

Review of the Talk by Paul Bohan, CEO of Zink

On 14 September 2026, Paul Bohan, CEO of Zink, gave an inspiring presentation about the organisation's work in Buxton and the positive impact it has on individuals and families facing a range of challenges. Paul has led Zink for eleven years and has a background in the Civil Service, together with qualifications in Business, Social Justice and Social Research.

Originally developed from the High Peak Food Bank, Zink's vision has always been to reduce the need for food banks by addressing the underlying causes of poverty and social disadvantage. Paul explained that issues such as unemployment, poor mental health, addiction, homelessness, neurodivergence and social isolation are often interconnected. Rather than treating these problems separately, Zink aims to support the whole person and help individuals make lasting changes to their lives.

A key message of the talk was that behaviour is often a response to personal circumstances. By providing people with opportunities, support and encouragement, Zink helps them build confidence, improve their wellbeing and move towards employment and greater independence.

The organisation operates a thriving Community Café in Buxton, which offers affordable meals; a cooked main meal £5, puddings £2.50 and a free drink, and a welcoming environment for people who may simply want company and conversation. Alongside the café, Zink provides a wide range of activities and services, including recovery groups, support for autistic adults, English language classes, music activities, work coaching and mental health support.

Particularly impressive was the emphasis on employment support. Zink employs work coaches who help people with training, job applications and career development. Small interventions, such as helping someone obtain suitable interview clothing or gain volunteering experience, can have a significant impact on self-esteem and future opportunities.

Paul also explained the concept of micro jobs, which provide people with a small amount of paid work each week. These opportunities help participants develop workplace skills, establish routines and gain experience that can be included on job applications. Around 67% of people supported through Zink's employment programmes move into work, significantly higher than the national average for those experiencing long-term unemployment.

Another important aspect of Zink's work is housing. Recognising the shortage of affordable accommodation in Buxton, the charity has invested in purchasing properties to provide

stable homes for vulnerable families. Zink hopes to expand this housing programme further in the future.

The organisation also works closely with health services. Its Neuro-Hub supports neurodivergent children and young adults, while mental health services help those experiencing emotional difficulties or crisis.

One of the most uplifting parts of the presentation was hearing about Zink's swimming initiative, Zink or Swim. The programme has helped participants improve their physical health, confidence and sense of achievement.

During the question-and-answer session, Paul explained that approximately 400 to 450 people access Zink's services each week, with an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 people benefiting annually. He stressed that prevention is just as important as crisis support, and that people should seek help before problems become overwhelming.

Overall, the talk provided a fascinating insight into the breadth of Zink's work and the difference it makes within the community. Rather than offering short-term solutions alone, Zink focuses on helping people gain confidence, skills, stability and hope for the future.

How to Support Zink

To donate to Zink visit www.zink.org.uk

Paul concluded by highlighting the importance of community support in enabling Zink to continue its work. There are many ways to get involved, including volunteering, fundraising, making financial donations, or supporting the Community Café. Local businesses and organisations can also contribute through partnerships, sponsorship, and providing employment opportunities for those taking part in Zink's programmes. Every contribution helps the charity continue to support individuals and families facing challenges, creating opportunities for people to build confidence, improve wellbeing, and achieve greater independence.

By supporting Zink, members of the community can play a direct role in helping vulnerable people access practical assistance, develop new skills, and create positive, lasting change in their lives.