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CITIZENS ADVICE NEWCASTLE LOOKING TO BOOST VOLUNTEER TEAM WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY GRANT SUPPORT

A longstanding Newcastle charity is looking to double the number of trained volunteers that it can call upon with the help of new funding from Newcastle Building Society.

Citizens Advice Newcastle provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice to anyone that needs it, and helps around 10,000 people every year with a wide variety of challenging problems and situations.

Headquartered at Newcastle's City Library, the charity's 20 staff are supported in the delivery of various services by a 30-strong team of volunteers, ranging in age from sixth formers right through to retirees in their eighties.

But having seen the number of volunteers decline during the pandemic, Citizens Advice Newcastle is now looking to sign up a further 30 volunteers to ensure it can continue to meet rising demand for its support, with full training being given to anyone who wants to get involved.

The charity is using a £1,850 Newcastle Building Society grant to produce a range of new publicity materials which will help raise further awareness around the city of the services it is continuing to provide, as well as encouraging more local people to get involved.

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

Founded in 1939, Citizens Advice Newcastle's work covers almost every issue, from money, debt, benefits, employment and housing through to immigration, consumer issues, health and social care.

Support is offered via freephone, e-mail, webchat, text messaging and at face-to-face walk-in sessions at the City Library, with many of its service users needing help in addressing multiple issues..

Shona Alexander, chief executive at Citizens Advice Newcastle CAB, says: “We’ve had to adapt our ways of working over the last two years, but we managed to keep providing the support that thousands of people across Newcastle have needed at the time they’ve needed it most.

“There’s still a lot of demand for the help we offer, and it’s often the case that starting to tackle one issue that someone’s facing reveals a number of other areas that we can help to address as well.

“Volunteering with Citizens Advice Newcastle provides a great chance to develop new skills, meet new people and learn new things and we’d love to see even more volunteers signing up to part of our brilliant team.

“Lots of training is provided to make sure people are equipped to do the work required and we’re very flexible in terms of the amount of time people need to commit and the ways in which it’s best for them to work.

“The generous funding we’ve had from Newcastle Building Society will help us boost our volunteer numbers, and will also help us make sure that everyone across the city is aware of the range of help that we provide, so that they know where to turn whenever the need arises.”

Donna Stubbs, community manager at Newcastle Building Society, adds: “Citizens Advice Newcastle has been a mainstay of community support across the city for decades. The dedication of its expert team of volunteers is hugely impressive and we hope our backing encourages even more people to sign up to make a difference to the lives of their city neighbours.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund has 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.

The Newcastle Building Society Community Fund is run in association with the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

To more information about volunteering opportunities with Citizens Advice Newcastle, email volunteering@newcastlecab.org.uk or visit www.citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk

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