



28 August, 2024

Building Society backing for Youth Employability Programme opens doors for County Durham youngsters

School pupils in County Durham, are boosting their aspirations and opportunities thanks to an employability skills programme led by a local charity and supported by the region's largest building society.

Launched in 2018, Building Self-Belief CIO work with thousands of vulnerable young people in the North East. It aims to build stronger communities by improving the mental health, self-esteem and life chances of young people in the region through the delivery of a number of programmes, projects, and broader community engagement.

As part of the charity's youth employability programme 'Bridging the Gap', sixth form students from Consett Academy, County Durham have been given the opportunity to develop vital workplace skills and improve their employment prospects with the help of grant funding and support from colleagues at Newcastle Building Society.

To help fund the charity's youth employability programme, a £5,000 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland is supporting with the cost of delivery as well as the creation of a documentary-style film that looks at the impacts of the programme on its young people.

Peter Thomas, founder of Building Self-Belief, said: "Our Bridging the Gap youth employability programme works with young people from areas in the bottom 20% of Multiple National Deprivation to help them realise their potential and achieve positive outcomes when it comes to employability.

"Having the backing of Newcastle Building Society has opened doors for our young people to be able to spend time in the workplace environment and gain a better understanding of what's expected of them as young professionals. We've witnessed our young people develop greater

enthusiasm for work as well as greater confidence in their abilities, and we couldn't have achieved this without the support of Newcastle Building Society and its colleagues.”

The ongoing relationship with Building Self-Belief CIO has also seen the charity's young people welcomed into the Society's Head Office at Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside to take part in a series of workshops. School pupils were given a tour of the office space before taking part in mock interviews and delivering presentations to build their skills, confidence and work experience.

Colleagues from Newcastle Building Society have also helped deliver online safety sessions for the charity's young people as part of the youth employability programme to help raise awareness of the dangers faced on the internet and provide support and guidance on how to stay safe when using social media and the web.

Noah Duggan, 17, sixth form student from Consett Academy said: “I enjoyed the programme as it made me realise how important a good CV is, and how to achieve a good interview. It's not just about turning up, there's also lots of prep you need to do to have a good chance of standing out from all the other people interviewing.”

Linda Creegan, manager at Newcastle Building Society's Consett branch, said: “We're keen to align with the findings of the Community Foundation's Vital Signs reports, which provide a pulse check on the region's priorities. As part of this we see the value in funding partnerships that support 'invisible children', e.g. young people at risk of disengagement from education to help close the attainment gap.

“It's fantastic to see our relationship with Building Self-Belief CIO go from strength-to-strength and to be able to provide them with opportunities they may not otherwise have had. Employability and skills are a key strategic community focus for our Society, and gaining real-world experience in the workplace creates unique opportunities that will provide the foundations for successful careers as adults.”

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

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society's Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £1.7m 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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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 £6.2bn. 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 have been named Regional Building Society of the Year for seven consecutive years from 2017 – 2023 by What Mortgage? and also won Best Overall Personal Finance Brand at the Personal Finance Awards 2023/24. 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 its members and communities.

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, we are increasingly proactive in making financial information and financial advice accessible across our regions.

Financial Advice is provided through our Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited subsidiary. Face-to-face financial advice is available at each of the Society's 31 branches plus a financial advice-only location in Pickering, North Yorkshire. For the third year running, Newcastle Financial Advisers has been awarded Top Rated Firm status by VouchedFor - the UK's leading review site for Financial Advisers.

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 £1.7m. Our total

community contributions in 2022, made up of grants, match funding, and our ongoing partnership donations, was more than £544,000.

Newcastle Building Society is committed to creating a culture of belonging, where people can bring their whole self to work and be respected and valued for who they are. Our colleague-run networks include the Race Network, LGBTQ+ Network the Disability and Awareness Network, Women in Leadership Network, Menopause Network and Parent and Carers Network, all of which help steer Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy within the organisation.

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