

What can biz learn from the North East?

The Great Business Debate team went on the road to visit a highly trusted region in the UK – the North East of England — to hear what Greggs, the bakery, George F White, the business consultant, and Kavli, dairy, dips and pate manufacturer, are doing to support their workforce and local communities.

Our team spent half a day at Gregg's and met with Emma Walton, Head of Reward and Policy (People), Malcom Copland, Commercial Director, Terry Meehan, Technical Support Manager (Retail), Jonathan Jowett, Company Secretary & General Counsel, Richard Hutton, Finance Director, and got a factory tour from Ian Blackwood, Bakery Operations Manager.

We heard about Gregg's: [**Fresh Start programme**](#) that has helped over 600 youth, unemployed, homeless and ex-offenders last year alone, and is supported by over 100 Greggs managers; 500 store-wide **food donation programme**; **customer feedback** approach where they survey up to 1000 people each month; and [**company values**](#) are shared across the organisation.

We met with Sally Hart, Head of Communications, and Holly Armstrong, Operations Manager, from George F. White and heard about: how they support the **Northumberland community** with mentoring and other local initiatives; their [**Newcastle business award**](#); their **strong ties with the local business community** have helped them excel through internal challenges; and how structure and planning has helped **engaged their staff** through change.

We met with Paul Lewney, Managing Director, and learned about the Kavli business model to donate all profits to the Kavli Trust, with funds going to charities and local farms. We also heard about: Kavli's involvement in the [**Big Sing**](#) music initiative; about their culture and how it helps maintain very **high retention rates**; and their [**Better Health at Work**](#) staff engagement activities.

The Great Business Debate team had a great time in the North East, and are very excited to continue their UK tour with a next stop in York and The Humber region!

