

# Together we're Recycling Lives

Social Value Report 2018/19



  
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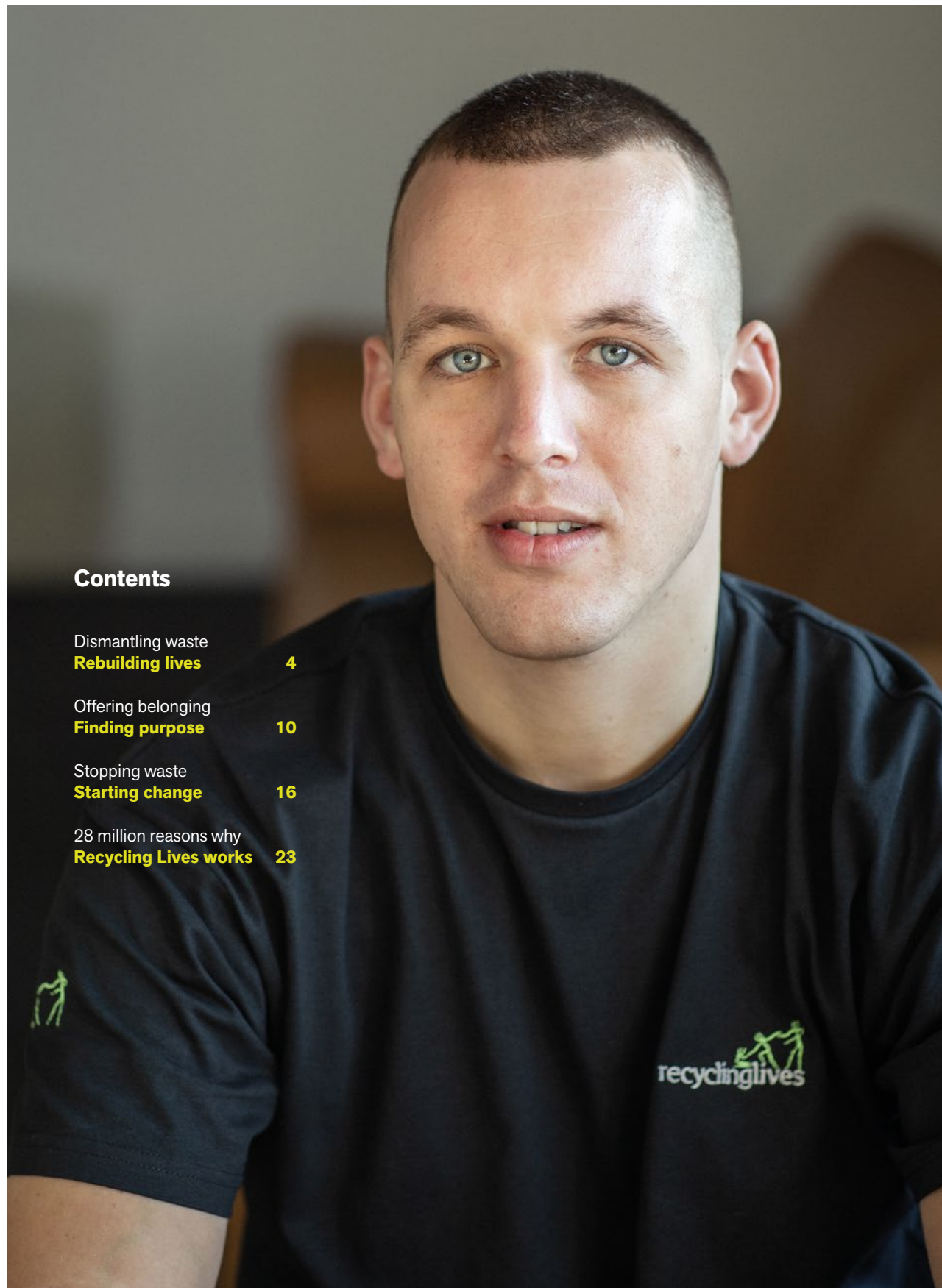
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# Together we're Recycling Lives



"We're about helping people here -  
that's why we carry this name and this logo."

Chris sums up Recycling Lives perfectly. He knows it well, having come through the offender rehabilitation programme and now working at one of the recycling sites.

