

Care residents get a taste of the outdoors with first post-lockdown outing

Residents at Edinburgh care homes have had the opportunity to experience their first organised outdoors activity after a year of lockdown, with a visit to Edinburgh's Royal Botanic Garden and Saughton Park.

Apart from the short trips to the end of the garden and stints in the home's purpose-built outdoor seating area, residents at [Mansfield Care's](#) Eildon House and Belleville Lodge have not been on a day out in more than a year.

Before lockdown, trips out were a regular staple for residents, with visits to the Royal Yacht Britannia, the National Museum and the Zoo.

Now with all residents and staff fully vaccinated and restrictions easing, carers at the homes organised garden outings as a special treat for the residents.

Staff from each care home planned and assisted the residents to travel to and from the Botanic and Saughton Gardens, which is only a short walk away.

Fiona Shale, Activities coordinator at Eildon House said: "While some of our residents do still feel more comfortable

remaining indoors for the time being, the vast majority have been very excited to get out and about again.

“The Botanic Gardens were very accommodating with our visit and it all went off without a hitch, although we made sure the residents were well wrapped up for the unpredictable weather.

“We spent the majority of the time in the Garden of Tranquillity which is a new area of the Botanic Gardens that has been created specifically for people with dementia. As the name suggests, it’s a lot quieter than some of the other areas, with beautiful landscaping and water features giving visitors a peaceful and safe space to enjoy.”

Residents from Belleville Lodge took a trip to Saughton Gardens enjoying the rose and herb garden in the sun.

Margaret Russell, Manager at Belleville Lodge said: “The residents really enjoyed looking at all the flowers. The herb garden was a resident favourite and we even tasted some of the different herbs.

“One of our residents, Heather Salzen, is a Botanist so she really enjoyed her day out and was telling us all about the plants.

“It was a great day out. We ended our tour of the garden with a cup of tea and refreshments in the garden café and sat outdoors as the weather was lovely.”

With activities requested, led and coordinated around the interests of the residents, Mansfield Care staff are dedicated to creating a homely, supportive and exciting environment, putting the needs of its residents at the forefront of everything they do.

Fiona added: “Our priority is keeping the lives of our residents as enriched as possible.

“It’s been a very tough year not being able to do the range of

activities we normally would, but we've been keeping residents entertained through the likes of craft activities such as painting, physical seated exercise and also reminiscence story telling.

"Following on from our Botanic Gardens trip, we've got some excellent stuff in the pipeline for later this year and look forward to resuming our regular frequency of outings."

Mansfield Care operates 11 small, friendly and residential care homes in Edinburgh, the Borders and the west of Scotland.

<https://www.mansfieldcare.co.uk/>