

Approved - 20 April 2023

## **ASHINGTON CHARITY PROVIDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN THE ROUND THANKS TO NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY BACKING**

More than 100 people in a Northumberland town have been keeping warm through the winter thanks to the work of a local charity and funding from Newcastle Building Society.

Full Circle Food in Ashington used a £3,000 Society grant to cover the costs of opening the doors of its Hirst Park headquarters to local people as a ‘warm space’ during the coldest part of the year.

The funding enabled the charity to provide hot meals and soup, facilities for washing clothes and access to a wet room for showering to its visitors, most of whom live in the surrounding area, and complemented the offer of basic goods from its food pantry to those most in need.

The project saw around 50 local people attending the charity’s premises on a regular basis, with the same number again dropping in more infrequently.

Funding also allowed the Full Circle team to identify more ways in which support can be provided to its beneficiaries to help improve their well-being.

The grant has been provided through the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, which offers grants to charities and community groups located in or around the communities served by the Society’s branch network.

Full Circle Food works to support people living in Northumberland in relation to growing food to eat, healthy cooking on a budget, waste reduction, and the impact food production has on local and global eco-systems.

Its community garden offers the opportunity to learn about growing food and plants from seed, and can provide a quiet space for reflection in the sensory garden, while the charity also runs cooking classes which help local people learn how to make tasty recipes and manage a food budget.

Andrew Wisbach, Operations Manager at Full Circle Food, says: “The last few months have been tough for a lot of people as the cost-of-living crisis starts to make a real impact and we want to provide a space that gave the most vulnerable members of our community somewhere safe and warm to spend some time.”

“The extra support we’ve been able to provide has been very well received, especially by local people who’ve told us that they wouldn’t have known where else to go.”

“As well as meeting immediate needs, creating new community links has helped support more people into further projects to tackle wider issues through expert partners.

“Newcastle Building Society’s support couldn’t have come at a better time, and with a lot of different spending priorities to cover, it’s enabled us to do much more than would otherwise have been possible.”

Stephen Burt, Manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Ashington branch, adds: “The Full Circle team has stepped up to meet a clear local need during difficult times and has further increased its positive impact on the local community’s well-being.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £2.3m in grants and partnerships to a wide variety of charities and projects across the region, including the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation and the Prince’s Trust.

The grants are so far estimated to have had a positive impact on more than 151,000 people.

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**For further information on Newcastle Building Society, please contact:**

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### **About Newcastle Building Society**

Newcastle Building Society\* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 31 branches and assets of more than £5.3bn. We've been here for our members for over 160 years.

As a leading local employer, we're committed to growing our region's talent and being a great place to work where people can realise their potential. We hold Platinum IIP and won the Excellence and Positive Impact Award at the 2022 CIPD North East of England HR&D Awards. We were named Company of the Year in the Northumberland and Tyneside category of the North East Business Awards 2022.

We help people to own their home, to save and to plan their finances through our range of products and services. We believe in the role of the high street at the heart of our communities and are proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our region.

Our Financial Advice is provided through our Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited division\*\*.

We're dedicated to helping our North East communities make positive changes; since 2016 the financial support through grants and donations from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to benefit local causes has surpassed £2.3m

\*Newcastle Building Society Principal Office: 1 Cobalt Park Way, Cobalt Business Park, NE28 9EJ. Newcastle Building Society is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. Newcastle Building Society is entered in the Financial Services Register under number 156058. You can check this on the Financial Services Register or by contacting the Financial Conduct Authority on 0800 111 6768. Call 0845 734 4345 or visit us online at <https://www.newcastle.co.uk/>

\*\* Newcastle Building Society introduces to Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited for advice on Investments, Pensions, Life and Protection Insurance and Inheritance Tax Planning. Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited is an appointed representative of The Openwork Partnership which is a trading style of Openwork Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.