

Freedom Community Alliance

Supporters Newsletter – July 2025



Dear friend

I am pleased to share with you some of our news from the last 6 months here at Freedom. You may remember that at the beginning of the year, we shared an opportunity to access some match funding from Aviva Insurance. Well, as a result of the kindness of James Scott from Crowthornes Insurance Brokers who nominated us; the amazing generosity of many of you, alongside Aviva Insurance we received a grand total of £20,000. In addition to this, in March, we were invited to an Aviva Community Awards Day in London where we were awarded a further £10k. All of this covered the cost of a replacement engine for our minibus & much, much more. 😊 So, thank you to all involved!



In recent months we have been delighted to welcome a new member to our staff team in the Day Centre when Sara Peters joined us in May, initially on a 12-month contract, but we really hope it will extend beyond that. Sara, whose previous work experience was as a letting agent, says: *'All the staff at the Freedom Centre are such lovely people and are always happy to help people in need. They have made me feel so at home. I actually enjoy coming to work. It is an honour to be part of the team. I feel that I have been blessed and appreciate the opportunity to make a difference in people's lives, as they do in my life.'* Sara has settled in so quickly and so well and is a wonderful asset to the team.

After previous years that have been pretty unbearable for our team working in the office in the heat of summer, we are delighted to report that this year, they have found some cool relief after a significant government grant for the Centre has enabled the installation of an air conditioning system run by air source heat pumps. At the same time, the grant also enabled us to replace all our lighting in the building to much lower cost LED lighting. So huge thanks to our fund raiser Lorna for pulling this successful bid together.

As you can see from some of the stats for the first half of 2025, our Day Centre and Partnership team working from the Freedom Centre continue to be very busy:

Activity	Total	Activity	Total
Visits to the Freedom Centre	4911	Computers used	51
Different individuals supported	321	Food parcels given	121
Lunches provided	3007	Loads of client laundry	130
Clothing donations given out	140	Gym visits	557
Showers provided	410	On site GP / Nurse interventions	378
Foodbank vouchers given	125	Mental Health interventions	56
Phone used by clients	73	On site pods nights occupied	393
Phones charged	221	Breakfasts for pod users	251
Individual counselling sessions	79	'Together' clients seen	107

In addition to the above, our housing team has continued to provide safe homes and ongoing support for up to 51 residents using the accommodation we provide across the town. They do such an amazing job and continue to make a real difference to the lives of those who may otherwise be rough sleeping.

You will see that one of the services we are able to offer is access to counselling sessions for clients who we feel would benefit from it. As a result of grants secured from different sources, the two amazing counsellors

we work with - Ally (left) and Philippa (right) - have provided 184 individual sessions to 23 individuals over the last 12 months. *Philippa says: 'We both love working at the Freedom Centre and find it so meaningful and rewarding. Each session allows us the opportunity to work with people who have, or still are, facing incredible hardships and to walk alongside them as they work to rebuild their lives. I love working with the staff too as I watch them offer the clients kindness, dignity, hope and a path forward'.*



In April, FCA was approached by Barnstaple Town Council and offered the opportunity of having 3 connected allotment plots. On first viewing, this looked a massive undertaking, but the team sensed a vision to provide a therapeutic space for clients to be meaningfully occupied growing veg that could then be used in the Day Centre Kitchen. The Council have given us until September to show our commitment to the patch, and the team have devoted a huge amount of energy into transforming the space with clients actively involved in using it. We have given the project the name **'Freedom to Grow'** and you can see the progress that has been made from some videos on our YouTube channel: [Freedom Community Alliance - YouTube](#)



In very much the same theme, FCA recently received a £10k grant from Sport England to encourage our residents to engage in positive and healthy activities such as badminton, swimming, walking, table tennis and for the more adventurous, paddle boarding and kayaking. We hope this will help overcome boredom and give a greater sense of confidence and adventure as well as promoting healthier lives. There has been a very positive response to this opportunity from a survey that all residents have been sent but it is early days.

With the above two paragraphs in mind, we are looking at extending our volunteer opportunities to include potentially helping to maintain the allotment and also driving clients to different activities. So, if you have time and either green fingers or a driving licence, and would like to know more about these, or indeed helping in our Day Centre kitchen, please don't hesitate to make contact with us at: info@freedomcommunityalliance.org.uk

It has only been since the New Year that we have had confirmed an extension of government monies to fund the delivery of many of our core services and enable us to maintain the size of the team we have. This is a massive relief. We have funding confirmed for the next 12 months and are now awaiting details of the 2 years beyond that. We are encouraged by the Government's focus on preventing rough sleeping before it happens and their commitment to providing a longer-term view of funding so we can properly plan 3 years in advance.

Some significant new legislation called the 'Supported Housing Regulatory Oversight Act' is expected to land soon. It seeks to ensure the quality of supported housing and ensure standards of support nationally provide good value for money. We at FCA welcome this and feel well placed to deal with this scrutiny. Our CEO Phil was privileged to be involved in the recent national exercise to provide feedback to Government about their proposals and we await the outcome of that, hoping we avoid the 'sledgehammer to crack a nut'. 😊

Finally, and just in the last few days, our wonderful GP Nigel and Nurse Louise who work alongside the Freedom Team from the centre here, completed a challenge to cycle over 130km in a day to raise £2800 for a piece of equipment to help diagnose and treat respiratory conditions like COPD ... and all on their day off! What a fantastic effort. Well done to them both. There is still time to support them in this by donating at: [Louise Scantlebury is fundraising for Freedom Community Alliance](#)



Thank you all so much for your wonderful ongoing support. It means so much to us. Bless you all.

The Freedom Team