



The Sunshine Fund Christmas Appeal 2023

North East Sight Matters



The North East has the highest number of disabilities recorded at **29%**.

11% of children in the UK are disabled.

5% of disabilities amongst UK children are visual impairments.



Here's how we have supported local organisation, North East Sight Matters, this year...

Our supporters know us as a charity who exists to enhance the lives of babies, children and young adults with disabilities and terminal illnesses, and this extends beyond individual or family support as we strive to ensure all children have the opportunity to live safely, comfortably and meet their own individual potential.

We are proud to say that we provide specialist and adapted equipment to a range of organisations who provide care, support and education to disabled children including schools, nurseries and community groups. Recently, we provided a bundle of equipment to Northumberland-based North East Sight Matters (NESM) and we have enjoyed visiting them to see how much impact this equipment has had for their members who have a wide variety of sight loss and visual impairment.



NESM was set up during the 2020 lockdown by Vision Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS), Penny Dane. Penny has over 26 years of experience working with both adults and children with sight loss. She's joined by two other directors, Caroline Boulby, another VRS with over 30 years' experience, and Charlotte Stephenson, a teacher with the SEND Sensory Service (Children's Vision Team) in Newcastle (incidentally, she was one of Penny's students when she was 12, and has lived experience as she is registered Severely Sight Impaired).

And how can they help enhance young people's experiences of the NESM activities?

For example, the rucksacks contain fidget toys and ear defenders and are designed for those with sensory needs, to make them feel more comfortable.

The iPad is available to learn about the extensive and advanced accessibility features, and it is loaded with new and appropriate apps relevant to children with visual impairments, to promote leisure and learning.

The baseball caps and anti-glare glasses help filter bright light, and if more light is required, they can use the torches and illuminated magnifiers. The canes are available for families to experience and trial, to see if they support the young persons' visual and mobility needs, and the polaroid camera allows the children to capture memories.

Penny told us that ***“because of the array of equipment The Sunshine Fund provided it gives each individual child and young person the opportunity to engage more appropriately for their particular circumstance”***.

Our Family Co-ordinator, Bev, was lucky enough to join the group at one of their festive events at a visit to Newcastle's latest attraction: the 'Northern Lights Trail' in Leazes Park, to find out from families how the equipment we funded will make a difference.





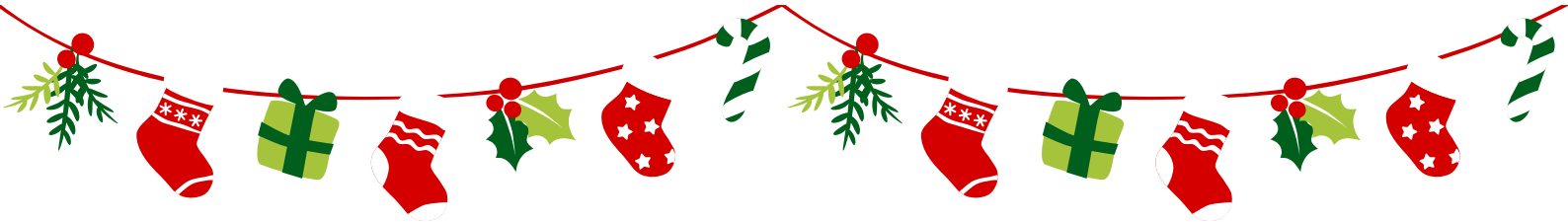
"It's always lovely to meet some of the families who have benefited from the equipment we've funded, and to learn more about each of them. Here at The Sunshine Fund, we're passionate about building relationships with the families and organisations we support, and we love to see the impact our work has on them first-hand.

We believe that all children deserve the same opportunities and experiences, and it's been a pleasure to enhance these types of visits and help make them more accessible for local children with visual impairments. When we support organisations, it's wonderful to know that each piece of equipment is going to help provide support and enrichment to multiple people, over a long period of time. We hope to see the equipment being used in more events in the future!"

- Bev, TCSF Family Co-ordinator

As a charity that strives to improve the daily lives of children in our region living with complex needs, to open the doors to new opportunities, we rely on the generosity of Chronicle readers to continue our hard work.

We have 4 equipment rounds per year, each costing upwards of £30,000 on average, and we receive zero statutory funding from the government or local authorities. Demand for equipment is growing and costs are rising; in the last 12 months we have seen number of applications for equipment rise by a colossal 43%, which demonstrates the increasing need across the region, and which is why we need your support now more than ever.



How you can help... Your Gift to Us

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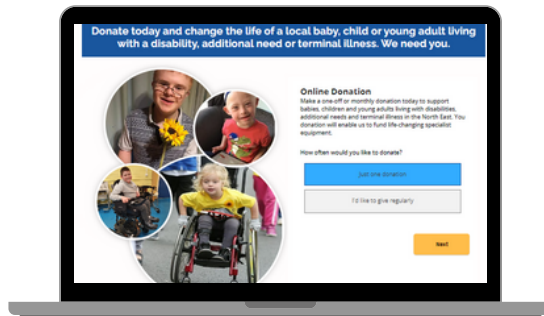
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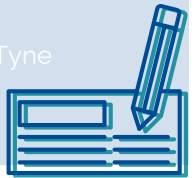


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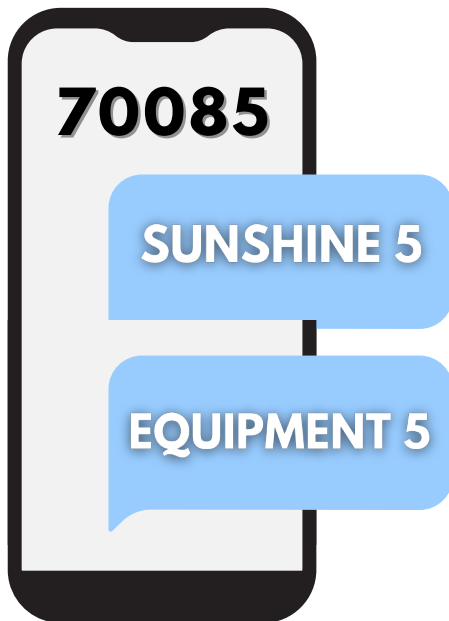


TEXT TO GIVE

Text **SUNSHINE 5** to **70085** to make a **one-off donation of £5**.

Text **EQUIPMENT 5** to **70085** to make a recurring **monthly donation of £5**.

Change the number from 2-20 to determine how much you donate.



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