

Edinburgh Leisure launches programme to help cancer patients

At the Royal Commonwealth Pool this morning there was so much energy in the air you would have been forgiven for not realising that some of the exercise class are going through cancer treatment.



Edinburgh Leisure has teamed up with Macmillan Cancer Care to offer Move More classes across Edinburgh to cancer patients.

The programme is called Move More Edinburgh and has been organised along with an investment of £240,000 from Macmillan Cancer Support. The idea is to get those who have cancer or are going through treatment, or who are in recovery into an exercise setting. The benefits are many – and not all are physical.

Extensive research has shown that getting active at any of these times is very beneficial, and can actually prevent future illness.

June Peebles CEO of Edinburgh Leisure explained that Edinburgh Leisure is always on the lookout to do more, to make a difference and to get people active. She continued: “We had relationships with Macmillan through the Coffee Morning and other fundraising activities. We were aware of the Move More programme on a national scale and so we approached Macmillan and then agreed a funding model with them.

“In year one we had 88 referrals which has resulted in 39 participants. We have 16 volunteers, 2 programme officers and

a host of other gym instructors who have helped deliver the programme.

“Our vision for the city is Inspiring City, to be more active and healthy. We run a lot of activities, a lot of ages and stages, and I am very conscious that a lot of people participate in physical activity for various reasons. That can be for health reasons, for physical mental or social health. But this also recognises that some people need a bit more support, and we run classes for example for mental health or to help those at risk of falling. So for us being able to work with Macmillan and offer physical activity for people with cancer was just an extension of what we do. It has enabled us to work with people with specific health issues.”

One participant Celia Barron told us that this class has encouraged her to do even more activity. She said: “I found it really helpful to get back to normal life and build up my confidence. It helps me mentally too. It is a gentle workout but it makes you feel stimulated afterwards. You don’t even realise it is a workout or that you are using your whole body!”

Gordon Maclean Macmillan Cancer Support National Programme Manager is very enthusiastic about Move More. He told us: “It is a growing requirement for Macmillan to help people to get back to normality. The number of people in Edinburgh may be growing but the number of people surviving cancer is growing too which is an excellent news story. But these people need support and help to get back to being more physically active.

“It has been shown that it can prevent recurrence of disease so it is crucial for that reason.

“Macmillan’s main focus is to help people live with their cancer diagnosis during and after treatment. We look at ways of helping people find out how they can live with their cancer diagnosis. This programme reduces isolation by bringing people

together in groups which is hugely beneficial.”

Dr Anna Campbell is a Reader at Edinburgh Napier University who researches this area of cancer and exercise and also teaches students about the benefits of doing physical activity when patients have cancer.

She said: “I have been looking at putting evidence into practice for a long time and trying to show that doing any type of activity during or after treatment has huge benefits both physically and psychologically.

“What I am trying to do now is ensure that everybody who has gone through cancer treatment has an opportunity to be referred to one of these amazing programmes which are available across Edinburgh.

“We will evaluate the programme to make sure that we are targeting the right people and they are getting benefit from it.”

Move More Edinburgh is free of charge and available to cancer patients and their carers. To find out more call you Move More Edinburgh team on 0131 458 2190 or email movemore@edinburghleisure.co.uk

Edinburgh Leisure is a not for profit trust and reinvests all surplus into providing more facilities. The Royal Commonwealth Pool is one out of 10 that the company runs in the city.