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Children North East Cooks Up Kitchen Skills Project For Dozens Of Newcastle Families

Dozens of Newcastle families are learning to cook healthy meals together thanks to a new project from a longstanding city charity that's been backed by a four-figure grant from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund at the Community Foundation Tyne & Wear and Northumberland.

Children North East is running regular free family cookery sessions at its Cowgate community hub on Haughton Avenue, which is also the location of its popular community café.

The project focuses on healthy eating and nutrition as well as cookery skills development, with recipe cards available for families to take away, and also delivers advice on how they still eating healthily on a limited budget.

Participants choose the food activities that they want to try together, with everyone in the family having their own jobs to do in preparing the meals, and they then get to sit with and talk to other families in the café while they're eating the meals they've made.

Children North East is also using the sessions to help identify other areas in which its families might benefit from extra support and to signpost them towards it if they can't provide it themselves.

The £4,886 grant has been used to cover the project's staffing, ingredients and associated running costs.

Founded more than 130 years ago, Children North East aims to create life-changing differences for babies, children and young people in their families, schools and communities, and works with more than 1,100 families every year to help them reach their full potential.

It delivers a wide range of services, support and initiatives right across the region, from therapeutic services, mental health support and youth work through to family support, domestic abuse services and community-based support, and also campaigns on issues affecting babies, children and young people.

Billie Jenkins, communications and fundraising manager at Children North East, says: “The idea of this scheme is to share vital information with families in a sensitive, friendly and accessible way, and the enjoyment that we see everyone getting out of taking part shows how well it’s working.

“Every member of the family, from the youngest to the oldest, has a job to do and it’s especially lovely to younger children having fun and joining in so enthusiastically with their older relatives.

“As well as the skills they’re learning while they’re cooking and the time this allows them to spend together, our sessions are also helping families build new support networks within their communities, which are really important for their long-term well-being.

“We know that, for some of our families, the food they cook together can sometimes be the only hot meals they’ll get that day, so as well as the skills they’re developing and the time they’re spending together, there’s an immediate added benefit for everyone taking part.

“We simply couldn’t have delivered this project with the support we’ve had from Newcastle Building Society and it’s meant that we’ve been able to do something that we know has a positive impact on our families in both the short and long-term.”

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.

Lynn Richardson, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Gosforth branch, adds: “Children North East has identified a clear community need and developed a project that addresses it in an accessible and enjoyable way.

“The knowledge and time that’s been shared will have a hugely positive impact on hundreds of families across our home city and we’re very pleased to be able to contribute to making it happen.”

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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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

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