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KEY PROJECT OPENING DOORS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR SOUTH TYNESIDE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY SUPPORT

A South Tyneside charity is giving dozens of local young people a better chance of finding work with the help of new funding from Newcastle Building Society.

The South Tyneside Churches Key Project, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, runs a variety of projects and activities designed to prevent youth homelessness and support people in hardship right across the borough.

In order to increase its service users' chances of finding and keeping employment, the Key Project has now set up a new employability initiative offering practical advice and support to anyone needing help to find, get and keep a new job, as well as raising their aspirations for what they can achieve.

It's hoped that the scheme, which is being funded through a £3,000 Newcastle Building Society grant, will eventually around 50 local young people - and it has already helped four of the early participants find new jobs and apprenticeships.

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.

South Tyneside Churches Key Project runs around 50 units which provide accommodation for people aged between 16 and 24 who are facing homelessness, with tenancy support, family intervention and mediation services also available.

It also runs the Key 2 Life poverty alleviation projects in partnership with fellow local community group Churches Together in South Tyneside.

Jo Benham Brown, business development and communities manager at the South Tyneside Churches Key Project, says: "Our work is about much more than just helping someone find a job - it's about raising aspirations with our young people,

realising the huge potential that so many of them have and showing them the opportunities that are out there for them.

“Many of our service users have grown up in situations where unemployment was sadly just a fact of life and often don’t have the tools and knowledge to even prepare for finding a job that many of us take for granted.

“This new project aims to change their aspirations, equip them with the skills they need to get into the workplace and help them start to build successful, independent lives.

“In the present climate, this work is especially important and we can’t let these young people down, so having Newcastle Building Society’s backing for our work is going to make a significant difference to what we and they can achieve.”

Erin Mulligan, people partner at Newcastle Building Society and a South Tyneside resident, adds: “Over the last 12 months, we’ve focused the majority of our grant giving on charities and projects which are linked to employability, as part of helping communities manage, mitigate and recover from the impacts of Covid-19 and delivering sustainable positive change across our region.

“The Key Project sets a terrific example of how this can be done in practical terms and it’s great to see results coming from their work so quickly.”

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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