



Approved - 27 July 2023

GRACE HOUSE CHARITY EXTENDS HELP FOR FAMILIES OF DISABLED CHILDREN IN MANAGING COST OF LIVING CRISIS

A Sunderland charity is giving dozens of local families of children with disabilities much-needed extra support to help navigate the cost-of-living crisis.

Grace House is using a £4,997 grant from Newcastle Building Society to extend the advice and guidance it can offer around managing the additional costs that families regularly face with caring for their disabled children.

A weekly Life@GraceHouse session with representatives from Citizens Advice Sunderland has been set up at the charity's Bardolph Drive premises at which families can ask for advice on navigating the financial challenges of day-to-day life.

The project provides guidance, practical support and signposting on easing problems relating to debt, benefits and food poverty, and also provides families with food hampers and lunch box top-ups for children where required.

The grant was 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.

Grace House, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, aims to support and inspire disabled children, young people and their families by helping them to manage challenges and enjoy the benefits of playing a full part in society.

It was originally established after a huge community fundraising drive by North East broadcaster Kathy Secker, who wanted local children “to have an amazing place where they can come to laugh, learn and live life to the full.”

The charity has around 850 families on its books, with people able to self-refer if they need help, and runs a wide range of other services including preschool and youth groups, counselling services, therapeutic activities, work experience and independent life skills coaching for young people.

Victoria Brown, CEO at Grace House, says: “Families with disabled children often find themselves facing financial challenges due to the extra lengths they need to go to to provide the care required, with one parent often having to give up work to make sure everything that has to be done can be.

“The cost-of-living crisis that we’re all experiencing has hit many of these families especially hard and we’ve responded by looking to provide practical advice and support on money matters wherever it’s required.

“It can be hard for anyone for talk about money problems at the best of times, but what we’ve found is that by welcoming our families into a familiar, comfortable environment, they’re more willing to discuss these issues and can therefore more easily get the help they require.

“We’ve had some really positive feedback from the families that have used the service so far and it’s clearly helping to break down barriers that might otherwise have stopped them getting the help they need.

“Newcastle Building Society’s support has meant we’ve been able to cover the costs of this project without having to take money from our other services, and we’re really grateful to have had their backing to help meet this urgent local need.”

Robert Boak, manager at Newcastle Building Society’s Sunderland branch, who recently visited the charity, adds: “Grace House has been helping North East families meet a whole host of challenges for the last two decades and has made an incalculable difference to the lives of thousands of disabled children and young people.

“We’re very pleased to be helping this excellent community charity to provide even more practical support when and where it’s needed the most.”

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.

- 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 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/>

** Newcastle Building Society introduces to Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited for advice on Investments, Pensions, Life and Protection Insurance and Inheritance Tax Planning. Newcastle Financial Advisers Limited is an appointed representative of The Openwork Partnership which is a trading style of Openwork Limited which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.