that advice I might not have gone for it."

"I'm not going to sugar-coat it, it's been hard. But each week, with their support, I had a way forward. I've been able to put my life back together again."

# Commercial sponsorship

## Sharing solutions

### VINCI Facilities Building Solutions

VINCI Facilities Building Solutions has supported and sponsored our rehabilitation programmes for many years.

The partnership allows VINCI to tangibly demonstrate its values and social impact to stakeholders, sharing regular reports on the impact of the donation, while also helping to cover essential overheads and expanding our employment offering.

“Our collaboration allows us to support reducing reoffending.”

Melanie Richardson, Head of Business Responsibility & VINCI Clean, said:

*“Many capable individuals are not given opportunities due to their backgrounds or disabilities – we want to change that.”*

*“We were first motivated to partner with RLSE to support the delivery of training, job opportunities and support which reduces reoffending risks. We are proud to be part of the process of improving people’s prospects and know the sponsorship has delivered invaluable impact so far.”*

*“Now we are working on supporting individuals who have come through RLSE’s programmes to find employment. We have already partnered with the Downs Syndrome Association to recruit operatives and seen the benefits this brings, of greater consideration and awareness in the workplace.”*

*“Our team who have visited RLSE have been profoundly impacted by what they learned about the difficulties faced by people with convictions, including the lack of opportunities and the prejudice or stigma faced. Our understanding of how we can make a positive difference has been enhanced greatly by this partnership.”*

It has provided a number of significant donations to cover costs within the prisons programme and is now exploring opportunities to offer employment to men and women leaving prison. The long-running relationship has also seen members of VINCI’s team complete volunteering days at our Food Redistribution Centre.



### Solutions-focused

Sponsors like VINCI receive regular reports on the difference made in prisons by our team members like Yvonne

## Employment support

Employment is central to all our rehabilitation programmes. It is not only the start point, allowing participants to develop transferable skills, but the end goal for many too – work is one of the strongest factors in reducing a person’s risk of reoffending.

Alongside our prison-based workshops, we also facilitate release on temporary licence (ROTL) work placements.

Commonly known as day release, ROTL allows prisoners to go out to work in the community on ‘day release’. This can be paid or unpaid, with the vast majority earning a standard or enhanced wage.

Working with businesses across all sectors – including industrial, manufacturing, construction, logistics, hospitality and even healthcare – we place participants into roles suited to their skills, experience, ambitions and location.

Our employment partners benefit just as much from this recruitment, too; bringing in loyal, hard-working and often highly skilled team members and being able to tangibly demonstrate their values and social impact.

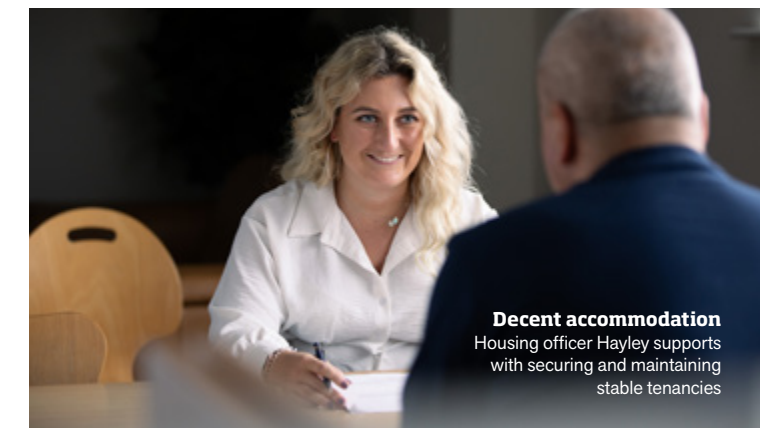
## Housing support

Our new housing officer focuses on finding appropriate, affordable and decent housing for our participants – housing is another vital factor in reducing reoffending risks.

Working with a network of housing associations, private landlords and third sector providers means participants can access a range of housing options. Each is guided through the administrative and

financial side of housing applications or to resolve any issues.

Once participants have found a suitable property, we support with all the essentials to set them up too. External funding from other charities or our broad network of contacts allows us to source homewares, toiletries and white goods for new tenants, as well as provide food parcels.



**Decent accommodation**  
Housing officer Hayley supports with securing and maintaining stable tenancies

### ▲ Growth

We now have ambitions to expand our residential and housing offer by investing in housing stock. This will allow us to offer independent, fairly priced and high-quality accommodation, with ongoing arms-length support as required, for people moving on from temporary housing elsewhere.

