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SOUTH TYNESIDE CHURCHES STOCKING UP FOODBANK SHELVES WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY SUPPORT

A South Tyneside community group is stocking up its foodbank shelves with the help of new funding from the North East's biggest building society.

Churches Together in South Tyneside coordinates the work of volunteers from 60 churches around the area in delivering a wide range of community support services, including Happy at Home for older people, Nurturing Dementia and Street Angels.

It also runs Key 2 Life poverty alleviation projects in partnership with local charity KEY, including a foodbank, 'Food & Fun' holiday activities and School Uniforms 4 All.

Key 2 Life is using a £3,000 grant from Newcastle Building Society to buy in enough food supplies to manage the increasing levels of demand that it is expecting to see in the coming months.

The funding is being 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.

It's the second time that the Society has supported Churches Together in South Tyneside, with a £5,000 donation provided late last year helping it cope with the exceptional demand it faced during the first winter of the pandemic.

The Key 2 Life foodbank has provided meals for a quarterly average of 1,600 adults, 1,900 children and 800 pets this year, and has recently begun to see levels of demand rising after a brief lull over the summer.

As well as providing food parcels, Churches Together in South Tyneside also distributed more than 880 summer holiday picnic and craft packs through July and August, as well as providing items of school uniform to over 140 children.

Bernadette Askins, chair of Churches Together in South Tyneside, says: “We’ve gradually seen demand for food parcels creeping up in the last few months, and with issues like the end of the furlough scheme and the removal of the temporary rise in Universal Credit, we’re pretty certain that demand is going to get much greater over the winter.

“Many of our donations usually come from collections in churches and other community locations, and while these are still coming in, the fact that many of these locations aren’t seeing as many people visiting them as they usually would is having an impact on how much we’re receiving.

“With all this in mind, it makes sense to get ahead of the curve and we’re now filling our shelves as much as we can to make sure we’re ready and able to help when we’re needed.

“The ongoing support we’ve had from Newcastle Building Society ensures we can buy the supplies we need with confidence and means we know we’re going to be able to help those who need our assistance in the coming months.”

Stewart Nicol, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Denmark Centre branch in South Shields, adds: “We’ve focused much of our recent grant giving on charities and projects which make a real difference in our communities as we all manage the impact of the pandemic.

“Churches Together in South Tyneside has stepped up to provide the help that hundreds of local people have needed during the most difficult time that most of us have ever faced.

“Every person involved represents the very best of South Tyneside and we’re very proud to be able to extend our support for its excellent work in our community.”

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

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

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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 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 were voted Number 2, Best Places to Work in the North East in 2019.

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

www.newcastle.co.uk

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