

03 June, 2024

North East Apprentice Recognised for 'Services to Education' at Buckingham Palace Garden Party

A Newcastle Building Society apprentice has attended a Royal Garden Party this month, following a special nomination from the Government.

Jess Duff is currently completing her L6 degree apprenticeship in Digital and Technology Solutions at Newcastle Building Society. She was nominated to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party by the Department of Education in recognition of her services to education.

Jess is Chair of The North East Ambassador Network, a group of apprentices and apprentice employers in the region with the aim of inspiring the next generation of apprentices and businesses to take up apprenticeships by sharing knowledge and best practice and promoting the value of apprenticeships.

Having joined the network in October 2022, Jess has quickly become an influential member of the network, leveraging her role at Newcastle Building Society to showcase to other young people the career path opportunities available to them through apprenticeships. Now her passion for education has gained attention nationally, with the Department for Education nominating the Newcastle Building Society colleague for special recognition.

Jess said: "Being a part of The North East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network is really important to me. Not only do I get support from other apprentices doing similar qualifications to myself, but I get to raise the profile of and champion apprenticeships and the opportunities they provide to young people.

"It's particularly rewarding to me when I get to speak to other young people, who may not have otherwise considered an apprenticeship as an option, about the range of career paths and opportunities an apprenticeship offers.

“It’s such a huge honour to be recognised with a nomination by the Department of Education for my role in helping to champion and educate people and businesses about the vital role apprenticeships play in the workforce.

Thanks to Newcastle Building Society’s volunteering-friendly policies, Jess has been able to dedicate over 100 hours of her time to her role as Chair in the past year, delivering presentations to school pupils and attending government meetings to help influence policy at a national level.

Gemma Manson, early talent manager at Newcastle Building Society, said: “Being recognised for her services to education by the Department for Education is a fantastic achievement for Jess, and it’s been a pleasure to be a part of her professional development during her time with the Society so far.

“Our early talent programme launched back in 2017 as part of our ongoing commitment to investing in our region, and since then we have been able to offer over 60 young people from across the North East permanent employment with the Society after completing their qualifications.

“Our volunteering-friendly policies are having a real impact both on our communities but also on our colleagues. For Jess this means she is offered the time to carry out her role as Chair of the North East Apprenticeship Ambassador Network, giving back to other young people while also further developing her own skills as part of the network.”

The Society’s bespoke programme for apprentices, undergraduates and graduate recruits is one of the reasons Newcastle Building Society is one of just a handful of organisations to have achieved the prestigious ‘Platinum’ Investors in People (IIP) standard.

-ENDS-

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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 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 £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.

