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THE CO-OPERATIVE BANK DONATES £10,000 TO GREATER MANCHESTER HOSPICE GROUP TO KEEP FAMILIES CONNECTED THROUGHOUT LOCKDOWN

- The Co-operative Bank provides Greater Manchester Hospices' with vital funds to keep families connected throughout the coronavirus pandemic.
- Adult hospices across Greater Manchester will use the funds to buy video enabled devices, in order to facilitate video calling between inpatients and their loved ones as the coronavirus pandemic limits face to face visiting. These devices can often be the lifeline for many families, who without a mobile phone or tablet were otherwise unable to stay connected to their loved ones at such a vital time.
- Derian House, Chorley are using the funds to not only help children and young people keep in touch with their loved ones, but also to allow them to become more independent through cutting-edge equipment that ensures that video calling to families is accessible to everyone.
- Francis House in South Manchester who provide respite and end of life support for children and young people, are using the funds to buy equipment to support their Bereavement and Emotional Support Team to stay connected with families.

The need for families to stay connected is more important now than ever before, particularly for those who as a result of Covid-19 restrictions are unable to see or visit their loved ones. The Greater Manchester Hospice Group have facilitated video calling between inpatients and their families throughout the pandemic, however, not all family members have access to a

device that is enabled for video calling. This has unfortunately meant that for anybody who does not have access to a mobile phone or tablet they are unable to stay connected, as face to face visiting is limited due to ongoing restrictions and is not possible in certain circumstances, such as when loved ones are themselves self-isolating.

This heart breaking scenario has meant that inpatients, who are often receiving end of life care, are sometimes unable to see or spend quality time with their families at an extremely difficult moment in their lives. This donation from The Co-operative Bank has enabled the Greater Manchester Hospice Group to purchase devices and cover the cost of any rates and data to ensure patients remain connected and supported throughout the end of life care they are receiving.

At children's hospice Derian House, not only have they been able to purchase iPads so that families can stay in touch with each other, but they have also been able to purchase cutting-edge equipment that ensures that whatever the ability or mobility of the young person, that they can stay in touch with their family, allowing them to become more independent.

Children's hospice; Francis House who also form part of the Greater Manchester Hospice Group are using the donation from The Co-operative Bank to buy equipment to support their Bereavement and Emotional Support Team who have seen an increase in demand throughout the pandemic. Experiencing the death of a child is one of the most devastating things that can happen to anyone. This funding will help to ensure that the essential support provided by the specialist team can meet the needs of all of the families that require support at this devastating time.

Maria Cearns, Managing Director of Customer and People at The Co-operative Bank said: *"Our customers and colleagues consistently tell us that staying connected is extremely important to them, especially during the pandemic, which is why we are extremely proud to support the Greater Manchester Hospice Group and the families they care for. Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on many people, reducing or even stopping face to face contact, which is why we are pleased to provide funds to help ensure families across Greater Manchester are able to stay connected during what is already a very difficult time."*

Dr Leigh Vallance, Chair of the Greater Manchester Hospices Group and Chief Executive of Bolton Hospice, said: *"The ability to communicate via video during this time, whilst not a replacement for physically being together, is much better than not being able to see each other at all. Thanks to the generous donation from The Co-operative Bank we will*

now be able to loan a video calling enabled device to family members who otherwise would not have access to one - a priceless gift of compassion in a truly traumatic scenario that will make a lasting and powerful difference in a world changed forever by the Coronavirus."

Caroline Taylor, Communications and Marketing Manager at Derian House Children's

Hospice said: *"We cannot thank The Co-operative Bank enough for their very generous donation. The money has allowed us to not only buy three new iPads to help our children and young people keep in touch with their loved ones whilst they are at the hospice, but has also meant we can purchase cutting-edge equipment to increase their independence and make it possible for them to use video calling in a much more accessible way.*

"Through the new sensory switches, even our young people with impaired mobility will be able to operate the tablets and computers to make recordings and video call their loved ones. This is hugely important in fostering a sense of independence and helping our families stay close during the pandemic. It will make a real difference."

-Ends-

Notes to editors

The hospices within the Greater Manchester Hospice Group include:

- Adult hospices: Bolton, Bury, Wigan and Leigh, St Ann's in Salford and Stockport, Springhill in Rochdale, Dr Kershaw's in Oldham and Willow Wood in Tameside.
- Children's hospices: Derian House and Francis House

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About The Co-operative Bank

The Co-operative Bank plc provides a full range of banking products and services to retail and SME (Small and Medium Sized Enterprises) customers and is committed to values and ethics in line with the principles of the co-operative movement.

The Co-operative Bank is the only high street bank with a customer-led ethical policy which gives customers a say in how their money is used. Launched in 1992, the Policy has been updated on five occasions, with new commitments added in January 2015 to cover how the Bank operates its business, products and services, workplace and culture, relationships with suppliers and other stakeholders and campaigning.

About the Greater Manchester Hospice Group

GM Hospices is a unique, first of its kind partnership, comprising the Greater Manchester area's seven adult hospices (Bolton, Bury, Dr Kershaw's, Springhill, St Ann's, Wigan & Leigh, and Willow Wood) and two local children's hospices (Derian House and Francis House). We're proud to be working together to help influence and improve the provision of specialist palliative and end of life care for people across Greater Manchester and East Cheshire.