### John's story

*“ROTL showed me what life would be like when I was released,” John says. He is one of dozens of men from HMP Hatfield to complete work placements with one of our well-established employment partners, Synetiq. He was then offered a permanent job - dismantling vehicles for salvage or recycling – to move into upon release.*

*“Life’s really changed since before prison. I’ve changed the way I think. Working is part of that.*

*“The people I work with are brilliant. They knew where I’d come from but they didn’t treat me any different. Not a lot of companies want to take people on like that.*

*“A lot of people have no one to help them and push them in the right direction after prison. But with RL, they really help you.”*



Sponsorship, Partnership & Volunteering opportunities

## Recycling Lives works



How we do what we do, is as important as what we do. Our work and impact are underpinned by:

- ✓ Treating people with respect and warmth
- ✓ Removing barriers to access services or opportunities
- ✓ Connecting people to skills, resources or opportunities
- ✓ **Partnering with organisations and businesses who share our values**

### How you can work with or support us

- **Refer** to us – Signpost people to our services. Improve outcomes for offenders, people in recovery and other marginalised or disadvantaged groups, or increase the food charitable groups are able to deliver to their communities, by working with our programmes
- **Partner** with us – Offer training and employment opportunities to our participants. Gain loyal, hard-working team members and demonstrate your values to your stakeholders
- **Donate** to us – Sponsor our programmes and help to sustain our impact. We'll send updates on the difference this makes, to share with your stakeholders and demonstrate your values
- **Supply** stock – Send your surplus stock, to prevent food waste. We'll send updates on where your produce has gone, to share with your stakeholders and demonstrate your values
- **Volunteer** with us – Give your time, to share or develop your skills and get food out to communities
- **Follow** us – Keep up with our achievements and growth via our socials and share our story with your network



In return, we offer:

- ✓ Support with social value and impact reporting
- ✓ Access to specialist support workers
- ✓ Access to specialist training or tailored courses
- ✓ Teams able to process or recycle end-of-life goods

### ✓ Demonstrate your social impact

Sponsoring or partnering with our programmes not only allows you to directly support life-changing work it also creates social impact for you to shout about.

We'll provide regular reports, updating you on the difference your contribution has made, allowing you to demonstrate tangible social value to your clients, stakeholders or wider community.

With a range of options available, volunteer days, partnerships and sponsorships are accessible to all business types and sizes.







## Naomi's story

**“To change people’s mindsets, you have to change their settings.”**

*“When I was released, I was on at probation straight away about help with work – the devil makes work for idle hands and all that,” says **Naomi**.*

*“I’d been shoved into Preston by probation but the difference was, I got a good house this time round - through [charity] Lancashire Women. It was beautiful and that was a massive thing for me.*

*“I’d been in prison before and released to violent homes, crack dens, shared houses in towns I didn’t know. Places where you’d rather be back in prison. How are you meant to move on with your life if you’re sleeping rough or on someone’s sofa?*

*“You’re in survival mode when you’re living like that. To change people’s mindsets, you have to change their settings, so they’re safe.*

*Having somewhere safe to put your head at night matters.”*

Naomi was referred to the Achieve programme by probation, joining our team in the community recycling workshop on a paid work placement.

*“I did about three weeks in the workshop but it just wasn’t for me. I thought they’d probably kick me off it.*

*“But Harriet explained the whole point of the programme is to get someone work-ready and offered me something in the café instead - front of house. Because I’m so chatty, that suited me, and then when a role came up at FareShare, they knew I’d suit that.*



*“So they extended my paid placement so I could trial a job – RL paid me for those extra four weeks themselves. That gave me the best opportunity to get the job - and I did.”*

Naomi is now CFM Coordinator at the Food Redistribution Centre (FareShare Lancashire & Cumbria) [see Page 25]. She is responsible for ensuring 140+ charitable groups (CFMs) receive the right food and service to be able to feed and support their communities.

*“Soon as I got here, I knew it was where I wanted to be. I liked the whole concept of FareShare. And the warehouse is an interesting place, lots of personalities.*

*“I didn’t think I’d ever be doing anything like this. I thought the life I was living before would just be forever. It’s not normal for me, all of this life now, so when you change your life like this having someone you can turn to and trust is a massive thing. Harriet makes my life easier still, even now.*

*“She’d helped me to sort my debts out and some other personal stuff I had going on. That’s the thing I like about RL, that there’s always someone there to help you.*

*“And it’s like I have 145 friends with all the CFMs I work with. I think it’s important that someone like me is in the role I’m in, because I always make sure I do my best by RL because I’ve been there and had that support myself.”*







**Offering choice**  
CFMs like New Day Church ensure no food goes to waste by reaching out to people in need

## Preventing food waste Tackling poverty & Supporting charities

Meet Trudy and Rahina. They're some of the hundreds the volunteers who we redistribute surplus food to, working in communities across Lancashire and Cumbria. Their charitable or community groups support people experiencing food poverty and inequality. Increasingly, the people they help are struggling due to rising food, fuel and energy costs, while others seek extra help due to job loss, unemployment, low paid work, illness or bereavement: "Some of our parents often don't eat so they can feed their children," explains **Trudy** at Morecambe Bay Community Primary. "This food makes sure no-one goes hungry."

