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YMCA NEWCASTLE REACHING ISOLATED OLDER PEOPLE WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY SUPPORT

A Newcastle charity is tackling social isolation among local older people with the help of a four-figure donation from Newcastle Building Society.

YMCA Newcastle is running a free friendship group which gives local residents aged 55 and over the chance to spend some time and meet new people in a friendly welcoming environment.

Up to 25 people attend the weekly group, which takes place at Walker Parish Church and includes a free lunch, as well as activities such as bingo, quizzes and outings.

The charity is using a grant of £4,798 to cover the annual staff and food costs of running the group, which would have had to fold without the Society's support, and is ready to welcome any other local people who'd like to be part of it.

The grant was provided through the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland, which offers grants to charities and community groups located in or around the communities served by the Society's branch network.

YMCA Newcastle is the oldest independent youth charity in the city, but works with people of all ages on a range of different projects and activities.

It focuses on four different areas - family and youth work, health and wellbeing, support and advice, and training and education - and supports around 4,200 people across the city every year.

The charity's work is backed up by a team of committed volunteers, while it also works in partnership with regional adult social care provider KeyRing to ensure vulnerable older local people are receiving all the support they need.

Roberta Davidson, community team member at YMCA Newcastle, says: “We look at what all the different parts of our community needs and try to develop events, activities and initiatives which respond to these needs.

“Some of the older people that we welcome to our sessions live in local care homes, while others live independently in the local community and quite often tell us that coming to our sessions is the only time they get out during the week.

“Tackling social isolation in this way makes a big difference to the wider health and well-being of our members, some of whom have very little contact with other people through the rest of the week.

“We involve everyone on choosing the different meals that we provide each week, as well as the various activities we run, and we know from members’ feedback just how much of a positive impact our sessions have.

“Without the funding we’ve had from Newcastle Building Society, we simply wouldn’t have been able to keep running this group, but now we’re looking to invite even more local people along to spend some time with us.

Lynn Richardson, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Gosforth High Street branch, adds: “A few hours spent in good company can make a big difference to anyone, but the positive impact will be even greater if you’re not getting the chance to do this very often.

“YMCA Newcastle has recognised a growing community need in our home city and we’re very pleased to be able to help them continue to meet it.”

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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For further information on Newcastle Building Society, please contact:

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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

*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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