

31 July, 2025



## Newcastle Building Society provides a boost to banking services as Hexham locals and traders grapple with bank branch closures

**Newcastle Building Society is piloting a new service at its branch in Hexham – helping local businesses and residents cope with the impact of bank closures in the town.**

By introducing a multi-bank kiosk which allows anyone to deposit or withdraw notes and coins from any bank account, the Society is supporting high street businesses and locals struggling to access basic banking services. The OneBanx service is free to use and available to all, whether they are customers of the Society or not.

The technology behind the service has been called ‘a super ATM’ because it allows both deposits and withdrawals. The service uses Open Banking technology to connect users with their bank account and as a result means more bank accounts can be accessed, including business banking customers. Under the pilot users can withdraw cash, deposit both coins and notes, and see all accounts, balances and recent transactions.

Bank branch closures are hitting communities hard, driving people towards online services, or forcing them to travel further to visit their nearest branch. Hexham has experienced a steady decline in local banking services in recent years, with further closures, of its Lloyds and Halifax branches, planned for later this year. High street traders, in particular, have complained about the cost and interruption to business created as a result of bank branch closures.

Local trader, Amy Brown, owns the Sweetie Jar in Hexham and is already making use of the new service. Like many local business owners, she has been impacted by bank branch closures in town.

Amy said: “Barclays closed down a couple of years ago. I had to switch to using the Post Office to carry out my personal and business banking, but it was often really busy, with long queues, and I couldn’t always do everything I needed, especially for the business.

“The OneBanx kiosk has been a gamechanger. It’s so easy to use, quick, and I can deposit coins as well as notes, which is really helpful for a shop like mine.

“Hexham is a cash-friendly town. People still like to use cash and businesses like mine want to be able to accept it. The kiosk means we can do that easily. It’s reassuring to know that there’s somewhere convenient in town where we can continue to do our banking properly.”

Sarah Seery branch manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Hexham branch said: “We’ve had a steady flow of banks leaving Hexham, and customers often tell me they worry about branches leaving the high street, and the access to essential services that simply disappear.

“Having the OneBanx kiosk in branch means that people who rely on cash transactions, or just need a way to pay money into their bank accounts can do so. Hexham is a great town with lots of independent shops and businesses, so it's much better for the high street and community if they spend more time serving customers and less time travelling to their nearest bank branch.”

Since 2015 over 6,300 bank branches have closed across the UK, leaving many towns without local cash services and leading to growing financial exclusion.

Stuart Miller, chief commercial officer at Newcastle Building Society, said: “We’re committed to improving local access to financial services and our branches are at the heart of that place-based approach. We think creatively about what each community needs and how we can play a role in supporting our high streets.

“We’re delighted to be piloting the service in Hexham – free to use for all, whether people are customers of ours or not.

“Having easy access to basic cash services is vital in busy towns like Hexham, supports small businesses, the local economy, and creates long-term value for members and the wider community.”

**-ENDS-**

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## About us

Newcastle Building Society is the UK's 7th largest building society with 32 branches across the North East, Cumbria and North Yorkshire. A branch in Manchester city centre will open later this year under the Manchester Building Society brand. The Society has assets of more than £6.5bn. It has been there for its members for over 160 years. Financial Advice is provided through its Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited subsidiary. Newcastle Financial Advisers has consistently been awarded Top Rated Firm status by VouchedFor - the UK's leading review site for Financial Advisers.

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 we're proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our regions.

We're dedicated to helping our communities make positive changes; since 1995 the financial support through grants and donations from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation to benefit local causes has surpassed £1.8m. An additional estimated £1million income gain has benefitted service users of the Society's Helping Hand service, delivered in partnership with Citizens Advice Gateshead.

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. We are a Real Living Wage employer and were the first building society in the UK to become an accredited Living Pension employer in 2024. We have been named Regional Building Society of the Year for eight consecutive years (2017–2024) by What Mortgage? and Best Overall Personal Finance Brand at the Personal Finance Awards 2023/24 and 2024/25. In 2024 Newcastle Building Society became the first UK business to receive international accreditation for mutual value measurement, recognising our ongoing commitment to creating value for our members and communities.