He is one of the thousands of people to have benefitted from the social programmes in the last year.

Bringing together individuals, businesses and charities, the three programmes are offering hope, strengthening communities and changing lives.

**Together, we're recycling lives.**

For the fourth year running Recycling Lives has created social value worth millions of pounds.

By **rehabilitating offenders £7.4m** has been saved for central government. Of this year's cohort, **96%** have been rehabilitated, reducing the need for prison places.

A further **£73,000** has been saved for local government by **supporting homeless men** and reducing demand for welfare payments.

And by **redistributing one million meals**, hundreds of charitable groups and thousands of individuals have saved **£3.5m** on their food costs.

**The programmes have saved in excess of £11m in 2018/19.**

**£11m+**  
social value created  
in 2018/19

But for people like Chris there's no way of putting a price on their value. Here, they share their stories...





**SUPPORTING** HMP Academy manager Yvonne guides women working in HMP Styal

# Dismantling waste Rebuilding lives

“It’s different here. It’s hard work but it’s rewarding and we start to look towards the future.”

It’s Barry’s job to turn hope into reality: “The difference people make to their lives is just incredible,” the Head of Rehabilitation says.

Facing uncertain futures in prison, hundreds of men and women turn to Recycling Lives to help them. They might want an opportunity to gain skills or earn money; or need support to overcome problems or stay motivated through a lengthy prison sentence.

Through work they are able to change their lives.

The HMP Academies employ up to 250 men and women at a time across 12 workshops in 11 prisons, working on processes including dismantling waste electricals or building skips. They are the first step towards permanent employment, stable housing and a life free from offending.

For the fourth year running, the programme has reduced reoffending rates to less than 5% – significantly below the national average of around 67%. On top of that 84% of participants moved into employment on release in the last year – compared to just 17% nationally.

By reducing the need for prison places the programme has created savings for central government; social value worth £7,428,449 in 2018/19.

## Meaningful work

“The job gave me the confidence to go back out into the real world,” says Janet, who faced her first jail sentence in her 50s. “The work itself – manual work, dismantling things – was therapeutic for me.”

The work is purposeful and demanding but also accessible, with experienced participants training new recruits to further improve their skills and create a tight-knit team. Opportunities are also available to gain certification or qualifications.

Participants earn an enhanced wage with opportunities for bonuses, and are supported to save up at least 40% of wages ready for release.

“Things changed as soon as I started working with Recycling Lives because it meant I could send money home,” says Chris R. “I’d worked in the other prisons but they’re £10 a week jobs – that’s only enough for your phone credit just to call home.”

For men and women approved for release on temporary licence (ROTL), commonly known as ‘day release’, there are opportunities to move into paid placements with businesses across the recycling, energy, utilities and hospitality sectors, earning the going rate for their role and contributing up to 40% of earnings to victim’s charities.

For Chris A, ROTL was a chance to really prepare for life on release after serving 22 years in total: “It was a bit of freedom but more than that, it was money. I knew my future depended on saving up that money. I had a few grand when I came out; enough to get set up.”

**250**

men & women  
supported at a time

**84%**

employment rate

**4%**

reoffending rate

# “It gave me the confidence to go back out into the real world.”

The programme works with men and women serving all sentence lengths and from all backgrounds and walks of life: “The reasons people end up in prison are many and varied – some admit they gave in to greed, some have never really had a chance in life,” says Barry.

“We’re mindful of their past but mainly we just focus on their future. Wherever they’ve come from, they’re all pulling in the same direction now.”

### Working together

Having a focus and a strong support network was a way to drastically change his lifestyle, says Alan, who was jailed for the first time in his 50s. “You’re sent to prison for punishment,” he says. “But then they should try to help you and show you the way forward. Recycling Lives gets your head back into work so it’s good for you.”

Work is the central component of the HMP Academies programme. Each participant is supported to secure a job on release, either



**WORKING** Chris is now leading a team working at the Recycling Park





**DISMANTLING** Men and women develop skills while completing meaningful recycling work

with Recycling Lives or partner businesses across the UK, meeting the experience, capabilities and ambitions of all.

"I couldn't get a job before," says Chris K, who's served 14 prison sentences. "Normally if you've no experience then there's no job for you, especially if you've got a criminal record like mine. They see past that at Recycling Lives – they look at whether you turn up on time and work hard."

