

Giving peace a chance in new urban pod

A new mental health resource will provide a quiet and safe space for one-to-one counselling space between staff and people using Support in Mind Scotland's Stafford Centre.

Work has started on an "Urbanpod" – dubbed Peace in a Pod – and which was the result of a £15,000 fundraising effort by generous supporters and service users.

An anonymous supporter generously got the building fund underway with a £6,000 donation, before fundraising duo Bilal Akram and Asim Ali added a further £3,000 through a driving challenge. A team of pupils from Holyrood High School – Todd Burgess, Lucas Martin, Pierino Crolla and Matthew Korecki Aguirre – also chipped in with their £3,000 prize from the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative.

The target was reached thanks to donations from other well-wishers, including customers and staff from Lothian Buses who have selected Support in Mind Scotland as their Charity of Choice. Volunteers from Lothian have also given their time to do the prep work for the pod.

The modern outdoor office unit will fit snugly into the back garden of the bustling [Broughton Street centre](#), and will provide a timely boost for the charity, which has endured a tough year during the pandemic.

Michele Mason, Edinburgh Area Manager for [SiMS](#), said: "The

fundraising effort and the goodwill shown towards us from the people of the city has been magnificent.

“The Pod and its furniture will look spectacular and having this new safe space will give everyone a big lift after the challenges we have faced together over the past 15 months.

“What makes this even better is that I can’t remember us ever having something new at the centre. We usually make do and mend, and so much of what we have is either second hand or patched up. For us to get something brand new and sparkly will be really appreciated by everyone who uses it and there is a real buzz of anticipation.”

Michele also thanked Livingston-based firm Urbanpods for kindly offering a substantial charity discount. The idea for Peace in A Pod was first conceived when the charity collaborated with Urbanpods and top landscape garden designer Tom Angel on his award-winning exhibit at Gardening Scotland 2019.

Tom’s stunning creation, which took the prestigious Best New Show Garden and Silver Gilt prizes, highlighted paths to recovery from mental illness, and was centred around a pod similar to the one that will soon take pride of place the Stafford Centre.