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## **NEW HOME FOR HARTLEPOOL'S PETS4PEOPLE THANKS TO NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY COMMUNITY FUND SUPPORT**

A Hartlepool social enterprise which supports young people and adults with disabilities and mental health issues with the help of a range of different animals has moved into a smart new home.

A £3,000 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland has enabled the Hartlepower Community Trust to carry out a major refurbishment on one of the rooms at its Energy Hub headquarters in Stranton.

The work has included fitting new windows and carpets, a full redecoration and the construction of a partition which allows occupants to use the room in private.

Local social enterprise Pets4People has now taken over the room and is expecting to be able to extend its work as a result of having more space to accommodate more service users.

It is an activity and support service which uses animal assisted activities for those with social, emotional and mental health needs and/or disabilities.

Animal occupants of the space now include bearded dragons and crested geckos, while amphibians, rabbits, ferrets and dogs will all be regular visitors to the space.

The Hartlepower Community Trust aims to prevent or relieve poverty by providing grants, items and services to individuals, charities or other organisations working towards the same goals.

It took over and upgraded the 150 year-old Energy Hub building three years ago to provide a location for new businesses and charities, as well as reasonable room hire facilities for the community.

It currently houses more than 30 different tenants, including charities, community interest companies, health services, a range of small businesses and a community café.

Peter Gowland, chairperson at the Hartlepower Community Trust, says: “Our aim is to provide a space which meets a range of community needs and to deliver information, ideas and support which help other local organisations carry out their different community activities as well as they can.

“The refurbished room is so much more suited to Pets4People’s work than it otherwise would have been and will provide new opportunities for them to extend what they do for families across the local area.

“We wouldn’t have been able to carry out this refurbishment without this funding, and we’re very grateful to the Society for enabling us to get the work done.”

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

Michelle Sherwood customer advisor at Newcastle Building Society’s Hartlepool branch, adds: “The Hartlepower Community Trust makes a massive positive impact on the local community in a whole host of different ways.

“The new room looks fantastic and it’s great to know that it’s going to be so well used by such a valuable and innovative local social enterprise.”

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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### **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

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