



Impact Report

2024-25

“I don’t mean this lightly, but I do really feel it has **changed my life significantly in so many ways.** I’m so grateful for all their support and everything they do for everyone here. **Life wouldn’t be the same without this organisation.”**

Next Steps Member

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A message from our CEO



Dear friend,

We want to thank you for your support over the past year, and this report highlights how your help has empowered hundreds of individuals facing drug, alcohol, and mental health challenges to transform their lives. Our achievements would not have been possible without your support.

Last year TMP celebrated its 40th anniversary, prompting us to reflect on our impact over the past four decades. We gathered over forty stories from those we've supported, their families, our volunteers, staff, and trustees, which provide insight into the way our work has changed people's lives.

Hearing our members share their personal journeys has been inspiring and humbling, and I am deeply grateful for their courage in speaking so openly about their struggles and triumphs. We have shared just a few of them in this report.

We have seen the new YouCan and Unity services completing their first year. Unity supports young people struggling with their own substance misuse issues and YouCan supports children and young people affected by a family member's substance use. The focus of the service is on building resilience and improving skills through a variety of positive activities.

We are also delighted that our Next Steps centre has started to open 7 days a week, allowing us to welcome more individuals who work during the week and to provide support for those who find weekends particularly challenging.

Our impact is only possible with your support. Thank you for being a friend of The Matthew Project, and I hope you enjoy reading about our achievements.

Rachel Chapman
CEO

We've turned 40

In 2024 we marked 40 years of making a difference to children, young people and adults in our communities. The Matthew Project was founded by Peter Farley, and his wife Margaret and today their legacy still lives on.



Peter's Vision: The Heart Behind the Matthew Project

In 1981, Peter left his role as Headmaster, driven by a deep calling to support young people struggling with addiction. Inspired by a vivid dream, he founded the Matthew Project – bringing together his experience in policing, education, and faith. The charity began with a simple but powerful mission: to offer hope through counselling, education, and outreach.

Peter faced criticism, particularly for distributing clean needles to reduce harm. When challenged, he met with Bishop Graham James, who affirmed, "You are doing the work the church should be doing." This encouragement strengthened Peter's resolve.

Over the years, Peter travelled globally – sharing the project's vision in Kenya, Latvia, Portugal, and beyond. By 2000, recognising the changing charity landscape, he stepped aside, inviting Julian Bryant to lead the project into a new era. Peter later became a Patron, proud to see the charity thrive with the same ethos he had instilled.

His favourite Bible scripture from Micah – "To act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" – guided his life and work. Today, the Matthew Project continues to honour Peter's legacy, offering young people and adults the support, compassion, and voice he believed they deserved.

A year in numbers

1,788

children, young people and adults have been supported through our services



3,912

volunteer hours delivered



192

Veterans received tailored support for their recovery



71%

of On Track young people experienced a positive change in their mental health



373

adults in prison were reached by the Criminal Justice Team



5,848

hot meals served
in the centre



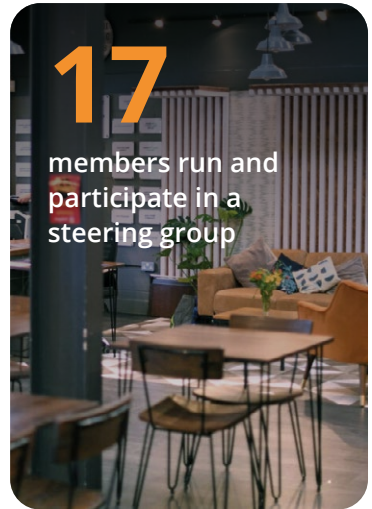
272

outreach and schools'
sessions delivered
across Norfolk



17

members run and
participate in a
steering group



70

positive activity sessions delivered
to children and young people



912

children and young people
have been supported



78%

adults successfully
completed the
Recovery Support
Programme



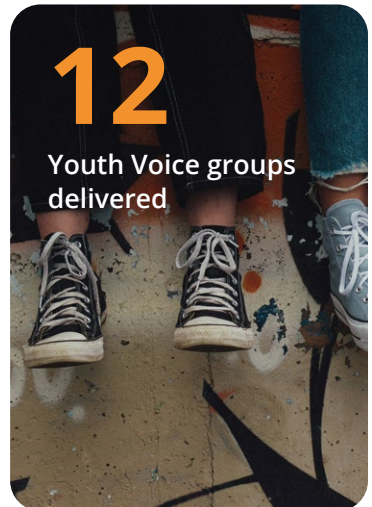
876

adults in recovery
benefited from
our services



12

Youth Voice groups
delivered



Adult Services

At the heart of Norwich, our Adult Services continue to transform lives through inclusive, recovery-focused support.

