

## **Brinnington Swap Shop**

Brinnington is one of Northern's stations located in Stockport, an area which a local council reported as ranking within the most deprived 1% nationally (BBC). The station welcomes over 100,000 customers a year and was previously a hotspot for anti-social behaviours amongst young people which resulted in a lot of staff refusing to work there.

Stewart Hall, a customer service assistant at Northern Rail is credited with turning around the fortunes of the station by setting up a "Swap Shop" with his Colleague Darin Astbury. The Swap Shop provides a service for those in the local community in need of food, clothes, books and other household items. The scheme proved incredibly popular, with more than 1,000 members of the local community joining the Facebook group and up to 20 volunteers now helping to co-ordinate donations. They have even helped fully-furnish houses for people that have moved into the local area with no possessions.



***"The aim was to help people and change people's attitudes towards the station as well. For us, the 'Swap Shop' was about providing practical help to people living close to the station that were most in need. It has become a community hub where people come to chat, it hasn't just benefited the community, but it has also helped my mental health "* Stewart Hall**

As word spread throughout the community about what the pair were doing at the station, they saw a steady reduction in anti-social behaviour, which makes the station itself a more valued resource for the community who need to use the railway to get about.

The Swap Shop has shown to be so popular that it gained the attention of The One Show on the BBC, with presenter Kevin Duala coming to interview the pair, as well as a feature on BBC Radio 4's award winning current affairs programme.

Craig Harrop, regional director for Northern, said: ***"Stewart and Darin are perfect examples of the positive impact each and every one of us can have on our community if we put our mind to it. Their actions – and those of other colleagues at the station and volunteers – are to be commended."***