

NewstrAid newsletter

Issue 23 | Spring 2025

Spring has arrived at last, bringing with it the warmth of sunshine, and the promise of longer days.

Yet, amidst this season of renewal, we are facing headwinds. Recent government budget cuts are projected to push more than 250,000 people into poverty, underscoring the urgent need for support in these difficult times.

This is where NewstrAid's work becomes even more critical. In response to the growing financial strain on individuals and families, we introduced the Cost of Living Crisis Fund a few years ago to help with rising energy costs and inflation. Today, we continue this important effort under a new name – the General Hardship Fund – to better reflect the ongoing struggles many are facing. With these latest cuts set to deepen these challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment to help those in need.

If you, or anyone you know with at least two years of connection to the newstrade,

are experiencing hardship, please do not hesitate to reach out to us using the contact details listed in this newsletter. We are here to support you.

We also launched our Retailer Support Scheme last year, with collaboration from our trade publication partners. Together, we've raised awareness of the issues facing retailers and the ways NewstrAid can offer support. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

Finally, we bid a fond farewell to our Operations Director Tom Rodger, who is retiring to enjoy quality time with his family, golf, and holidays. Tom's dedication has made a difference to so many lives and we are very grateful for everything he has done to support NewstrAid. At the same time, we are excited to welcome Paul Bacon, who will now lead our Operations function. Please join me in wishing Tom a fulfilling and joyful retirement, and in extending our best wishes to Paul in his new role.

Neil Jagger and The NewstrAid Team

A message from our Welfare Manager

Recent changes announced in the **Government's Spring Statement** have significantly altered the welfare benefits landscape, particularly for individuals with health conditions, disabilities, or caring responsibilities. These reforms could mean a reduction in benefits for many, creating uncertainty and financial strain.

In these uncertain times, NewstrAid is here to help those within the newstrade who are affected. Our Welfare Team can provide state benefits advice, ensuring you have the most up-to-date information on any changes or entitlements available to you. If you find yourself facing hardship due to benefit cuts, we may also be able to offer short-term financial assistance until you get back on your feet.

Contact our free helpline 0800 917 8616 if you need support.

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Win £150 of Amazon Vouchers!



NewstrAid 
The helping hand of the Newstrade 

We are the helping hand of the newstrade



Financial Support



Grants



Welfare Volunteer Home Visits



Support For Disabled & Carers



Help For Children



State Benefits Advice



Debt Advice



Emotional Support

Free Helpline:
0800
917 8616



www.newstraid.org.uk

Retailer Support Scheme awards over £60k to retailers in its first 12 months.



We are delighted to report that we have awarded 137 grants to retailers in need since the launch of our Retailer Support Scheme in May 2024.

Designed to provide financial, emotional, and practical support, the scheme has already paid out more than £60K to retailers facing ill health, family crises, bereavement, and retail crime, helping them navigate unexpected hardships.

Katie Babooram, Welfare Manager, emphasised the scheme's impact; *"The overwhelming response to this scheme highlights just how many retailers are struggling right now. While we can't cover business-related costs, we're making*

a real difference in people's home lives—offering financial support for essential household bills, home repairs, and even giving benefits advice and providing access to counselling where appropriate."

The Retailer Support Scheme also provides vital emotional assistance for those affected by shoplifting or retail crime, as well as financial aid for households experiencing a loss of income due to these incidents.

Katie added; *"It's important to stress that this support isn't just for business owners—anyone working in the sale of newspapers and magazines can ask for help, including shop staff."*

All grants are non-repayable and do not affect other benefits.

Full details can be found at www.newstraid.org.uk/retailer-support-scheme/



Retailer Support Scheme – How we have helped retailers



Support following retail crime and personal crisis

Following his divorce, Bobby moved in with his parents who lived above the family shop. The shop had been broken into more than once causing both physical and emotional damage. In addition, Bobby was providing financial support to his ex-wife who was the primary carer for their young son and was struggling to cover her priority bills. The change in his circumstances following the divorce had resulted in a severe reduction in his finances and the situation was causing Bobby extreme stress.

NewstrAid provided him with a one-off grant from the Retailer Support Scheme to help him meet living costs. In addition, he was provided with details of the Wellbeing Helpline and Website to help him cope following the shop break ins and deal with his money worries during this stressful time.



Financial support for household bills

Independent retailer Katrina had worked in the newstrade for a number of years and had been running her own shop for 18 months, however, the business was struggling which, in turn, was having an impact on her ability to pay household bills and make ends meet.

Following a short financial assessment NewstrAid awarded her with a grant from the Retailer Support Fund to help her cover her bills whilst she tried to sell her business.



Support during illness

Manish and Shreya were both working and managing their finances well when Manish suffered a heart attack and had to undergo surgery which meant he could not work. As he was self-employed he did not receive any sick pay during this time and this had a devastating effect on the couple who were in danger of spiralling into debt.

NewstrAid referred the couple to the Debt Advice Foundation for help on managing their bills and outgoings and also advised them on other sources of help that might be available to them. In addition, they applied for a grant from NewstrAid's Retailer Support Scheme which was subsequently awarded to help them meet their living costs whilst Manish recovered from his heart attack.





Financial support following retirement

Derek and Shirley had owned a newsagency for 60 years but in recent years they had taken a back seat and handed the business over to their daughter to run. They were in poor health and relying on income from their state pensions to get by.

NewstrAid advised them on some state benefits they were entitled to and, following a financial assessment and a visit from a local Welfare Volunteer, the couple were awarded regular benefit which will see them receive a payment three times a year to help cover their living costs.



