

CARING HANDS CHARITY PICKS UP FOUR-FIGURE GRANT TO SUPPORT NEWCASTLE VOLUNTEERS' WORK

Dozens of volunteers with a Newcastle community charity are receiving extra support thanks to a four-figure grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation.

Caring Hands provides a wide range of community-based services around the east end of the city, including a busy community laundrette, and has around 4,000 people benefitting from its support every year.

It is now using the £3,000 grant towards the cost of its volunteer coordinator, who organises the recruitment, induction and well-being of a 60-strong team of volunteers, for the rest of the year and into 2023.

Based in Shieldfield, Caring Hands operates under an 'open door' policy, meaning that anyone who needs help, advice or just a cup of tea and a chat can simply turn up at their Wretham Place headquarters

The community laundrette is open four days a week for the general public and offers a collection and delivery service in the city's East End for older people and those with health issues who aren't able to manage their laundry themselves.

It also runs a free counselling service via telephone and face-to-face meetings, while its befriending service works to tackle social isolation through regular telephone conversations, events and one-to-one home visits or activities.

Help with odd jobs and gardening is also available, while a small equipment loan service allows health professionals to access equipment that their patients need to enable them to continue living independently.

Dawn Henderson, manager at Caring Hands, says: "Our community laundrette is about much more than just getting your wash done, and the collections and deliveries that our volunteers make give them a chance to talk to service users and make sure that they're safe and well.

“A great deal of effort goes into organising our volunteers’ work schedule, but the difference they make to the lives of so many local people makes it all worthwhile.

“Many of our volunteers use the references we give them for their work with us to go on to find permanent jobs, which increases what we’re able to give back to the local community, and we’re always keen to hear from new people who’d like to get involved with what we do.

“Raising the money we need to pay for our services is always a worry, and especially so at the moment, so we’re really grateful to the Society for their generous donation to our work which means we can direct more resources towards other important activities.”

Caring Hands is actively looking to recruit further volunteers to help it meet the growing local demand for its services.

Lynn Richardson, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Gosforth branch, adds:

“Caring Hands offers clear proof that what might seem like little things can make a really big difference to the lives of thousands of people.

“We’re proud to be able to support another great community organisation with our home city and would encourage anyone who thinks they might be able to volunteer with Caring Hands to find out more about doing so.”

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

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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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