The Next Steps Centre – Norfolk's first community recovery hub, offers seven-day-a-week access to programmes that build resilience, skills, and connection. From our Recovery Support Programme to tailored work with veterans and individuals in the criminal justice system, we've supported over 876 people this year. Through consistent outreach, group work, and specialist interventions, we empower individuals to grow their recovery capital and rebuild their lives with dignity and purpose.



311

adults in recovery benefited from our services

373

adults in prison were reached by the Criminal Justice Team

192

Veterans received tailored support for their recovery

92

Veteran led support groups

5,848

hot meals served in the centre

78%

adults successfully completed the Recovery Support Programme

17

members run and participate in a steering group

Bob's Story

When Bob first walked through the doors of The Matthew Project on 19th February 2025, he had just left rehab. It wasn't his first attempt at sobriety – he'd been hospitalised many times due to alcohol use and had tried to quit before, only to relapse. This time, he arrived with no support in place, unsure of what to do next, but determined to make a change.

From that moment, Bob committed to his recovery. He began attending TMP several times a week, gradually building a routine and reconnecting with a sense of purpose. He joined our Recovery Support Programme course, which helped him increase his recovery capital and widen his support network to include other organisations.

Now, over three months sober – the longest he's been in years – Bob's progress is clear. His Recovery Star scores have soared, moving from 4s and 5s to 8s and 9s. More importantly, Bob has found stability, community, and hope. His journey is a testament to the power of persistence, connection, and the right support at the right time.



Next Steps



At the heart of Norwich, our Next Steps Centre is Norfolk's first community recovery hub. Open seven days a week, it offers a safe, welcoming space for people in recovery from addiction to build skills, friendships, and resilience.

The six-week Recovery Support Programme (RSP) is its foundation, followed by ongoing sessions in employability, personal development, and community engagement.

The centre also supports veterans, young people, and families affected by addiction. By providing consistent, inclusive support, especially outside traditional hours, Next Steps empowers individuals to grow their recovery capital and stay connected to a thriving recovery community.

Over the past year, the Next Steps Centre has supported 311 adults in recovery through a range of therapeutic and skills-based programmes. Of these, 64 individuals have progressed through the structured RSP, with the remainder accessing drop-ins and additional activities, including volunteering. In addition to the RSP we ran 1,560 drop-in sessions. Our members reported that:

79%
felt more socially connected

77%
felt better able to manage their addictive behaviour

84%
identified improvement in their mental health and wellbeing

Criminal Justice Service

Over the past year, our Criminal Justice team has continued to provide vital support to individuals affected by substance misuse within Norfolk's criminal justice system and beyond.

We work in HMP Norwich, HMP Bure and HMP Wayland as well as with offenders through the probation service in the community. Our work includes intensive one-to-one work as well as delivering SMART Recovery Groups

373

offenders and ex-offenders affected by substance misuse have been supported in total

Through consistent engagement and tailored support, the team continues to reduce stigma, promote recovery, and help individuals rebuild their lives after involvement with the criminal justice system.

"The Matthew Project has been a great resource to me, as it provides connection, advice and a safe space in which I don't feel isolated, and I know I can be here and feel safe."

Next Steps Member

Outside the Wire

Over the past year, our veteran team has continued to provide vital support to veterans facing challenges with substance misuse and mental health.

Over the past year, Outside the Wire has provided one-to-one and group support to 192 people. This includes:

121

veterans in the community received specialist one-to-one outreach support

39

family members provided with specialist one-to-one support and activities

32

veterans in custody supported with advice and guidance in prison forums

In addition, we also run volunteer led groups across the region, supporting an average of 70 group members a month.