We equip Community Food Members (CFMs) like this with resources by:

- ✓ Collecting surplus stock from the food retail supply chain - supermarkets, wholesalers, manufacturers, producers and farmers
- ✓ Redistributing product to groups including food pantries, community groups, schools, hospices and homeless shelters
- ✓ Providing regular deliveries or collections of fresh, frozen, ambient and chilled produce along with toiletries, personal care items and other essentials
- ✓ Connecting groups with local supermarkets and suppliers to source short-dated produce, or funding opportunities to cover new equipment or extra food

We do this by working in partnership with FareShare, delivering their regional centre for Lancashire & Cumbria.

"The magical thing about the food that's supplied," explains **Rahina**, from Grange-over-Sands Community FoodShare, "is how it can transform into community, connection, and people improving their lives."

By supporting people like Trudy and Rahina to provide food and practical support to communities, we created **£11.8m social value** through our food redistribution work in 2023/24.

This work primarily creates savings for CFMs – which save thousands of pounds annually on food costs by securing low-cost goods from us instead. It also creates savings or value for the CFMs beneficiaries or services users, as they receive free or low-cost food.

Here's the difference our work has made for individuals and communities...



### Impact - 2023

**2.45m**  
meals delivered

**140**  
groups supported

**1,029t**  
diverted from waste

**£11.8m**  
**social value created**  
- by creating savings for charitable groups and the communities they serve, and by preventing food from going to waste





New Day Church, Preston & Food Share, Grange-over-Sands

## “Saving food from landfill and sharing it our fairly makes such a difference.”



**Hand up** – CFMs like New Day Church and Food Share use food as a way to offer extra wrap-around support to communities

Rahina, Elizabeth and Jen run community groups set up to tackle food poverty but say the environmental and wider social impact of redistributing food are of equal importance.

Rahina set up Grange-over-Sands Food Share following her own experiences of poverty.

*“I was very ill for almost 10 years; a lone parent, housebound with no transport, and there was just no help. We experienced some pretty grim poverty and lived on poor quality, cheap food,”* **Rahina** shares.

*“There’d been a time where I was really at my wits end and a food bank volunteer visited with food. I cried tears of joy and relief. Now I meet that same level of need, week in, week out.*

*“We started a monthly community lunch first, then weekly cook-and-eat sessions and now, five years in, we have our own premises that’s pretty much full Monday to Saturday.*

*“We’re helping people who are working, older people, families with children, refugees. It’s much more than just giving people food. Two of our mums saved up the money they would have spent on food and used it to go on a caravan holiday. It’s about quality of life.”*

Elizabeth and Jen adapted their model at New Day Church in Lostock Hall, to help address the root causes of food poverty.

*“We started out as a traditional food bank,” says **Jen**. “But we realised that delivering food parcels was more of a sticking plaster - it was helping with the food but not the issues surrounding it.*

*“So we transitioned to a new model – a community café with a lovely atmosphere, giving people that social contact, and a food hub, which gives people choice and dignity while reducing food waste.*

*“We work with other organisations to signpost people. We don’t want to just work on our own.”*

*“Most of what we do is environmental – to stop this food from going in the bin,”* **Rahina** adds.

*“But it’s charitable too. This simple action of saving food from landfill and sharing it out fairly, makes such a difference. It transforms into community, connection, and people improving their lives.”*



## Volunteer programme

All operations at our Food Redistribution Centre are underpinned by the efforts and enthusiasm of volunteers. Our staff team is bolstered by dozens of volunteers each day, to process hundreds of trays and trolleys of food. Volunteers contribute

to everything from registering and allocating stock to driving and making deliveries of goods to groups.

We give back to many volunteers too, offering structured support like guiding job seekers in applying for work, or supporting prison leavers or people

from healthcare settings to resettle in the community. The Centre offers a welcoming space for everyone from students to retirees, care leavers to asylum seekers, to develop life and work skills, meet new people and give back to communities.

