



# St Vincent's

*growing people, changing lives*



## **Annual Report 2024/2025**

### **St Vincent's Centre, Newcastle**

# Contents

<b>Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Our year in photos</b>	<b>3 + 4</b>
<b>Centre Manager Report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chair's Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our Year in numbers</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Our Community Pantry</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Community Market Report</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Our services/activities</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Beneficiary stories</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Links</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>With thanks</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Volunteer with us</b>	<b>14</b>



# Our year in photos









# Centre Manager's Report

Rebecca Stevenson-Read



This is my 5<sup>th</sup> year as Centre Manager for St Vincent's Newcastle, and over the past few years we have seen the Centre get busier and busier as the Cost-of-Living increases and so many more people need our help. As well as offering the essentials of life – a hot meal, food parcel, clothing, we offer something that we all need and is in short supply – hope. For St Vincent's Newcastle, it's not just about 'what' we do, but 'how' we do it. Our Vincentian approach is rooted in compassion, kindness and non-judgment, understanding that many of the folks we see have been turned away from other agencies and services, and they're often bruised and buffeted by the storms of life. We aim to offer a shelter in the storm, and 'walk with' people to help them find a way through. As a recognised City of Sanctuary, Newcastle has a proud legacy of welcoming those fleeing their homelands in search of safety. Working closely with our partner, the Justice & Peace Refugee project, we strive to create a safe, inclusive, responsive space for the sanctuary community where people can access food, clothing, free haircuts, ESOL classes and other services to assist with feeling at home here. We are in the process of hopefully being accredited as a Centre of Sanctuary, recognising the important work that the centre does to welcome and help integrate this community.

There are so many unsung heroes at St Vincent's and the staff and volunteer team are a daily inspiration.

I am privileged to work alongside such a dedicated team who achieve so much in a typical day. There are so many acts of kindness and compassion – offering a cuppa and a sit down to a new arrival at the Foodbank who is feeling overwhelmed, a bunch of flowers being added to a food parcel to lift a lady's spirits, or always asking if there are pets at home so we can include pet food in a parcel, recognising that pets are part of our families too.

The funding landscape remains incredibly challenging, and of course we are incredibly grateful to our past and current funders, and alongside grant funding, it is vital that we can generate much-needed income from our charity retail operation, to ensure our project remains sustainable. The launch of Vinnies Community Pantry last year has been a real success, both in terms of the wonderful community asset that it has proven itself to be, and in terms of generating a financial contribution to the centre.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the local conferences and members who support our work and our own Local Oversight Group, whose support is invaluable.



# Chair's Report



**John Kilgour, on behalf of  
SVP Tyne Central Council LOG**

It is a privilege to contribute to St Vincent's Newcastle's Annual Report 2024/25 as it reflects the close bond between the Centre and the local SVP members. The Local Oversight Group (LOG) is made up of SVP members and invited people with experience of local charity work. We receive monthly reports from St Vincent's covering their financial and work activities. We meet regularly with the CSP Managers in the Tyne CC area to review their work and plans for the future in the spirit of St Vincent to maximise all our efforts to help those in need.

St Vincent's staff and volunteers have had a very successful year in helping people in a wide range of activities and all with a very sound financial base (with 50% of their income self-generated from sales). They are to be congratulated on their hard work and dedication. There are very many examples of not only big events: Holiday Activities for Children, the Vinnies Meals, the Pantry and Market Place, but also the very personal interaction with individuals who are treated with love and care whatever their circumstances.

The Centre has had a number of challenges over the year with increasing demand, funding challenges and staff number restrictions but the ingenuity and passion in managing these challenges has been impressive.

Another distinguishing factor has been the co-operation with other charities and local businesses. The hosting of the Justice & Peace Refugee Project has shown a great collaboration between the Group and the Centre, with a mutual trust and respect now been established. The link to local businesses is exemplified with the recent announcement of being Ringtons Charity of the Year.

Unfortunately, the need for helping people in difficult circumstances will continue in the future and the work of the St Vincent's Centre and SVP members is vital in helping these people not only in alleviating their immediate issues but in valuing them as individuals and providing them with Hope in this Jubilee Year where we are all 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

Finally, a big Thank You to St Vincent's Staff and Volunteers.





# Our Community Pantry.

Our highly discounted Community Pantry opened in May 2024 after much demand for a low cost, healthy shopping experience for the local community.

Offering the dignity of choice in shopping for essentials, we wanted to create a shop with a variety of both fresh and frozen products at a substantially reduced cost compared to supermarkets. So, we introduced a section of our pantry that allows customers to purchase up to 10 items for just £5.

