



Approved - 16 May 2023

## **FREE THE WAY FEEDING RECOVERING ADDICTS' BODIES AND MINDS WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY SUPPORT**

A grassroots County Durham charity is extending the support it can provide to dozens of people facing addiction issues with the help of a four-figure grant from Newcastle Building Society.

Free The Way has used a £3,000 Society grant to provide emergency food parcels to people and families facing challenges related to alcohol and substance misuse, as part of its wider efforts to tackle service users' addictions.

The Seaham-based charity, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, specialises in providing structured weekly programmes of recovery from addictions, as well as offering supported housing in which their service users can live while they're on their journey to recovery.

It also runs a weekly breakfast club and healthy eating courses, to help ensure the people it is supporting are getting the nutrition they need as they get their lives back on track.

The grant has been 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.

Free The Way was originally set up by a group of local parents and carers who wanted to improve the care and support available to people in East Durham facing problems with alcohol and substance misuse.

Its services are available to people from both within and outside the local area, with people travelling from as far away as Scotland to access the support it provides.

Run by a team of staff and volunteers, some of whom have been involved with the charity since its inception, Free The Way helps around 70 people every month, with peer support provided by a number of former addicts who can provide advice on how they've reach their goal of getting and staying clean.

Alison Goggins, support workers at Free The Way, says: "Our service users often come from chaotic or very challenging backgrounds, and can have almost nothing to their names when they first find their way to us.

"When you're battling addictions, getting the right amount of food and nutrition simply isn't a priority, which can add to the health problems that are often already in play.

"Addressing this issue, whether through these food parcels, our breakfast club sessions or our healthy eating classes, is a core part of helping people find a way past their problems and to get themselves healthier in every way possible.

"We wouldn't have been able to make this happen without Newcastle Building Society's support and we're very grateful to have them on our side."

Steven Marks, client services director at Newcastle Building Society subsidiary Newcastle Strategic Solutions, who recently visited Free The Way, adds: "Free The Way was founded on the basis of meeting a clear community need and is continuing to do so two decades on.

"Their commitment makes a hugely positive difference to the lives of individuals and families who might otherwise struggle to get the help they need and we're very pleased to be able to contribute to the services they provide."

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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### **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/>

\*\* Newcastle Building Society introduces to Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited for advice on Investments, Pensions, Life and Protection Insurance and Inheritance Tax Planning. Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited is an appointed representative of The Openwork Partnership which is a trading style of Openwork Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.