We remain inspired by the strength and progress of those we support, and proud of the impact our team continues to make across Norfolk and Suffolk.



“My home life with my family is better than ever and although it is hard to put into words to express my feelings, all I can say is that after many dark days, I finally feel like me again – and for that I am grateful.”

Veteran

Volunteering

We are incredibly grateful for our dedicated team of volunteers who continue to play a vital role in the life of The Matthew Project.

Over the past year over 53 volunteers have generously contributed an estimated 3,912 hours – an average of 326 hours each month – to support our services and community.

Each volunteer brings something unique. Some serve coffee and conversation at our barista bar, others prepare meals in the kitchen, lend a hand in our allotment, or support creative activities through Next Steps. Their time, energy, and compassion help create a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone who walks through our doors.

To every volunteer who has given their time this year: thank you. Your contribution makes a real difference, and we simply couldn't do it without you.



“Volunteering at The Matthew Project has been a huge part of my recovery journey. It helps me to keep focused on staying in recovery myself, but it also is very rewarding to help others on their own journey and help them to see that there is hope. When doing jewellery in the workshop, people often open up when they haven’t been able to in a talking group. Volunteering as a recovering addict at the centre gives others a chance to speak to me as someone who understands the journey, which I found and continue to find a huge support and stops you from feeling alone.”
Volunteer



Young People's Services

This year saw the launch of YouCan and Unity, two new services supporting young people affected by substance use. YouCan works with those impacted by a family member's addiction, while Unity supports young people facing challenges with their own substance use.

Both focus on building resilience through positive activities and skill development. Alongside these, our On Track service continues to support 13 to 24-year-olds who are NEET or at risk of becoming so, helping them overcome barriers and move towards education, employment, or training.



912

children and young people have been supported



272

outreach and schools sessions delivered across Norfolk



71%

of On Track young people saw positive mental health changes



12

Youth Voice groups delivered



Hananka's Story

Hananka was referred to our service by her college due to concerns about her regular use of ketamine, ecstasy, and other substances. Initially, support focused on harm reduction, helping Hananka understand the risks and impacts of her substance use. Over time, she gained the confidence to make healthier choices and began to self-advocate, even in challenging social situations.

Between sessions, Hananka felt safe reaching out to her worker with questions, allowing her to access timely harm reduction advice. She shared this information with her peers, including drug alerts and safety tips, which led to a noticeable reduction in substance use across her friendship group.

Reflecting on her journey, Hananka said, "From when I started to where I am now, there is a significant change in everything I do." Her progress was clear—not only in her own choices but in the influence, she had on others. She even referred a friend to the service, recognising the value of the support she had received.



YouCan

This year, YouCan provided vital support to children and young people under 19 affected by a family member's substance use. Through tailored one-to-one sessions in safe, familiar spaces, the team helped 232 young people better understand and navigate their experiences.

A standout moment was YouCan's first residential trip to How Hill, where young people came together to learn new skills – from sailing to thatching – while connecting with others who shared similar experiences. This sense of belonging proved transformative.

YouCan also launched its Peer Mentor Programme, training young people to support others by creating safe, non-judgemental spaces for sharing and connection. Beyond direct support, young people helped shape wider change – contributing to focus groups for the Norman Lamb Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, judging the Flourish Awards, and influencing service development.

YouCan continues to empower young people to build resilience, form meaningful connections, and have a voice in shaping the support they receive.



Unity



Unity and YouCan launch to 80 professionals across Norfolk

Unity provides Norfolk-wide support to young people under 19 who are concerned about their own substance use. Over the past year, Unity has worked with 243 young people.

They provide support tailored to each individual, with one-to-one sessions held in safe, familiar spaces. The team offers education around substances, harm reduction strategies, and links to additional services where needed.

Unity also ran twenty-two outreach sessions for groups identified as having increased vulnerability to substance misuse providing a further 253 young people with vital information about the impact of substances on physical and emotional wellbeing.

As a result of the work delivered by Unity:

75%
of young people reduced
their Cannabis use

72%
reduced their alcohol use

Unity delivers high-quality training to professionals across Norfolk, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to support those they work with.

Unity continues to empower young people to make informed decisions, reduce harm, and build resilience - ensuring that support is accessible, compassionate, and rooted in understanding.

