



## **Cancer Patients Feature In New Film Celebrating Tenth Anniversary Of Sir Bobby Robson Foundation Partnership With Newcastle Building Society**

Two North East cancer patients have been chosen as the stars of an inspiring new film celebrating the tenth anniversary of the partnership between one of the region's best-loved charities and its biggest building society.

Sixteen-year-old Rebecca Henderson from Billingham and Keith Farquharson (48) from Heaton have both received pioneering cancer treatments funded and developed with the support of the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, which is part of Newcastle Hospitals Charity.

Over the last decade, the Foundation has worked in partnership with Newcastle Building Society, which has contributed more than £3m towards the Foundation's work and is its largest corporate donor.

To mark the partnership's tenth anniversary, the two organisations have come together to make a film which highlights the practical benefits that the donations made by the Society and all the charity's other supporters bring to cancer patients across the region, especially in terms of the extra time that advances in treatment give them with their families.

Interviews with Professor Ruth Plummer, Director of the Sir Bobby Robson Cancer Trials Research Centre within the Northern Centre for Cancer Care, and Newcastle Building Society Chief Executive Andrew Haigh also feature in the film.

Keith Farquharson, who himself raised over £5,700 for the Foundation in 2020 by completing a 2,000-mile virtual Tour de France on an exercise bike in his back garden while shielding at home during the pandemic, was diagnosed with stage IV bowel cancer in 2017.

At the time, he was told that half of people with his prognosis would die within a year, and he credits the treatment that he received at the Sir Bobby Robson Cancer Research Centre with extending his life.

Keith Farquharson says: “Before anything gets into the mainstream, you need to check that it works, and from my point of view, even if the trial hadn’t worked for me, it creates data that can be used to help other people who might benefit from the drug.

“I was referred onto the Sir Bobby Robson unit for an immunotherapy trial that started in 2018, and I’ve been on that same trial ever since.

“It’s bought me three and a half years of extra life so far, which is amazing. That’s three and a half more years with my son - he was four when I was first diagnosed and he’ll be ten this year.

“Because I’ve been there for so long, being on the Sir Bobby unit feels almost like a family - you get to know the nurses, the doctors, the whole team, and in a way, it doesn’t feel like hospital.

“These trials are going to help so many other people down the line and it’s vital that they’re funded - simply put, without the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation, I wouldn’t still be here.”

The Foundation, which is part of Newcastle Hospitals Charity, was set up by Sir Bobby and Lady Elsie Robson in 2008 to support the search for more effective ways to detect and treat cancer.

Working within the NHS, and in collaboration with Newcastle University and other cancer charities, its main aim is to help fund world-class cancer treatments that directly benefit patients, as well as funding projects that enhance cancer patient care.

It funds projects within the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which benefit cancer patients from across the Society’s heartland area, and it also contributes significantly to the global fight against the disease.

Lady Elsie Robson adds: “From the very beginning, our relationship with Newcastle Building Society has been a very close partnership. Their support has had an extraordinary impact for the Foundation and has been nothing short of magnificent.

“The Society has always asked how will the money help cancer patients and what positive changes will it bring about - and in the last ten years, their amazing contributions have done an incredible amount of good.

“The enthusiasm and involvement of their staff and members in our work is remarkable and their senior executives regularly take time to visit work funded by the Foundation to find out more about the progress being made.

“I know Bob would be absolutely amazed by everything they've done for us and everything they've helped us achieve - it's teamwork at its very best.”

The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation formed its first and only financial partnership in 2012. Contributions made by the Society surpassed all early projections and Newcastle Building Society swiftly became far and away the charity's largest corporate donor.

The scale and consistency of this financial support has helped fund cutting-edge cancer treatments and innovative cancer support services that directly benefit patients of all ages from across the North East and Cumbria, and which play a significant role in the international fight against the disease.

Andrew Haigh, Chief Executive at Newcastle Building Society, says: “Supporting The Sir Bobby Robson Foundation for the last decade has been a real honour for the Society and the work done by the Robson family, Professor Plummer and everyone involved with the organisation remains truly inspirational.

“We are immensely proud to have been part of Sir Bobby's ‘last and greatest team’ for so many years and to be contributing to something unique which makes a tremendous difference to the lives of so many people across our communities.”

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**About the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation:**

Sir Bobby Robson launched his Foundation in 2008 and it has gone on to raise over £16 million to find more effective ways to detect and treat cancer.

Work funded by the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation directly benefits cancer patients in the North East and Cumbria and plays a significant role in the international fight against the disease - funding cutting-edge cancer treatment and innovative cancer support services and including the clinical trials of new drugs at the Sir Bobby Robson Cancer Trials Research Centre.

Sir Bobby described his charity as his “last and greatest team.” He had no idea how large his team would grow, or how much it would go on to achieve.

A fund within the Newcastle Hospitals Charity, the Foundation works within the NHS and in partnership with other leading charities and organisations. Teamwork was always very important to Sir Bobby.

For more information, please visit: [www.sirbobbyrobsonfoundation.org.uk](http://www.sirbobbyrobsonfoundation.org.uk).

**About Newcastle Hospitals Charity:**

Newcastle Hospitals Charity is the official charity of Newcastle Hospitals and aims to make a positive difference for the patients, staff and communities of the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Supporters of Newcastle Hospitals help the charity to make an impact for the 19,000 staff and the 1.72million patient contacts that take place through the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust each year.

Newcastle Hospitals Charity supports initiatives that help to improve the health and wellbeing of patients, visitors and the wider communities of the North East and North Cumbria through compassionate and innovative healthcare, education and research.