

## PRESS RELEASE WITH IMAGES

03 May

### ALEXANDRA ROSE CHARITY TO HOST CELEBRATION EVENT TO CELEBRATE IMPORTANT MILESTONE

A national charity which works to alleviate health inequalities and food poverty is hosting a celebration event in Barnsley on 26 May to celebrate giving away its two millionth voucher.

Alexandra Rose Charity, based in the Southeast, runs ten projects in eight locations around the UK, including Barnsley. In just under ten years, the charity has distributed two million Rose Vouchers for free fruit and veg to families on low incomes.

The charity's **Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project** and the **Fruit & Veg on Prescription** project help families and individuals on low incomes to buy fresh fruit and veg with Rose Vouchers and supports them to give their children the healthiest possible start.

Since 2014, Rose Vouchers have supported 9,351 families and 17,380 children to access fresh fruit and veg in their communities from 66 different children's centres and community organisations. At the end of May 2023, two million Rose Vouchers will have been given out and spent with 58 different market traders and greengrocers.

To celebrate this important milestone, Alexandra Rose Charity will be hosting an invite-only event in **Barnsley** on **Friday 26 May at 10.30am until 12.30pm**. Families and market traders, as well as the charity's funders and key dignitaries, will attend.

**Jonathan Pauling, Chief Executive at Alexandra Rose Charity, said:** "Our project here in Barnsley is hugely representative of the work we do across the UK. The project's success proves that the Rose Vouchers for Fruit and Veg Project works anywhere and not just in London. For that reason, it is the perfect, and most central, location for our celebration event."

Recipients of the Rose Vouchers in Barnsley usually collect their vouchers from their local family centre, but in keeping with the celebration event, a special pop-up collection will be operating from Barnsley Markets to encourage all recipients in the area to get involved with the festivities.

Rose Vouchers have supported 1,952 families in Barnsley since 2016 when the project was launched there. There are ten family centres in the town distributing Rose Vouchers that can be used in Barnsley Markets, as well as AG Greengrocer in Hoyland, Smiths Fruit Stores in Wombwell, Leversleys Quality Produce in Wath on Dearne, and a stall at Barnsley Hospital.



Alexandra Rose Charity celebrated its last milestone in 2021 when its millionth voucher was spent by a family in North End Road Market in Hammersmith and Fulham. Since then, the charity has scaled up its mission, enhanced efficiency and distributed a further one million vouchers in less than two years.

**Jonathan added:** “We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved over the last nine years. We started small by testing the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project in local communities in London. As news spread of its effectiveness at combating food poverty and promoting healthier diets, we received requests from locations across the UK to expand the project.

“It took us seven years to get to one million vouchers but only 18 months to get to our second million. This shows how quickly the project can be scaled to meet rising demand but also, sadly, is an indictment of the impact of both COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis on families on low incomes across the UK.

“Demand for our work still outstrips our capacity, and although we celebrate this milestone, we continue to worry about the huge challenges families face up and down the country. We will continue to collaborate with our brilliant local partners to make sure as many families as possible can have access to healthy, fresh fruit and veg in their local communities.”

The charity says diet-related ill health costs the NHS billions every year, but more importantly, it is limiting the life chances of people on low incomes.

**Henry Dimbleby, Author of The National Food Strategy, former Lead Non-Executive Director at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and co-founder of Leon, Chefs in Schools, and the Sustainable Restaurant Association, said:** “This milestone is a terrific achievement from Alexandra Rose Charity.

Everyone should have access to healthy and affordable food, but right now, that’s incredibly hard. The rising cost of living, low-paid, unstable jobs, and a food environment flooded with junk food, means more and more people are struggling with food poverty and diet-related disease.

“Calories from unhealthy food are three times cheaper than healthy alternatives, so it makes sense that people will prioritise being full rather than being healthy, but this only stores up health problems for the future.

“Alexandra Rose Charity’s programmes are vital because they enable people, who otherwise would not be able to afford it, to buy the fresh fruit and veg of their choice every week, giving them the spending power to eat healthily. I hope that in due course, this becomes an entitlement for anyone living in poverty.”

**Rachael, a mum from Barnsley who has received Rose Vouchers, said:** “Having Rose Vouchers has changed how I do things. Instead of saying, “I can microwave this or put it in the oven”, I cook more from scratch. I get my son more involved with making meals too.

"I buy more variety of fruit and veg now I have the vouchers. Seeing all the fruit & veg displayed nicely lets me see what I want to try. I can offer my son different fruit and veg to try and see what he likes. Rose Vouchers have been a lifesaver."

**Carly Speechley, Executive Director of Children's Services at Barnsley Council, said:**  
"We are delighted to host the celebration of this milestone. Rose Vouchers provide a real support for Barnsley families to adopt healthier lifestyles in the crucial years before school begins.

"We want Barnsley to be the place of possibilities and giving children the healthiest possible start is part of helping them to lead productive and happy lives in the future.

