



In-person banking no longer possible for one in four as study reveals impact of branch closures

Visiting your local bank is not an option for more than a quarter of people in the UK, according to a new survey into the impact of branch closures.

The research from Newcastle Building Society, found that for 28% of the population, in-person banking was no longer possible.

Almost a third (29%) of those surveyed have seen a bank or building society leave their local area within the last 12 months, while more than a third (38%) worry their local branch will close this year.

Newcastle Building Society undertook the [research](#) as it launches a new pilot project to restore access to cash on high streets and town centres, offering hope to millions of people and small businesses across the UK.

Once a common sight on every high street, now more than one in three people (36%) live in an area without access to financial services. With in-person banking no longer possible for more than a quarter (28%) of UK adults, and 42% saying there is a lack of access to financial services in their community, Newcastle Building Society says its innovative blueprint for branches could provide a solution for cashless communities across the UK.

Collaborating with shared bank branch innovator OneBanx, the mutual is piloting the use of multi-bank kiosks in two of its branches in Gosforth, Newcastle, and Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. The kiosks use Open Banking technology to allow small businesses and personal customers of any bank in the Open Banking network to withdraw and deposit cash from their accounts, and are the first to be located within the branch of a financial services provider anywhere in the world.

The additional access to cash services provide greater convenience for personal and business customers who may otherwise have to travel significant distances in order to complete their basic banking tasks, meaning extra cost, time and loss of income.

The pilot project with OneBanx is just one part of the Society's unique approach to restoring access to financial services in the North East, North West and North Yorkshire, which combines communities, technology and partnerships, and could equally support high streets and communities anywhere in

the UK. Its innovative community branch concept has proved successful in a number of locations, including rural towns like Hawes, North Yorkshire and Wooler, Northumberland.

In 2016, in partnership with Stockton Borough Council the mutual opened a branch within the redeveloped Yarm Library, and last year opened a branch within Knaresborough library through a similar agreement with North Yorkshire County Council. A further branch is planned for Tynemouth's redeveloped library in collaboration with North Tyneside Council.

Stuart Miller, chief customer officer at Newcastle Building Society, said: "Members tell us every day that they value having access to local financial services, but this research reveals the scale of the impact caused by branch closures across the UK. With the pressure on living costs, I can't think of a more important time for people to be able to pop into their local branch for a chat about money.

"The use of cash has increased significantly recently as people look for ways to manage their household budgets, so we believe it's more important than ever to offer people the opportunity to transact locally and access cash.

"We're absolutely committed to our branch network and finding new ways to provide financial services in our region; the OneBanx kiosk pilot supports this by providing people with convenient access to their bank."

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Notes to Editors

Research conducted by Opinion Matters for Newcastle Building Society among 2,021 nationally-representative UK adults, and 500 small business owners, from 09.01.2023 – 11.01.2023. Opinion Matters abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles.

The survey found that:

- In-person banking is no longer possible for more than a quarter (28%) in the UK, while 38% worry their local bank or building society will close this year
- In the last 12 months, 29% have seen a bank or building society leave their local area, with more than a third (38%) worried their local branch will close this year
- Already, more than one in three (36%) live in an area without access to financial services
- 42% saying there is a lack of access to financial services in their community

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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 £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 £2.3m

*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 <https://www.newcastle.co.uk/>

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