

Cash boost to enhance employment prospects

A SIX-FIGURE cash boost will enhance the employment prospects of Copeland residents.

Copeland Council and Copeland Community Fund have donated a combined £350,000 to The Phoenix Enterprise Centre, Cleator Moor, which will fund the majority of its latest employment support project.

Mike Starkie, Mayor of Copeland, today (Thursday) presented a cheque in support of the project, which offers IT facilities and training to unemployed Copeland residents, alongside Julie Monk on behalf of the Copeland Community Fund.

The project aims to assist around 1,200 local people in developing their skills, which includes 600 residents who will be able to access services provided by Citizens Advice Copeland.

A further 200 people will be helped to secure employment and 50 residents will be helped to access accredited training. It will also see over five full-time equivalent roles safeguarded.

The scheme aims to support some of the most vulnerable members of the community who often find themselves unemployed, inactive, digitally excluded and at times sliding into mental illness.

Citizens Advice Copeland will be providing services that aim to support residents who face issues such as debt, homelessness and tenancy disputes.

Mr Starkie said: "We are proud to be supporting projects such as this which will provide vital services to the unemployed in Copeland.

"By enabling access to training for our residents we hope to support them enhance their skills and knowledge and hopefully move into employment."

Joanne Crowe, Operations Manager at Phoenix Enterprise Centre said: "This funding ensures our four IT Centres in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom remain open for the next two years.

"Staffed by qualified advice and guidance workers and Citizens Advice caseworkers they offer the support, advice and internet access needed to enable the unemployed to search and apply for benefits, training and jobs.

"It is a unique service. We are very grateful to Copeland Borough Council and Copeland Community fund for their continued support."

Copeland Borough Council has allocated a total of £40,000 over two years towards the project with Copeland Community Fund awarding a grant of £310,051. The Phoenix Enterprise Centre has pledged a total of £20,000. The project will run until January 31, 2020.

David Moore, chair of the Copeland Community Fund board, said: "The Fund has provided significant grant support to Phoenix Enterprise Centre in recent years in recognition of the essential need to support unemployed Copeland residents accessing benefits, training and jobs.

"We are delighted that the project has evolved to include a collaborative approach, providing access to Citizens Advice services dealing with issues such as debt, homelessness and tenancy issues."

Image - l to r: Grace Starkey, Lead Advice & Guidance Worker - Phoenix Enterprise Centre, Mike Starkie - Mayor of Copeland, Bob Metcalf - Chair of Phoenix Enterprise Centre, Julie Monk on behalf of Copeland Community Fund, Joanne Crowe, Operations Manager - Phoenix Enterprise Centre



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