### Rosie's story

## “Volunteering gave me so much and it was something good for others too.”



Rosie was one of 78 volunteers to help at the Food Redistribution Centre through 2023. She used the opportunity to boost her confidence, refresh her skills and make new connections following a period in a rehabilitation unit.

*“Volunteering gave me so much confidence back but at the same time, it was something good for others too,”* **Rosie** reflects. *“I felt like a ghost of a person when I started there. I’d been in rehab and it was suggested I did some volunteer work to get back into a normal routine.*

*“My background is in catering, I was a chef for 10 years, so I loved the ethos of redistributing food and preventing waste.*

*“As soon as I started volunteering, it was just lovely to be greeted so nicely every morning and thanked as I left. It was a social thing too - I’d locked myself away for so long. It was nice to meet new people that I didn’t have to hide my situation from. There was no stigma.*

*“I was doing a course at college at the same time and now I’m working in management accounts.*

*“Volunteering was that first step for me.”*

**Giving back** - Volunteers gain as much as they give, receiving tailored support while helping to redistribute surplus food to communities (Images show other volunteers)



## “I thought the food was everything but it's the social side that's so important.”



### Soup and signposting

Paul and his team provide food, connection, support and signposting

*“There's only one question we ask of those who come in – are you hungry?”*  
**Paul**, the founder of Wesleys, explains.

*“We don't just get the ‘down and outs’. It's little old couples whose pensions aren't stretching or young mums with their children, as much as it's people in bedsits with a one-bar radiator and not enough money for the meter. The food gets out to about 250 households each week. People would go hungry without this.”*

*“The need has intensified in recent years. The cost of living has risen and the people that were on the breadline are well below it now.”*

*“I'm a chef by trade. When I retired, I wanted to teach people to cook. I met the local vicar whose church happened to be in the same building as a food bank, so said I'd make soup for people coming to the food bank.”*

*“Use of the food bank was limited because people could only use it twice in three months. But people came back the following week just for the soup. Then some started helping me to make it, so they were cooking for their local neighbours. That's how the café started.”*

*“Now we have two operations – the café, serving breakfasts and lunches, and a larder which is like a corner shop but without the till. It's all free.”*

*“We develop a relationship with people so we can send them to where they can get more help. The people who are serving on the counter are basically ‘triage’.”*



*“The food fulfils people's nutritional needs on the spot, but the other part is community, the social side of it.”*

*“We get a car full of food from FareShare at least three times a week. Mince, cereal, tins, fruit, veg, pasta – it's good value for money.”*

*“I made a pan of soup and thought that would do it but the social side of this is massive, actually. It's become more important than I ever dreamt.”*





His Provison, Blackpool & Botcherby Community Centre, Carlisle

**“This is just another way that FareShare helps us to help others.”**



#### Offering lifelines

Volunteers like Christine work with communities to understand what resources people need

Through 2023 we increased the goods and support offered to CFMs, by starting to redistribute additional allocations of pet food, toiletries and personal care items. Christine and Helen run two of the grassroots groups now able to provide more support, opportunities, and connection to people in need.

#### Impact - 2023

**11t**

of pet food redistributed

**9t**

of toiletries redistributed

*“For many people, pets are a lifeline - a source of companionship. But many are struggling to feed their pets in the present climate,”* explains **Christine**, project coordinator at His Provison. The community café and food pantry in Blackpool is one of 81 CFMs to receive pet food.

She adds: *“Animal shelters are overflowing as families can no longer afford to keep them. The pet food is helping people to avoid the heartache of losing what is, to them, a valued family member.”*

Botcherby Community Centre in Carlisle is one of 96 CFMs to redistribute toiletries and personal care items amongst its community.

*“While we all know affordable food is high on the agenda, toiletries are vital too,”* says manager **Helen**. *“These make a huge difference to our community.”*

## Commercial partnership Our kind of partners

#### The Cumberland Building Society

The Cumberland Building Society committed to a tangible and sustainable partnership with our Food Redistribution Centre in 2023.

It made a generous £250,000 donation to this work, for the lion's share of the sum to be distributed between all CFMs working in the communities served by the building society's branches. This covered the membership fees of eligible groups, saving each between £4,800-£7,200 annually. Direct donations were also made, with cash boosts and donations of fridges and freezers allowing groups to buy in more food or expand their provision for communities.

The partnership helped to underpin The Cumberland's brand values and demonstrate genuine corporate social responsibility to its members, employees, and stakeholders.