Working with Recycling Lives helped Damien get parole from an indeterminate Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence. He now works for Kier Highways: "It's mint! There's lots of opportunities and it's decent money. Life is much happier now and the job is a big part of that."

#### **Ongoing support**

But the work is just the beginning of the support offered to offenders.

**“Life is much happier now - the job is a big part of that.”**

For Janet, the support and understanding from her manager, Yvonne – herself an ex-offender, now running the HMP Academy in Styal women's prison – was life-changing: "She took me under her wing and made me feel so welcome."

And the personal support continues long after release and is critical to success rates.

For Danny, it was help to manage mental health problems: "I had all these problems in my head but I've had help now. I've got a place and belonging here at Recycling Lives."

## **National picture**

**£13bn**

estimated annual cost of reoffending<sup>1</sup>

**67%**

rehabilitation rate<sup>2</sup>

**17%**

employment rate<sup>3</sup>

## **Recycling Lives**

**£7.4m**

saving to the UK taxpayer

**96%**

rehabilitation rate

**84%**

employment rate

1. **£13bn** - Ministry of Justice, 2015

2. **67%** - Combined UK averages

3. **17%** - Prison Reform Trust, 2018

While for Chris A, it was the ongoing support to secure work in the face of setbacks: "They'd helped me to get a job labouring but then a load of us got laid off because they found asbestos on the site. Within a week Recycling Lives had found me something new."

And after five years inside it was the opportunity for Chris R to spend much needed time with family before starting work for Recycling Lives: "The first six months out of prison I found really hard. I felt like giving up but they gave me some time to get my head together. I've never had people looking out for me in the way Recycling Lives does."



**GUIDING** Ex-offenders like Danny are given guidance and advice long after release

"We support people in whatever way they need," Barry says. "We'll continue contact with people for at least 12 months so they know we're still there for them."

"I've been in work for months now but the team still ring me to see how I am," says Janet.

**Helping others**

This support is invariably paid forward by the men and women who've been supported: "We're about helping people here," says Chris R, proudly patting the badge on his Recycling Lives uniform. "That's why we carry this name and this logo."



"We have a lot of the ROTL lads here. To be able to help them is good," says Shaun, supervisor at a Recycling Lives' site. "They're no different to any of the other lads on site. We work hard for what we get."

But what these men and women ultimately 'get' is so much more than material, as dad-of-seven Shaun attests: "My life has never been as good as it is now. When I walk through the front door and the kids call out 'daddy's home!', there's nothing better."



“When I walk through the front door and the kids call out ‘daddy’s home!’ there’s nothing better.”



*“It’s hard work - proper, meaningful work - in the HMP Academies but that doesn’t mean we’re looking for previous skills or an ability to hit targets when we’re recruiting men and women. We’re looking at an individual’s needs.*

*“We want to support the hardest to help.*

*“We work one-to-one with every participant, looking at their backgrounds, skills and aspirations; understanding their home life and what*

*support they need ready for release. Mental health, substance misuse services, settling debts, managing money, reconnecting with family, or just being a friend and advocate – we do it all.*

*“It’s the swan effect really – what people can see, those results, might seem easy, but there’s a hell of a lot of hard work going on behind the scenes to make that possible.”*

### **Barry Flanagan**

Head of Recycling Lives' Rehabilitation Programme

## Offering belonging Finding purpose

“I’ve been doing this a long time and I’ve seen a lot, but every week astounds me.”

Neil is manager, mentor, advocate, even father-figure, to the men in his charge.

As manager of the residential charity, on any given day he can be attending doctors’ appointments or flat viewings with residents, meeting employers to arrange work placements, or coaching a man to start a new chapter in life.

“He can resurrect you – he really looks after you,” former Resident Carl says of him.

Over the years Neil has supported dozens of men to change their lives.

Each time this creates savings for local government by removing need for welfare payments. In 2018/19, the programme’s social value totalled £73,707.

“We have men from all walks of life,” Neil says. “They come to us through all different pathways – they could walk in off the street, have a referral from the council or another charity, or come straight from custody.”

### Starting again

“I’d never had a permanent home,” says Julian. “I’d floated all around the country but I woke up and realised I couldn’t see a future so I started looking and found Recycling Lives.”

