

**EMBARGO: Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May**

## **£410K to tackle youth unemployment in Cumbria**

**Today (Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May) Youth Futures Foundation announces more funding for Cumbria Youth Alliance (CYA) to launch a new county-wide youth support programme, Forging Futures. Young people facing the greatest challenges will receive personalised support in housing, wellbeing, work experience and job search allowing them to fulfil their potential.**

This comes at a time when the number of young people not earning or learning has risen to 788,000, a 13% increase in one year and higher than pre-pandemic levels. This is compounded by an increase in mental ill health amongst young people.

A report published by PwC and Youth Futures found that if the UK matched the rates of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), in Germany, it could add £38bn to the economy.

To tackle this challenge the new programme will support young people in Cumbria facing disadvantage, including care leavers. It will involve a mix of training, work experience and volunteering, traineeships and apprenticeships geared towards finding and keeping a good job. To make sure their transition into the world of work is successful, CYA will offer in-work support if needed.

Forging Futures, set to open this month, builds on the successful delivery of CYA's employment programme launched in 2020, with an initial £253k grant from Youth Futures, funded from dormant assets. It saw the regional charity collaborate with Ipsos Mori to improve youth employment support by identifying gaps in provision and evaluating the effectiveness of its service.

Since working with Youth Futures and Ipsos Mori, the Cumbrian charity has improved its approach to evaluation, data collection and monitoring, resulting in better services and outcomes for young people. These learnings will be shared by Youth Futures, as the What Works Centre for youth employment, to improve policy and practice at a national level.

### **Barry Fletcher, CEO, Youth Futures, comments:**

*"It's critical that organisations like Cumbria Youth Alliance can continue their work supporting young people facing the greatest challenges, including care leavers who are four times more likely to be NEET. That is why we are delighted to continue our funding.*

*"The Forging Futures initiative builds on the impact of the original programme we funded and will create strong, consistent referral routes for young people in the area.*

*"We strongly believe that CYA can help us in our mission to reduce the youth employment gap by improving how services are delivered so that we can scale up that learning to a national level."*

**Becky Wolstenholme, CEO, Cumbria Youth Alliance, comments:**

*"We're delighted to build on the momentum of phase one and reach more young people in the county with this vital support. The additional Youth Futures funding means we can continue to embed improved evaluation and delivery processes."*

**Cass, a young person supported by Cumbria Youth Alliance, said:**

*"You get back what you put into it and from being on the program I have gained new skills which benefit me on a daily basis. I feel I have more opportunities open to me."*

To find out more information about Youth Futures Foundation, visit:

[youthfuturesfoundation.org](http://youthfuturesfoundation.org)