**Kind natured** - Community groups benefit from commercial partnerships and donations distributing cash and support

Nigel Taylor, Head of Marketing for The Cumberland, explains: *“Throughout our operating area, the cost-of-living has seen the use of community kitchens, meal clubs and foodbanks more than double. We were determined to play our part in helping to tackle food poverty.”*

**“It's a true partnership.”**

*“To do so, we required a partner with expertise in the field with whom we could build a lasting relationship across the region - enter Recycling Lives Charity and FareShare Lancashire & Cumbria.”*

*“It's a true partnership - we collaborate and work as a team at every stage. We see their commitment and passion for all they do to support their communities.”*

*“The aim was to help dozens of groups to invest in more food, expand their provision and raise awareness around these issues.”*

*“At the heart of this partnership is a story of kindness, community, and those who give their time to help others. It's not about storytelling, it's about storydoing. Kindness is in our nature and with this partnership, we've helped share it across Cumbria and Lancashire.”*



# Training Kitchen

In 2022 we expanded our food offering, redeveloping our community café to create a modern, purpose-built training kitchen. We became partners of Jamie Oliver's Ministry of Food programme and brought in a full-time chef/trainer. Our courses aim to give participants the confidence and skills needed to cook fresh, nutritious, budget-friendly meals. Classes cover basic kitchen skills, food hygiene and safety, budgeting, and nutrition along with essential recipes.

## ^ Growth

We have already expanded this offering, developing our own classes to deliver externally, including working with NHS providers and going into prisons to teach people skills ready for release.



## Tomas's story

**“The classes were my first stepping stone towards my goals.”**

**Stepping stone** - Cookery classes equip people like Tomas with practical skills and volunteering opportunities too

Tomas was one of 106 people to complete the cookery classes through 2023, and one of five to progress into a structured voluntary placement as a result. He is now employed in our community café.

*“I’ve been interested in food since I was a young child. Then when I got into my early 20s I was growing my own vegetables,”* says **Tomas**.

*“A friend put me on to Recycling Lives Charity. He knew I was interested in learning more skills. I met him through rehab.*

*“I came along to the cookery classes and it built up my confidence massively. It was nice to come somewhere where everyone’s treated equally. There can be stigmas built up around people in recovery or with criminal backgrounds.*

*“I really enjoyed the course. I learned loads and all in a safe environment – how to prepare food safely, food hygiene, cross contamination of food groups. We learned how we can adapt meals to suit different budgets too.*

*“After that, I started volunteering in the kitchen and café to gain more skills and to give back a bit too.*

*“It got me up and motivated every morning, building some routine.*

*“And now I’m properly employed there, working in the café a few days a week. Before this I’d do nothing with my week and I could see my mindset switching back to my old ways.*

*“My dream goal would be to own a pop-up style place one day, so this is my first stepping stone.”*

# Environmental impact

## Impact - 2023

**1.56m**

waste electricals recycled or refurbished

**1,029t**

of food, toiletries and pet food diverted from landfill or waste

**1,016t**

of CO2 emissions saved

**2.16bn**

litres of water saved

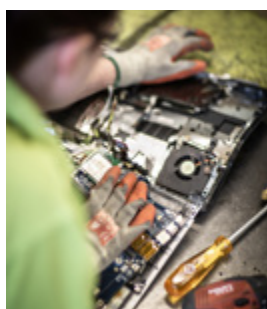
We think taking care of people only makes sense if we take care of the environment too. Our work does this by:

- ✓ Preventing good-to-eat food from being sent to landfill or incineration
- ✓ Recycling or repurposing end-of-life electrical items and household goods

This work not only reduces waste, it also prevents CO2 emissions and saves water. Our calculations find that 1,016t CO2 emissions would be created and 2.16bn litres of water required if the 1,029t of food we redistributed had been sent to landfill - our food redistribution programme delivers significant environmental impact on top of its social impact.

We also continue to support other environmental work, sponsoring beehives. We have donated thousands of pounds to The Bee Centre since 2021, covering the cost of four hives in its apiaries in Lancashire. The Bee Centre breeds honeybees, creates habitats for pollinators, and educates the public sector and landowners on biodiversity, habitat creation and how essential bees are to environmental efforts.

The donation has had dual-impact too, allowing us to take team members and programme participants for Bee Experience days, as wellbeing and team-building opportunities.



**Preventing waste** - Our work stops food and commodities from becoming waste, while also giving people resources or training opportunities





# Work with us

## We need:

- ✓ Employers
- ✓ Landlords
- ✓ Food surplus
- ✓ Commercial partners
- ✓ Sponsors & Donors

## We offer:

- ✓ Support with social value & impact reporting
- ✓ Access to specialist support workers
- ✓ Access to specialist training & tailored courses
- ✓ Teams able to process/recycle goods



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