Emotional support following retail crime

After she was verbally abused and violently shoved by a shoplifter who was trying to leave her shop without paying, Amrita was very shaken up and started to experience panic attacks when working in the shop. Her manager contacted NewstrAid to see if we could help.

NewstrAid gave Amrita the free Wellbeing Helpline number so that she could speak to a trained counsellor about her traumatic experience and find ways to deal with the incident moving forwards. She was also introduced to the Wellbeing Website so that she could access resources to help her deal with stress and anxiety.

Staff changes

Good Bye Tom...

We said a fond farewell to our Operations Director Tom Rodger when he retired at the end of March. Tom had been with NewstrAid since 2019 and prior to that had spent many years working for wholesaler Smiths News.

Of his time with the charity, Tom said: *"I have thoroughly enjoyed my 6 years working for NewstrAid."*

"I have made many friends during my time and I hope to see them all at a NewstrAid event in the near future"

Tom will continue to work with the charity as a Welfare Volunteer.

...Hello Paul

Taking over from Tom as our new Operations Manager is Paul Bacon who joined the NewstrAid team on 17th March.

Paul most recently worked for Harmsworth Media as Key Account Manager - The i Paper and has previously worked in various sales and marketing roles for the Independent and The i Paper as well as working in distribution for wholesalers including Smiths News.



NewstrAid Launches General Hardship Fund to Support Those Struggling to Make Ends Meet

We recently unveiled a brand-new General Hardship Fund to provide urgent financial relief for those from the newstrade who are finding it difficult to keep up with essential household costs.

The fund offers grants of up to £250 per household, helping to ease the burden of rising bills and everyday expenses for anyone who has worked in the sale or distribution of newspapers and magazines in the UK. Katie Babooram, Welfare Manager at NewstrAid, said: *"With the Government's Spring budget announcement bringing further cuts to essential benefits, many people are now facing even greater financial strain. We hope this fund will act as a much-needed safety net for those struggling to make ends meet."*

This initiative builds on the success of NewstrAid's Cost of Living Crisis Fund, which provided crucial aid to those facing economic uncertainty between 2022 and 2024.

For full details on how to apply, visit: www.newstraid.org.uk/general-hardship-fund



Did you know?

In 2024 we distributed **over £800,000** to households in need

True or False?

You can access discounts for more than 1000 high street retailers through the Wellbeing Website.

True!

Log into the website and click on the Discounts tab for details

<https://tinyurl.com/2j5r2wx9>

Could you give up a few hours each year to make a real difference to someone's life?

NewstrAid is looking for people to join our invaluable team of **Welfare Volunteers** who keep in touch with those receiving financial help from the charity by visiting or telephoning them during the year.

All you need is:

- ✓ **A little TIME**
- ✓ **A willingness to CHAT and to LISTEN**
- ✓ **EMPATHY for those going through a tough time**

"We all have busy lives, but the reward of being fortunate enough to help others far outweighs any time you put into the role."

Darren, Welfare Volunteer



For more information, visit the NewstrAid website or call our team today: **01279 879 569**
www.newstraid.org.uk/welfare-volunteers/

Wellbeing Suite Spotlight – Mindful May

Throughout May we are focusing on mental health and wellbeing through our Mindful May initiative. We have created a calendar of daily wellbeing activities to help improve your emotional health and we will also be posting information on social media throughout the month.



You can download the activity calendar from our website for free
www.newstraid.org.uk/mindful-may-2025/

Don't forget, there are also hundreds of resources on our **FREE Wellbeing Website** to support good mental health, including guided meditation and a soothing audio sound bath for stress relief!



Prize Draw

WE ARE GIVING AWAY

£150 of Amazon Vouchers!

Thank you to everyone who entered our Winter edition prize draw and congratulations to the winner who received their prize in April.

The question was:

How many people did NewstrAid provide advice to in 2024?

The correct answer was: 425.

If you would like to enter the next prize draw, please answer the following question:

How many grants has NewstrAid awarded through the Retailer Support Scheme since its launch in 2024?

As always, the answer is in this newsletter. Please send your answer to mail@newstraid.org.uk

All correct answers received before 30th June 2025 will be entered into the prize draw. Terms and conditions apply. See the NewstrAid website for details www.newstraid.org.uk/about/newstraid-policy-documents/

If you no longer want to support NewstrAid

Thank you for making a regular contribution to NewstrAid through your news wholesaler's weekly invoice, either as a 40p a week Retailer Charitable Donation (RCD) / NewstrAid Charitable Donation, or by membership of the NewstrAid 200 Club / Old Ben 200/400.

Your money allows us to make a real difference to the lives of people from our own industry who need help. We are very grateful for this support. However, if you would like to cancel your Retailer Charitable Donation, your membership of the 200 Club, or both, please do one of the following:

- Contact your supplying wholesaler using the relevant address from the following:
InPost / Menzies Distribution: enquiries.headoffice@menziesdistribution.com or
Smiths News: mynewsaccount@smithsnews.co.uk or
NewsTeam: **3 Saline Street, Airdrie ML6 9BE**
- Fill in the opt-out form on our website: www.newstraid.org.uk/retailer-donations/
- Email NewstrAid at: mail@newstraid.org.uk
- Write to us at: **NewstrAid, Suite 2 Threemall Estate, Start Hill, Bishop's Stortford CM22 7TD**
- Call us on **01279 879569** or on **Free Helpline 0800 917 8616**

You can also use any of these contact details to let us know that you no longer wish to receive this newsletter but please be aware that this will automatically cancel all contributions.



NewstrAid Benevolent Fund

Suite 2 Threemall Estate, Start Hill, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM22 7TD

Free Helpline: 0800 917 8616

www.newstraid.org.uk Tel: 01279 879569 mail@newstraid.org.uk



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