

TEESSIDE CHARITY EXTENDING ESSENTIAL STOCKTON SCHOOLS' WORK WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY GRANT SUPPORT

Young women in Teesside schools are getting extra support and advice around building healthy relationships thanks to the work of a local charity and new funding from Newcastle Building Society.

A Way Out is an outreach and prevention charity which aims to engage, empower and equip vulnerable and excluded women, families and young people across Teesside to live lives free from harm, abuse and exploitation and to reduce life limiting choices and behaviour.

The Stockton-headquartered organisation, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, is using a £3,000 Society grant to underpin its work in schools in the Bowesfield Lane and Port Clarence areas, where pupils face some of the most challenging socio-economic circumstances and deprivation.

Participants engage in one-to-one and group sessions which teach them about healthy relationships and coping mechanisms, and which are designed to help ensure they stay in education and learn skills that can have a positive impact on their lives.

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.

Founded in 2002, A Way Out works across Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Hartlepool and runs a range of different services which tackle present and vital issues including sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, family breakdown, substance misuse, mental health and well-being.

The charity has experienced a substantial rise in demand for its services over the last two years with young people having to be home schooled for considerable

periods of time and the significant rise in sexual violence, abuse and controlling behaviour at a time when women had far fewer ways to escape it.

Kay Nicolson, CEO at A Way Out, says: “We adapted how we worked during the pandemic to make sure that our clients still had access to help and our teams worked through the lockdowns and other restricted periods.

“We have been able to play catch up since restrictions were lifted, but demand for all our services is still very high as we deal with the aftermath of everything that we’ve been through.

“Our work in schools in these deprived areas makes a significant difference to the lives of the young people that we work with, both in the short term and hopefully long into the future.

“The Society’s branch team encouraged us to apply for this grant after attending a presentation about the work in the local area and we’re really grateful to have them on our side.”

Faye Dale, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Middlesbrough branch, adds: “A Way Out provides an essential lifeline for many local young women who are facing very challenging situations and seeks to help them find ways to build positive, healthy lives.

“It has been supporting the Teesside community for two decades and we’re proud to be able to help it to continue making a difference here.”

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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About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 30 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 were voted Number 2, Best Places to Work in the North East in 2019.

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 £2.1m

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