Chris had lost his home and his job when he was jailed: “I’d lost everything. I couldn’t wait to get out of prison but I was scared about what would happen to me so Recycling Lives lifted a whole lot of stress.”

After 28 years in prison, it was an opportunity for Carl to learn to live again: “When you come out you have to learn how to do everything – budget, pay bills, shop, mix with other people. Some people come out to nothing – no way to pull themselves up – so a lot turn back to crime and it’s never-ending.

“But if you come out to a job, a routine and some accommodation, like we have here, well that can put a halt to that lifestyle,” he reflects.



**SUPPORTING** Men like Chris are coached and mentored by the charity team





**WORKING** Julian is now a driver for the Food Redistribution Centre





“We’re a big family working together.”





### Structuring

The Six Stage programme guides men to rebuild their lives: "They're getting the basics in order like ID and bank accounts; gaining qualifications and doing placements to get some work experience; and starting to rebuild relationships with family. All the while they're growing in confidence and learning new things. It's a structured programme but it's very much about the individual," Neil explains.

**"I take a lot of pride in my job."**

No two men are the same, just like no two days are, he adds: "Every week astounds me. Sometimes it's the challenges we're facing, or it's what's been overcome."

The length and pathway of the Six Stages varies for each individual – that can include bumps in the road: "People struggle sometimes," Neil admits.

"I felt like Neil was always on my case," says Chris. "So when I met a girl I decided I wanted to move out. I went into another supported accommodation and what a shock it was. There was no future there. All the while I was there though, Neil would call me to see if I needed any help. Eventually I moved back in to the charity. I needed the structure and support. Neil wants you to make something of yourself so sometimes he'll have a moan at you – a bit like a dad."

Positive relationships are critical to men's journeys through the residential programme; whether with the staff, their peers or their friends and family.

"The community feel to the place is so important," says Neil. "They have breakfast together and a morning meeting, they have chores and take it in turns to cook, and we'll go out for tea or have a day up in the Lakes. We're a big family, working together."

"The lads I was in the charity with made the experience a lot easier," says Kieran, who came to Recycling Lives for a two-day Job Centre course but left after 11 months with a job at the Recycling Park.



**GUIDING** Residents receive both personal and professional support





**DEVELOPING** The charity team form long-lasting friendships

After spending his early 20s bouncing between short prison sentences and supported accommodation he seized the opportunity for a steady job and a home of his own.

#### Developing skills

Central to the programme is the work each man undertakes, first as voluntary placements before moving into full-time employment: "The job is so important; it gives self-worth and financial security. It gives them their place in the world."

"I take a lot of pride in my job," says Julian, who is now a driver for the Food Redistribution Centre. "I'd never really looked forward to anything in life. Now I'm always looking forward to next week when I get to do my job all over again. I've found my purpose at Recycling Lives. This is the longest I've stayed anywhere."

"It's changed my life," says Carl. After spending his first year out of prison in the charity, he's now a recycling operative at the Recycling Park. "I've got a nice little flat and a good job where there's opportunities for progression."

"Once you've got a home and a job, life really goes up from there."

#### Developing the model

As the offender rehabilitation programme has been developed and improved, Recycling Lives' team have refined a programme which offers bespoke support to address and overcome personal problems while still in prison. This means many more men are able to move into independence immediately upon release from prison, reducing the need for emergency accommodation or intensive support from our residential programme.

## National picture

**33%**

of prison leavers say they have nowhere to go<sup>4</sup>

**£1bn**

estimated annual cost of homelessness<sup>5</sup>

## Recycling Lives

**80%**

residents with histories of offending

**£73k**

saving to the taxpayer

4. **33%** - Howard League for Penal Reform, 2013

5. **£1bn** - Department for Communities & Local Government, 2012



*"There's a lot of lads who come through here and it's like their last chance – maybe next time it'll be a lengthy prison sentence, or they've lost so much in life they feel there's nothing left. But what we see again and again is that this 'last chance' is often their first real opportunity in life."*

*"Then there's the men who come through who want that 'second chance' – they might have made some decisions that mean quite suddenly they're*

*starting again in life. But that idea of a second chance is denied to them by a lot of places, so we give them a 'fair chance'; a fighting chance."*

*"For many, they might not have achieved what they have without this place. Years later they'll come back to show off a new car or invite me for a brew at the house they've been able to buy."*

*"They're proud of what they've achieved and rightly so."*

### Neil Flanagan

Manager of Recycling Lives' Residential Programme



**SERVING** Volunteers serve meals for vulnerable communities



# Stopping waste Starting change

“This isn’t just feeding people. This food is teaching, supporting and uniting people.”