"In times of need, it's important that people can get additional support at the right time and in the right place. At a time where many families are facing financial challenges due to the rising cost of living, Rose Vouchers are a valued part of the local and national support we are promoting through our More Mon£y in your Pocket campaign."

Alexandra Rose Charity's work helps put money back into the town centres in which their projects operate, and this helps communities, not just for those that have access to the Rose Vouchers, but everyone, as these projects pave the way for more people to access more fresh food locally.

Barnsley Markets, which has, in recent years, seen a major renovation as part of the development of The Glass Works, is symbolic of regeneration and investment in the town centre, and, as a venue, aligns perfectly with Alexandra Rose Charity's vision to help keep money in the local economy.

The charity will continue to support families across the eight Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project areas over the coming year while building on the recent successful launch of its Fruit & Veg on Prescription Project working with health practitioners and social prescribers to increase access to healthy food for people suffering from long term health conditions.

It is also involved in the national **Bridging the Gap Project**, that aims to increase access to local, sustainably produced food for those on low incomes. This Project will see several pilots delivered across the UK over the next two years.

Alongside its programme work, Alexandra Rose Charity will continue to advocate for a more equitable food system and make the case to policymakers for the significant role that financial incentives can play in creating a healthier and more sustainable food system.

**ENDS**



## NOTES TO EDITOR:

### IMAGES AND BROADCAST OPPORTUNITY

The media are invited to attend Alexandra Rose Charity's celebration event inside Barnsley Markets, The Glass Works S70 1GW between 10.30am and 12.30pm.

Interviews on the day will be available with the charity's Chief Executive Jonathan Pauling, a family who benefit from the scheme in Barnsley and Laura Hammerton, Early Start and Families Strategy and Service Manager at Barnsley Council.

Photograph opportunities will include shots with the family and the Alexandra Rose Team with a large Two Millionth Rose Voucher, in and around Barnsley Markets and The Glass Works.

Jonathan and the Alexandra Rose Team will be available for online interviews in the run up to the event too.

### More about [Alexandra Rose Charity](#)

Founded in 1912 by Queen Alexandra, the Alexandra Rose Charity was established to support Londoners in poverty.

Since the charity began the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project eight years ago, an incredible 1.6 million Rose Vouchers have been redeemed by families. They have given thousands of families the spending power to buy the fruit and vegetables of their choice whilst supporting markets, traders, and greengrocers around the UK. In the toughest of years, this has been more vital than ever.

Alexandra Rose Charity receives funding nationally and locally from a range of funders, including The National Lottery Community Fund Partnerships Programme, Garfield Weston Foundation, People's Postcode Lottery and Impact on Urban Health as well as local councils and public health teams.

The charity plans to support thousands more families as it continues to deliver on its 5-Year Strategic Plan.

### More about the Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg Project

A family receives £4 of Rose Vouchers for each child every week, or £6 if the child is under one year old. Alexandra Rose Charity work with some fantastic market traders in London, Liverpool, Barnsley, and Glasgow, where the vouchers can be redeemed for a great selection of fruit and veg.

By working with the market traders, the project also benefits local markets, helping to ensure economic vibrancy by encouraging regular trade, and so maintaining local markets as important sources of healthy, low-cost food.

Distribution of the Rose Vouchers is based at children and family centres and some community organisations, to support families on the Rose Voucher project to engage with existing activities focused on health and well-being in their local area.

Staff at the distribution centres register families which stand to benefit most from the vouchers due to their susceptibility to food poverty, dietary-related health issues or other risk factors.

### More about the Fruit & Veg on Prescription Project

An innovative pilot, thought to be the UK's first large-scale "Fruit & Veg on Prescription" project, has been launched to help tackle health inequality and food poverty.

Alexandra Rose Charity, in partnership with public health teams in the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Lambeth, has launched Fruit & Veg on Prescription as part of a £250,000 pilot funded by local authorities and a charitable foundation.

The projects will be delivered in partnership with the Bromley by Bow Centre in Tower Hamlets, one of the earliest pioneers of social prescribing, and by The Beacon Project in Lambeth.

Trials in the boroughs, which both have high rates of chronic disease, will explore the viability of fruit and veg on prescription as a long-term solution to tackling diet-related ill health and food insecurity.

Each person will be prescribed Rose Vouchers for Fruit & Veg and will receive up to £8 per week in vouchers, plus £2 per week for each household member\*.

Participants can spend their Rose Vouchers on the fruit and veg of their choice with local retailers and market traders. In Tower Hamlets, they will also be invited to take part in monthly healthy lifestyle group sessions to improve their understanding of nutrition and health.

### More about the Barnsley Council's [More Mon£y in Your Pocket](#) support

Many people are having difficulties due to the rising cost of living, and they might not realise that they are entitled to some help. Barnsley Council have collated information on their More Mon£y in Your Pocket webpages to help people find out about the range of local help that's available, as well as national support.

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, the government has also launched a campaign to let everyone know what national support is available. This is called Help for Households.

**This news release has been prepared by Altitude on behalf of Alexandra Rose Charity.**

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