Through our partnership with Neighbourly, we are able to offer flowers, baked goods, meat & fish, fruit and veg and other items from local supermarkets.

“Great shop for essentials, very cheap!”

“A beautiful shop, it made me smile, thank you”

“Lovely little shop, very helpful for everyone in need”

“Great shop, great stock, kind and accommodating staff”

“I am very pleased with how fresh the veg and fruit is”





# Vinnies drop-in

The Tuesday Vinnies Drop-in is now a local institution. Every week, a three-course lunch is cooked from seasonal local ingredients, and served to our community with kindness and dignity. Fresh flowers adorn the tables, and customers orders are taken while they are seated. Often there is a queue at the door when we open at 11am. Jan, our Catering Supervisor, runs the service each week with a dedicated team of volunteers. Our local Councillor holds his monthly surgery at Vinnies, and Ibrahim, our volunteer barber, gives free haircuts for guests. There is also a local representative from the Council's Community Team on hand to assist with housing and welfare queries.



# Annual Stats:

**39,572**  
**Interventions**

**1,091**

**HAF Children  
supported**

**10,746**  
**Meals Served**

**320**  
**Households  
supported at  
christmas**

**1,647**  
**Food Parcels  
provided**

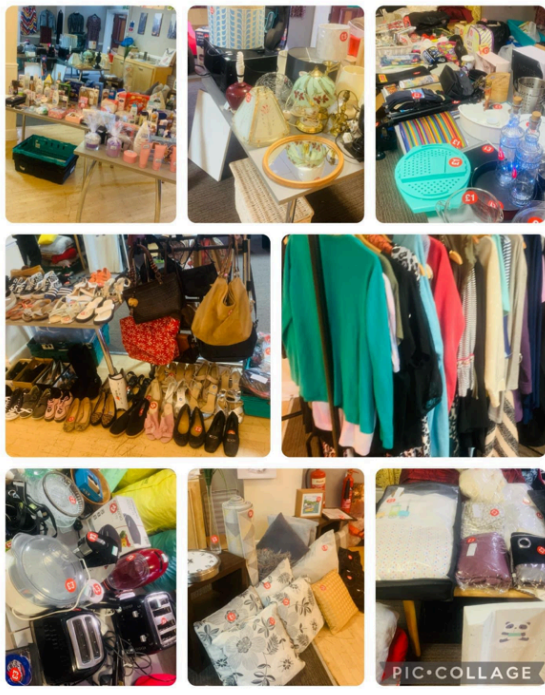
**968**  
**clothing parcels given**



# Weekly Community Market

Our Community Pop-up Market runs every Thursday. Since it opened in January 23, it has been a huge success. Our Market not only offers very low cost items, such as clothing, bedding and household goods - but we also have Citizens Advice here offering support and giving out energy and food vouchers. Our Market provides a warm space where customers can mingle whilst looking for a bargain, or simply relax with a free tea or coffee. We also have Tyneside MIND running a free wellbeing drop-in session during the market.

All funds raised at our market come directly back into our Centre to support the vital services we offer.





# Our free services

Each week we offer a variety of free activities and services. In the last 12-months we have seen over 3,100 people attend our wellbeing activity groups.

In addition to our wellbeing sessions, we also offer free haircuts and a free counselling service, delivered by psychotherapy students from Peel Psychological Consultancy.





ST VINCENT'S COMMUNITY CENTRE

## COUNSELLING SERVICE

IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP

- COUNSELLING SERVICE RUN BY STUDENTS IN TRAINING AT PEEL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY (NEWCASTLE)
- SAFE & CONFIDENTIAL SPACE TO TALK THROUGH ANY CURRENT OR PAST PROBLEMS



**WHEN & WHERE?** WEEKDAYS AT ST VINCENT'S  
**HOW LONG?** SESSIONS LAST 50 MINS  
**HOW MUCH?** FREE TO CURRENT SERVICE USERS