The Food Redistribution Centre is filled with pallets of fruit and vegetables, racks of tins and cereals, and fridges of meat and dairy. Moving between it all are staff and volunteers getting food to people of all ages, backgrounds and faiths.

Every day, 1.7 tonnes of food and drink are redistributed from the Centre to feed communities across Lancashire and Cumbria. In the last year 1,064,767 meals have been delivered, feeding up to 20,000 people each week.

By ensuring the food feeds people the programme created social value worth £3,563,950 in 2018/19, by reducing food costs for charitable groups and individuals.

But the goods being eaten is far from the only benefit, explains Jeff, manager of the Centre. The food is a door opener for disadvantaged people needing extra support; a teaching tool for adults with learning disabilities; or a social tool for schoolchildren and homeless adults alike.

What it isn’t, is waste. By redistributing these goods, Jeff’s team have diverted 447 tonnes of surplus from landfill in the last year. So by receiving and eating the food, the Centre’s 173 Community Food Members (CFMs) aren’t taking a handout, but actively reducing waste.

“Because it’s surplus it makes families feel alright to take it,” says Chris Kania, of Pennine Way primary school.

“It’s shocking it was ever destined for landfill,” adds Neil Reid, from Blackpool Food Bank.

## Preventing waste

The food comes in from 500 different suppliers, via the national network of food redistribution charity FareShare, for which Recycling Lives runs the Centre for Lancashire and Cumbria.

“It can come from farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers and importers as well as distribution centres for retailers ranging from Asda to Aldi to Amazon,” Jeff says. “None of our stock has been on an actual supermarket shelf. It’s surplus for many different reasons – manufacturing techniques, just-in-time tactics, the weather, seasonal produce or just dated branding.”

CFMs say they’re always impressed by the quality and variety of the produce which can range from fresh fruit and vegetables to

**1.7tonnes**  
of food and drink  
redistributed daily

**173**  
Community Food  
Members served

**£7,900**  
average annual saving  
for Community Food  
Members



**STOPPING** Jeff and his team prevent surplus food from becoming waste



## “The food is a great tool to bring people together.”

trout, salmon and pheasant as well as luxury or high value items and lactose- and gluten-free alternatives.

“More often than not it's top end brands as well as products that CFM's already stretched resources wouldn't reach to,” says Jeff.

### **Reducing costs**

According to national FareShare figures a CFM will save an average of £7,900 on their food costs each year through membership with the Food Redistribution Centre. Membership costs CFMs between just £300 or £1,200 per year, depending on their need, but guarantees them dozens of pallets of goods.

“As well as helping cut costs, it helps us to teach our service users cooking skills,” says Phil Taylor, fundraising officer for Mencap in Carlisle. Supporting 500 adults and children with learning disabilities across Cumbria, Mencap uses the food across its four respite centres as well as its café.

“We have cooking sessions, preparing our people for independence as well as giving them a real sense of satisfaction and pride to have cooked for others. Eating with others helps with their social and communication skills too.”

Cookery classes are a highlight for service user Adam: “I love cooking my own food. We make lots of nice meals. It is great!”



**GUIDING** Adults with learning disabilities are helped to cook their own meals



**SUPPORTING** Community groups use food as a way to engage and support people

Homeless charity Emmaus uses the food in much the same way across its Preston and Burnley facilities: "The food makes such a difference," says deputy support manager Karen Wallis. "It helps us financially but more importantly it's getting quality food to the dozens of men and women here.

"We've also used it as part of food safety courses in our kitchens, to give people qualifications. They can then make a meal for everyone and all sit together, sharing food and chatting about the day. It creates that community."

#### **Strengthening communities**

Community is the most common theme to CFMs' use of the food.

