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THE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION CHARITY ALLOTMENT PROJECT FLOURISHING WITH NEWCASTLE BUILDING SOCIETY BACKING

Young people in Newcastle are improving their physical health, mental well-being and long-term life chances by getting their hands dirty with The Children's Foundation.

The charity has received a £3,000 grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland to help cover the cost of its essential Roots to Health project and of taking on a second Coxlodge allotment, which will help meet growing demand for places on the course from local schools.

The Children's Foundation's Roots to Health project at the Coxlodge Allotments in Fawdon allows groups of young people aged 14 and over to gain new skills and greater self-confidence while working towards obtaining a City & Guilds Level One Award in Practical Horticulture.

Led by 25-year-old 'green mentor' Robson Steele, the project is designed to help young people who have disengaged from traditional education for a range of reasons, with groups of six to eight people working together in each cohort.

A growing number of girls are taking part in the project, with ongoing support available after the completion of each cohort's course should participants feel they would benefit from it.

Founded in 1990 with a view to helping to address what were the worst levels of child health in the country at the time, the Children's Foundation works to improve the health and well-being of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people across the North East.

Its 'Yellow Brick Road Appeal' raised £12m to build The Sir James Spence Institute of Child Health, which sits within the Great North Children's Hospital and is one of the UK's leading NHS centres for research into childhood ill-health.

The Children's Foundation is an independent charity and receives no statutory funding at all.

Sean Soulsby, CEO of The Children's Foundation, says: "Everyone knows how beneficial it is for your physical and mental well-being to spend time outside, and we've used this as the basis for helping young people who might need a different kind of environment to help them progress.

"Our young people regularly start showing skills and talents that they never knew they had and find they're able to start realising this potential in ways that might have been beyond them if they'd not got involved with this project.

"The certificates they're earning may well be the first achievement of this type that they've ever had, and we've already seen several examples of young people then going on to take up further studying and employment opportunities that they'd never have believed they could manage before they came to us.

"Being on the allotment also allows participants to come into contact with people from different generations, which helps their personal development, especially when they're sharing their mutual enthusiasm for being out working on their plots in the open air.

"Newcastle Building Society shares our commitment to improving our communities and we're really grateful for their support for this highly effective project."

The Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland offers grants to charities and community groups located in or around the communities served by the Society's branch network.

Sue Scott, head of mortgage service centre at Newcastle Building Society, who recently visited the charity, adds: "The dedication of the Children's Foundation team to doing everything they can to support young people across our home area is

absolutely inspiring, and the positive impact of the Roots To Health project is plain to see in the achievements of its young participants.”

Since its launch in 2016, Newcastle Building Society’s Community Fund at the Community Foundation has also contributed over £2.3m 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.

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For further information on Newcastle Building Society, please contact:

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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 £5.3bn. 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 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 £2.3m

*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

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