On Track

Our On Track service supports young people aged 13-24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), or at risk of becoming so. Through tailored one-to-one support and positive activities, we help young people overcome barriers and build brighter futures.

This year, 184 young people were supported by On Track across Norfolk including Safe SPACE in Norwich and coaching in South Norfolk, Broadland, King's Lynn, and Great Yarmouth.

Impact has been significant: 90% of participants in the Right to Succeed programme improved their wellbeing. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive - 100% felt listened to, supported, and would recommend the service.

Twelve young people have gone on to volunteer, including roles on TMP's youth panel, supporting SafeSPACE activities, and mentoring peers. On Track continues to empower young people to build confidence, develop skills, and take meaningful steps toward their future.



The feedback received from our participants are:

77%
feel their
Practitioner
provided them
with links and
opportunities

82%
agreed they
received
enough regular
appointments

95%
found the 1-to-1
support useful or
very useful

91%
reported their
confidence and
self-esteem had
improved

100%
felt comfortable,
listened to, and
got the help they
needed from their
practitioner

100%
would recommend
our service to
others

A young person with dark hair, seen from the side and back, wearing a white and purple patterned jacket. They are looking out towards a blurred background of trees and foliage. In the lower-left background, a blurred face of another person is visible.

**“I feel
happier
without so
much on
my chest,
being able
to talk to
someone
made
a huge
difference”**

Young Person

40th Anniversary

In summer 2024, The Matthew Project proudly celebrated 40 years of supporting individuals and communities across Norfolk. To mark this milestone, staff, volunteers, and members came together for a series of special events that honoured our journey and looked ahead with hope.

40FEST, held on a sunny Saturday in September, brought our whole community together. From a BBQ hosted by Outside The Wire to creative workshops led by Next Steps and games facilitated by our Young People's team, the day was filled with laughter, connection, and celebration. Friends, families, and supporters joined in, enjoying ice cream, coffee, and cake in a joyful atmosphere.

Our Supporters' Night recognised the incredible individuals who have stood by us over the decades. Guests heard powerful recovery stories through our Living Library and previewed our 40 Stories Exhibition – a collection of personal reflections from staff, volunteers, and members.

The exhibition has since toured venues across Norfolk, sharing the voices and experiences that have shaped our work. From churches to police HQs, we're grateful to all who hosted it.

As we look to the future, these celebrations remind us of the strength of our community – and the lasting impact of 40 years of compassion, resilience, and hope.





Community Support



We have been truly overwhelmed by the incredible support from our local community.

Our much-loved DINE events continued to be sell outs, featuring culinary talents like Francis Woolf from Woolf & Social, Jacob and Ellen from The Steampacket, and for our special 40th Anniversary DINE, we were honoured to welcome renowned chef Charlie Hodson.

Over the past year, more than 52 individuals and groups have supported our work through regular giving and inspiring fundraising efforts. From skydives to half marathons at Blickling and Run Norwich, and even epic cycle rides.

In 2024, we raised a phenomenal £65,492.24 through the Big Give Christmas Challenge, and in 2025, we launched our first Business Breakfast, engaging with over 20 businesses across Norfolk to build lasting partnerships.

One of the most meaningful events in our calendar is our Annual Remembrance Service, held every September. This year, over 200 people came together to honour and remember loved ones lost to addiction – a powerful reminder of why our work matters.

Thank you to our funders



Norwich Freeman's Charity, Norwich Consolidated Charities, The Veteran's Foundation, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk County Council through the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board, The Souter Charitable Trust, The National Lottery Community Foundation, Right to Succeed, Norfolk Community Foundation, The Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, The Garfield Weston Foundation, Coco Joelle Foundation, The Albert Gubay Foundation, Sir Norman Lamb Coalition for Young People, The Alan Boswell Group Charitable Trust, The 29th of May 1961 Charitable Trust, Community Alcohol Partnerships, The Royal British Legion.



**"My worker was the only person to
care about me at a dark time in my life.
Everything is better now, my mental
health and my physical health as I have
been clean off any sort of drugs for over
two months now and I am loving life."**

Young Person

THE
**MATTHEW
PROJECT**

Finding hope together

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