**INTERESTED?**  
**PLEASE SPEAK TO ANNABEL OR AMANDA AND THEY WILL PUT YOU IN TOUCH WITH THE COUNSELLORS**







# Free Activities



## **Mondays**

**Woman`s Support Group 1.15pm - 3.15pm**

**Knit & Natter 2pm - 4pm**

## **Tuesdays**

**Vinnies Lunch 11am - 1pm**

**Golden Years Group 2pm-4pm**

## **Wednesdays**

**Beginners Yoga 2pm - 3pm**

## **Thursdays**

**Vinnies Pop Market 12.30pm - 3pm**

**Citizens Advice 12.30pm - 3.30pm**

**Zen Zone 12.30pm - 3.30pm**

## **Fridays**

**Craft group 9.30am-12.30pm**

**Knit & Natter 2pm - 4pm**

**Pies for Guys 2pm - 4pm**

**Life skills 2pm - 4pm**

**Zentangle 2.30pm - 3.30pm**

**Eden Training Academy free courses, Mon - Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm**

**Cooking on a Budget, Wed 10.30am - 1pm**

**ring for details and to book on 0191 261 6027**

**Vinnies Pantry open Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm**

**St Vincent's Newcastle - New Bridge Street - Newcastle NE1 2TQ 0191**

**261 6027 stvincentsnewcastle@svp.org.uk**

**Charity Registration Number 1053992, England and Wales 3174679**

# Beneficiaries' Stories

Jalal came to St Vincent's a year ago to learn English. He asked if he could volunteer with us. Jalal is an Iraqi – Kurd. He and his wife and children were forced to leave Iraq as Jalal was an active voice in the government opposition party, and this involvement, as well as being Jewish, meant they were deemed apostates by IS and their home was set alight.

They are now settled in Newcastle. His family have come to our summer activities and especially loved the days out. Recently, Jalal had his substantive interview with the Home Office, and the family have been granted Leave to Remain. In the last few weeks, the family have welcomed baby Rose to the world.



Paul first attended our centre in March 2024 for emergency food due to unemployment and financial difficulty. We gave him information about our services. He explained he applied for a DRO for £7,000 via Citizens Advice at our centre. Paul returned to our support worker, Annabel, in August. The DRO had been granted but he had some new rent arrears with Gateshead Council and faced eviction. Annabel contacted the council & arranged a repayment plan for Paul. Paul had more financial problems after losing his job and waiting for Universal Credit. We gave him a £50 food voucher and a SIM card. Annabel contacted British Gas about his arrears. British Gas had not removed the debt from his energy card, despite a previous application for debt relief. Annabel negotiated, and British Gas cleared the debt in January after a complaint. They also gave him £100 as a gesture of goodwill. We helped Paul apply for fuel vouchers from Healthy Homes and Unity in Community. Paul later joined groups and started a Driving Theory course with Eden Training Academy. Paul will also volunteer on Tuesdays. We applied for an ACTS 435 grant for Paul to access training at St Vincent's & provided him with travel and food costs. Paul has since completed Computer Literacy and Business Development courses.

May 2025: Paul, with Annabel's support, applied for a job with LNER. We provided a computer for his application and helped build his confidence and understanding. When Paul reached the interview stage, we provided interview clothes and support. His friends in the Golden Years group helped him tie his tie and share words of encouragement. Paul is gaining confidence and making friends at the centre while receiving support and opportunities through daily or weekly actions that positively affect his life.

Financial Empowerment: We are helping Paul create a budget for his next Universal Credit payments. This includes advice on prioritising essential costs and finding savings. Paul has since made progress in managing his financial & living situation. He wants to manage his finances & is looking for work. We aim to help Paul become more independent and stable.





# Links to support our centre

Thank you for taking the time to read our yearly update. We take pride and pleasure in the work we do daily, and the support we receive from you all throughout the year is vital to allowing us to continue. Our project costs £360,000 a year, just to keep our doors open and offer the services we currently have in place. Every penny of this needs to be raised locally. Please find below links to our Facebook page, JustGiving and Ebay shop. Every follow, share, £1 donation and purchase from our Ebay, really does make all the difference.



Vinnies @  
St Vincents Centre



**JustGiving™**

Vinniesnew



st\_vincents\_support\_centres



St Vincent's  
*growing people, changing lives*

# Special Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to each and every one of our Volunteers. Our regular volunteers who show up each week, and our corporates who volunteer as a one off or quite often, year after year. Your support means the world to us and without you, we simply could not exist.

We would also like to say a huge thank you to the following funders, who's support has been invaluable .



SIR JAMES KNOTT TRUST



Community  
Foundation







Newcastle



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**Are you passionate about giving back to the community and creating positive change**

**and can spare a day or even a few hours?**

**We are seeking dedicated volunteers to support our centre to make a difference.**

## **We need help for:**

- ✓ **Sorting clothing donations.**
- ✓ **Delivery and collections. Helping**
- ✓ **in our foodbank. Retail - charity**
- ✓ **shop and food pantry.**



## **Volunteer Requirements**

- **Minimum 18-years-old**
- **Able to commit to a regular day/time with some flexibility to meet demands of the project**
- **Positive communicator and team player**

**JOIN US NOW**

**0191 261 6027**

**[stvincentsnewcastle@svp.org.uk](mailto:stvincentsnewcastle@svp.org.uk)**