

PRESS RELEASE

Training and job creation on the menu

A new café and drop-in centre is to open in Norwich, after Norfolk County Council's Public Health Department, in partnership with The Matthew Project, successfully secured almost £600,000 funding to help people with substance misuse issues.

The community café will be staffed by people who are receiving support from The Matthew Project and will be open to the general public. The café's purpose is to help support people in recovery, providing job skills and a much needed revenue stream to sustain the café as a business long-term. The location of the café has yet to be decided but is due to open in December 2016.

In addition to the community café, the funding will also provide a separate subsidised drop-in facility for people in recovery where they can pop in to receive help and advice in an informal environment.

Also on offer will be a range of activities and an evening venue for people in recovery to visit a 'dry' pub with family and friends. It is hoped that providing a safe place where people can socialise will prove invaluable for people hoping to build their social networks and rebuild their confidence and self-worth.

The funding will also provide a minibus and, over the course of the project, develop into a full community rehabilitation programme with the introduction of new projects and groups reaching communities across Norfolk.

Paul Martin, CEO of The Matthew Project said: "Norfolk has a high level of people struggling with alcohol, drug and mental health issues. We have seen a great need to help people move on from treatment for substance abuse back into health, homes, work and the community. This funding award helps fill this gap to provide premises and transport to help people become stronger so they help themselves, each other and our community.

"This new funding into Norfolk is a great achievement. The Matthew Project will now start to develop the project to help recovery in Norwich as we plan and hope this can then grow across Norfolk."

Dr Louise Smith, Head of Public Health at Norfolk County Council said, "Thanks to successful partnership working, Norfolk County Council's Public Health Department has managed to secure funding from Public Health England for a service that is vital for people struggling with alcohol and substance abuse. Delivering a point of contact for people to receive advice and information without judgement or shame is so important and will provide the road to recovery for many people suffering in silence. The provision of a public community café is another creative initiative with clients from The Matthew Project having the opportunity to rebuild their confidence and life skills."

Chairman of Norfolk County Council's Communities Committee, Paul Smyth, said, "Working with organisations such as The Matthew Project shows our commitment to developing effective partnerships, and in future there will hopefully be other opportunities to work collaboratively to improve services for communities in the county."

The Matthew Project works with adults, young people and communities affected by drugs and alcohol and through the Project's varied services, young people and adults receive professional advice, information, counselling, support, care and education. Support workers are based both in rural and urban areas and are involved in outreach work, including schools, youth venues, police stations, courts, in the community and at their own premises.

For more information about The Matthew Project visit: www.matthewproject.org