



Professor Greta Defeyter talking to some pupils at a school holiday club.

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The Big Issue names Northumbria academic as one of the UK's Top 100 Changemakers

Professor Greta Defeyter of Northumbria University, Newcastle, has been listed as one of The Big Issue's Top 100 Changemakers for 2020 for her research making a positive impact on society.

The magazine's annual list of changemakers recognises some of the "awe-

inspiring” individuals and organisations doing what they can to make things better in Britain and beyond. The list of thinkers, creators and agitators represents those who The Big Issue believes will change things in 2020 by taking on the world’s challenges.

People campaigning against poverty and homelessness, and those helping refugees and asylum seekers are among those selected. [Professor Defeyter](#) of Northumbria’s Department of [Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing](#), was hailed a “food poverty hero” for leading on the fight against holiday hunger – when parents struggle to feed their children outside of term time. Professor Defeyter advises policymakers how to tackle the problem, ensuring the most vulnerable people stay fed.

The academic is the Director of [Healthy Living](#), a research lab at Northumbria University which focuses on public health interventions; including school and community breakfast clubs, holiday hunger, nutrition and food insecurity within schools and the associations between nutrition, cognition and physical activity.

She is a committee member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on School, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hunger and the North East of England Branch of the British Psychological Society; a member of the National Steering Group for Breakfast Clubs and a trustee for Feeding Britain. Professor Defeyter has also been an advisor to the Westminster Health and Education Forum and provided evidence to a number of Select Committees.

Professor Defeyter has published numerous papers on food insecurity and led a number of successful knowledge transfer and public engagement events; including a Wellcome Trust project and a British Science Festival at the Centre for Life, Newcastle upon Tyne, and an ESRC knowledge exchange conference.

She has also presented a number of Parliamentary Papers to the Westminster Health and Education Forum, the House of Lords, Annual Westminster Briefing Events and at HRH Prince of Wales, Seeing is Believing Visits.

Upon hearing about being named in The Big Issue’s list for 2020, Professor Defeyter said: “What an honour to be included in this list alongside such fantastic organisations and brilliant folk. Thanks to Northumbria University and all colleagues who supported our research.”

Others highlighted in the list are Dr Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, chief fire officer and an ambassador for The Big Issue, Rutger Bregman, historian and author, Streetwise Opera, Geoff Horsfield, former Birmingham City and West Bromwich Albion striker, and Darran Martin, founder of Homeless Rugby and Tiny Changes, the mental health support charity set up in memory of Scott Hutchison, frontman of the band Frightened Rabbit, who died by suicide in 2018.

Northumbria alumna and Labour MP for South Shields, Emma Lewell-Buck, also gained a place on the list for her tireless work to reform child protection and to improve the social care provision for both children and adults in her constituency.

Paul McNamee, editor of The Big Issue, said: “This is the second time we have dedicated an entire edition of the magazine to celebrating 100 awe-inspiring people and organisations who we believe are changing the world in significant ways and giving us all hope for the future.

“There are a host of categories, from those innovating in the field of tech to the formidable, often young, campaigners working to save our planet, to those focused on literacy and education, to people working to help refugees and asylum seekers, to name a few.

“They all deserve our attention and support for their tireless efforts to make a difference. These are the true champions of change in our society and The Big Issue is proud to shine a light on them.”

The full list of Changemakers is in issue 1391 of The Big Issue magazine.

Learn more about the Healthy Living Lab and Professor Defeyter’s work by visiting www.healthylivinguk.org

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