

NEWCASTLE CHARITY CORNERSTONE GIVING CITY ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES CHANCE TO TRY NEW ACTIVITIES

Dozens of adults with learning disabilities across Newcastle are getting the chance to try a range of new activities thanks to a new initiative from a city charity and a four-figure grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation.

Cornerstone Benwell has set up its weekly Welcome Project where around 25 service users and their carers from across Newcastle are trying out everything from chocolate making and cookery through to making Christmas crafts and bath bombs.

The charity has used the £3,000 Newcastle Building Society grant to buy all the extra facilities, materials and ingredients required for the sessions, with bread and cheese tastings set to take place in the coming weeks.

The funding is being 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.

Along with the new group, Cornerstone Benwell runs a wide range of community support programmes and projects from its Armstrong Road headquarters, including the Corner Kitchen Community Café, the Benwell Bridge Food Pantry and the Corner Shop Preloved Shop

It also operates an emergency food bank, runs baby/toddler and children's clubs and offers technology, employment and college support to any local people that need their help.

Amy Proud, operations manager at Cornerstone, says: "Through the Welcome Project, we're providing our learners with the chance to take part in activities and experiences which most of us would take for granted, but which might otherwise not be available to them, and it's been a real success so far.

“The sensory elements we introduce each week give learners the chance to experience new tastes, smells and textures, and their response is wonderful to see.

“As well as giving learners the chance to try new things, our Welcome Project is also helping them make new friends and increasing their confidence.

“They’re always excited to be going home to show their families what they’ve made each week, while their carers are also really keen to be part of the sessions we’re putting on.

“Any charity will tell you that finding funding is a real challenge at the moment and takes an awful lot of time out of their day, so being awarded this grant by Newcastle Building Society will make a big difference to our service in lots of different ways.”

Joanne Mercer, chief internal auditor at Newcastle Building Society, who recently visited Cornerstone, adds: “This is a terrific project that touches on lots of different areas and ideas, and the positive impact it’s having with learners, carers and families is very clear.

“We’re always keen to support the work of charities in our home city and it’s great to be able to add Cornerstone to the long list of local organisations that we’re helping to deliver their invaluable services in our city communities.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £2.1m 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.

- ends -

For further information on Newcastle Building Society, please contact:

Julian Christopher
Footprint Public Relations
07891 005034

About Newcastle Building Society

Newcastle Building Society* is the biggest building society in the North East, with a network of 30 branches and assets of more than £4.9bn. We've been here for our members for over 150 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 £2.1m

*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 investments, pensions, inheritance tax planning, financial advice and life cover. Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited is an appointed representative of Openwork Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.