"Groups use it as the door opener to engage or create communities. It's an opportunity or catalyst to engage people with services that can support them and make a difference," says Neil Reid, chairman of Blackpool Food Bank.

His organisation takes deliveries from the Food Redistribution Centre along with collecting local supermarkets' daily surplus to distribute it to 62 grassroots groups including children's centres, community kitchens and churches across Blackpool: "It's a real myriad of organisations that all have food as part of their solution."

One such organisation is The Well Church, which uses the food to feed up to 100 people at a midweek evening service.

Jamie Sergeant and a team of volunteers serve up support and guidance alongside hot meals and a friendly face for vulnerable groups ranging from young care leavers and adults with learning disabilities to the

**"It's shocking it was ever destined for landfill."**

elderly: "The food is a great tool to bring people together as a community. The practical support we offer, providing meals, is good but it's as much about people sharing and being looked after."

While food is important to CFMs' work it is increasingly costly in the face of stretched resources. As well as dozens of groups like food banks and community cafes, the Centre supplies food to 42 schools and churches.

#### **National picture**

**1.9million**

tonnes of food wasted annually<sup>6</sup>

**4.7million**

people living in severe food insecurity<sup>7</sup>

#### **Recycling Lives**

**1million**

meals delivered annually

**20,000**

people fed each week

6. **1.9million** - WRAP, 2016

7. **4.7million** - UN, 2016

**Adding value**

Preston Muslim Girls High School uses the food to run a free breakfast club before classes start. In a noisy school hall, girls file in for snacks and all-important socialising to start their days: "About 60 girls come along, whether that's because families are struggling to provide breakfast or the parents have got to be in work early," says finance officer Hafiza Akubat. "Us providing the breakfast might save a family £1 a day - over a year that's a lot of money and a lot of value.



**WORKING** Volunteers develop skills while redistributing food to charitable groups

"The impact has been immense. We've seen a difference in punctuality, attendance, health, concentration levels and academic performance."

Like them, Pennine Way Primary School in Carlisle uses the food for its breakfast and after school clubs.

Around one third of its pupils are on free school meals: "Ours is quite a disadvantaged community; a lot of people unemployed, some refugees," explains school business manager Chris Kania.

"The impact has been immense. We've seen a difference in punctuality, concentration levels and academic performance."

"As well as using the produce for our clubs we use it to give food parcels to families who we know are struggling. We've been able to help so many more people using this food."





*"All through the process, the food is doing good. It isn't just feeding people. This food is teaching, supporting and uniting people. When the food comes in here, at that point it ceases to be surplus or waste."*

*"Within our Centre the food is a conduit for our volunteers to either develop skills or to give something back to the community, as they manage deliveries, stock taking and collections."*

*"Then the food goes out to CFMs and it becomes a tool with which to engage communities and promote work, or a way to teach new skills as well as save money."*

*"Only then, after all that, is the food eaten! By families, children, elderly people, the sick, homeless or disabled."*

*"We're all working to stop that food from going anywhere other than in mouths."*

### **Jeff Green**

Manager of Recycling Lives' Food Redistribution Centre



# 28 million reasons why Recycling Lives works

Between 2015 and 2019 Recycling Lives has rehabilitated 228 men and women, supported 17 men into housing and work and delivered more than 3,238,000 meals to communities creating a total of £28.3m social value.

These social value figures are calculated by a Social Return on Investment practitioner, using government and national metrics around the cost of reoffending, the cost of welfare dependency and the benefits of food redistribution membership.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
Rehabilitating offenders	£2.7m	£2.6m	£4.5m	£7.4m	£17.2m saved
	97%	97%	95%	96%	96% rehabilitation rate
Residential support		£276,000	£167,000	£73,000	£516,000 saved
Redistributing food	531,000	698,000	945,000	1,064,000	3,238,000 meals delivered
	£1.4m	£2.3m	£3.4m	£3.5m	£10.6m saved

£28.3m

Overall social value 2015-19



Recycling Lives social programmes are supported by the commercial operations of Recycling Lives Ltd; through training opportunities and employment for programme participants, waste contract management through the HMP Academies, and in-kind support for logistics, operations and communications.



# Together we're Recycling Lives



**Recycling** partnerships that change **Lives**

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[RecyclingLives.com](https://www.RecyclingLives.com)



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