



Press Release: 09/05/23

North East Companies Newcastle Building Society and Recite Me, Collaborate to Address Financial Vulnerability

North East companies, Newcastle Building Society and Recite Me assistive technology are collaborating to add accessibility and language tools to the Society's website www.newcastle.co.uk, supporting customers to access content more easily, as well as those with visual impairments, disabilities and whose first language is not English.

In England, 9.8million people live with a disability*, and can often face barriers that prevent them from taking an active part in life. Newcastle Building Society has already made Diversity, Equity and Inclusion one of its five strategic priorities, and the roll-out of Recite Me's accessibility support technology on the Society's website comes as part of this commitment, and reflects its wider purpose to connect its communities with a better financial future. The introduction of the Recite Me tool is also in support of the FCA's priority to create a higher standard of consumer protection.

Jennie Pitt, head of equality, diversity and inclusion at Newcastle Building Society commented: "We're committed to making it easy for all of our customers to interact with us in the way they choose. That's why, as well as continuing to invest in and grow our branch network to ensure our communities maintain access to face-to-face financial services, we're making it simpler for members to manage their personal finances online, by making our website accessible to everyone."

The Recite Me tools available on the Newcastle Building Society website allow users to access the screen reading functionality, multiple reading aids, customisable styling options and an on-demand live translation feature capable of interpreting over 100 languages, including text-to-speech.

Jennie added: "Recite Me's accessibility software provides the ideal platform for us to uphold our commitment to delivering a website that everybody can easily use, and enables us to offer a customisable experience for our website visitors and members in a way that meets their individual needs.

"Ensuring that as many people as possible are able to access our website and obtain the information they need, or carry out the tasks they require, is important for our Society in enabling us to deliver high levels of customer service, and an inclusive experience for our members."

Newcastle Building Society is committed to inclusivity both as a workplace, for its members, and in its approach to its communities. Currently the Society has a variety of partnerships, including long-term relationships with other Recite Me clients including the Newcastle United Foundation and the Prince's Trust.

To try out the assistive tools on Newcastle Building Society's website visit www.newcastle.co.uk. For more information on Recite Me go to www.reciteme.com.

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*Office for National Statistics 2021 Census Data:

[https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20England%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,\(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000\).](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20England%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000).)

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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 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/>