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Newcastle Building Society tech team volunteering with Newcastle United Foundation to help boost pupils' digital skills

A team of Digital and Technology colleagues at Newcastle Building Society are investing their time and talent to work with Newcastle United Foundation to deliver a series of computer science and engineering-based workshops to local pupils. The programme involves real-world application through mentoring and hands-on activities to encourage young people to pursue careers in these areas.

The programme, delivered by Newcastle United Foundation with the support of eight people from the Society's Digital and Technology department, takes place at NUCASTLE powered by Newcastle Building Society, Newcastle United Foundation's new community hub. The science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) sessions are set to run throughout the summer term and, so far, have involved teaching local school children how to program Sphero coding robots to move and undertake basic actions, encouraging innovative thinking and exploration.

One of the volunteers, Paul Douglass, is a user experience designer at Newcastle Building Society. Paul said: "As a parent and a school governor I know how packed the curriculum is and how important digital literacy is. It's fantastic to see opportunities like these STEM workshops being provided for children to try something new, and you can clearly see how much they enjoy the coding sessions and how engaged they are. It's amazing to think that the new skills that are being developed here are ones that they can take into their future careers."

Manila McLean, chief information officer at Newcastle Building Society, added: "The enthusiasm colleagues have shown to help deliver the STEM sessions with Newcastle United Foundation reflects our wider ambition to find new ways to work collaboratively to help bridge the digital skills gap that persists across the region, especially amongst younger people.

"Coding is one of the skills which will only grow in importance, and even a basic understanding could be the spark which leads to a much deeper interest in STEM subjects and all the opportunities which will follow."

In July 2020, the Society entered a six-year partnership with Newcastle United Foundation worth £1.1 million, including support for their flagship employability programme, NUFutures. The partnership also helped to deliver the Foundation's state-of-the-art community facility, NUCASTLE powered by Newcastle Building Society, which opened in Newcastle in March 2022.

The facility provides access to extensive sports and fitness activities for the community, as well as delivering wellbeing and education programmes for the wider region, supporting people become fitter, healthier, more active, and develop their employability skills.

Andrew Foster, Head of Programmes and Impact at Newcastle United Foundation, said: "The fantastic support and commitment from Newcastle Building Society to provide meaningful opportunities through Newcastle United Foundation programmes is helping to connect and inspire communities across the North East.

"From our charity's home at NUCASTLE, our specialist STEM suite is a unique space for young minds to explore the possibilities that science, technology, engineering and maths holds for them in their future – whether that's in education, recreation or potential careers.

"Volunteering support from the Society is key in delivering exciting and engaging Foundation sessions for the next generation and we look forward to seeing where their passion for STEM takes them."

Colleague volunteering is one way in which Newcastle Building Society supports its local communities, with more than 900 days volunteered in 2022. Volunteering friendly policies, including two days of paid volunteering leave, enabled colleagues to volunteer more than 900 days in 2022.

Activities they have supported include: packing goody-bags for NHS staff, building workplace employability and skills through coaching and mentoring; cleaning beaches and maintain parks and woodlands, delivering food parcels, supporting food banks, and making hot meals for those in need.

To find out more about how Newcastle Building Society is delivering on its commitment to communities, visit: <https://www.newcastle.co.uk/powering-communities/community-impact-2022>

For more information about the Foundation, NUCASTLE and programmes near you, visit www.nufoundation.org.uk or follow Newcastle United Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) for regular news and updates.

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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, as our branch network grows, are increasingly 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. Our total community contributions in 2022, made up of grants, match funding, and our ongoing partnership donations, was more than £544,000.

www.newcastle.co.uk

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.