

## **WORKPLACE SKILLS ON THE MENU AT GATESHEAD YOUNG PEOPLE'S CHARITY'S NEW LUNCH CLUB**

A Gateshead young people's charity is bringing different parts of its community together by launching a new lunch club with the help of a four-figure grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation.

Skills4Work supports young adults with a range of disabilities and/or mental health conditions with making the transition from education to the workplace by providing opportunities for them to develop the skills they need to succeed.

Weekly work placements are arranged with employers from a variety of sectors, helping service users gain experience in areas relating to their individual interests. The charity also organises regular gardening and walking groups that offer the chance to work on any issues in an informal environment while also learning new skills at the same time.

Skills4Work is now using a £3,000 grant to set up a monthly lunch club for around 20 older people at The Mount Community Centre in Eighton Banks. The lunch club will be run by service users who've not previously had any workplace experience.

Over the next year, they will be supported by staff from the charity, as well as by other young people who've previously been supported by Skills4Life and succeeded in developing their own workplace skills.

The funding is being 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.

Set up eight years ago, Skills4Work works with 12 young people at any one time to ensure they receive the specific support and assistance they need to progress towards employment.

Several service users have implemented the skills and experience they've acquired at Skills4Work to find paid employment in both hospitality and administration sectors.

Tracey Wallace, founder and development manager at Skills4Work, says: "Young people with mild learning disabilities all need different kinds of help as they progress towards maturity and independent living, and the charity was set up to help each one succeed by providing the particular types of support they require.

"Not all of our young people are ready to take on a full work placement and we've set this new project up to ensure that they're still able to start building their workplace knowledge and experience in a supportive, well-managed environment.

"Not only will our lunch club help our young people develop new personal and workplace skills, but it will also help to tackle social isolation within our community and will create new links that benefit everyone involved.

"The funding we've had from Newcastle Building Society is allowing us to plan a whole year ahead and there's no way we could have made this project happen without them."

Dale Barclay, area manager at Newcastle Building Society, adds: "Employability has been one of the key focuses of the Society's charitable giving over the last year as we've looked to support our communities in the most practical ways we can.

"Skills4Work's new lunch club will have a positive impact across different parts of our community and we're very pleased to be able to make it happen."

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society's Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £2.1m 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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### **About Newcastle Building Society**

Newcastle Building Society\* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 30 branches and assets of more than £4.9bn. We've been here for our members for over 150 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 £2.1m

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\*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 [www.newcastle.co.uk](http://www.newcastle.co.uk)

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