

Teens+ celebrate the opening of new educational centre at Eskmills

Teens+ celebrated the opening of its new East Lothian centre at Eskmills, Station Road in Musselburgh where a new educational day service will be provided.

The 'Teens +' programme, which is organised and run by charity organisation Capella, has been brought to East Lothian to further support the Community Transformation Programme for Adults with Complex Needs.

Teens+ opened an East Lothian base to add to their other facilities in Gilmerton and Liberton. In these three locations the organisation will offer a person-centred programme supporting the needs and aspirations of students to help them to develop social and life skills. The service provides a range of education and therapeutic disciplines to support students and their families to learn new skills and approaches, preparing them for the future. Young people can gain access to education tutors and highly experienced project workers who collectively build an extensive individual learning plan, tailored for each student.

Simon Pearce-Madge, Teens+ Head of Service said at the official event: "Welcome everyone to our third Teens+ Centre. Around a year ago a conversation took place around some of the services that we have in Edinburgh where there were places available. One of the things we then realised was that a lot

of people from East Lothian required a support service. So the idea began on email and grew and grew.

“We have offered support to eleven people so far and by next year we will be offering places to 15 students. By the end of year two we hope to increase the support to around 20 people, and by the end of year three we will be able to offer lifelong education support to 25 individuals.

“We are also one of the newest Living Wage Employers in the East Lothian area. Not only are we supporting eleven new students but we have also taken on 18 new staff from East Lothian or the surrounding areas.”

Colin Beattie, MSP Midlothian North and Musselburgh said: “I think it is fantastic. As soon as I heard they were opening up in my patch I had to come down and see what they were doing, and see the new premises. It all exceeds my expectations. I am sure that the organisation is going to be a real asset for East Lothian and Musselburgh and I look forward to working with them in the future.”

Cllr Shamin Akhtar, Depute Leader and the Cabinet Spokesperson for Health and Social Care, East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership, said: “I have had the privilege of spending a little bit of time here with Simon and the young people. I saw the ethos, I saw the caring, nurturing and supportive environment that the young people were provided with while I was here. Teens Plus as an organisation also provide that same environment to their staff.

Mercedes, one of the students, had written a speech saying: “I hope you all have lovely time tonight. While I am at Teens Plus it feels like a new path to the future. Everyone here helps me in difficult times. I am still trying to make friends but I still hang out with my best friends every Friday.

“Most importantly I am beginning to feel at home here. I am very grateful to a few key people who made it all possible,

including my social worker, Abby, and Louise, Meg and Simon.”

The new Teens+ [centre](#) has been set up to eventually support 25 students and their families with the move from school to adult living. Funding has been provided by the East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership.

This one of a kind service will support the East Lothian community by providing further education, life and social skills, with work placement support, transition to ownership of tenancies, and lifelong learning to young people who, due to their needs, would ordinarily be excluded from accessing any form of further education after they have left school.

The celebration at the East Lothian centre marked the opening of the charity’s third centre and its first expansion outside Edinburgh, expanding the charity’s ability greatly as it grows, going from strength to strength and bringing the total capacity of students supported by Teens+ service to 100 on all three sites.

As well as working within the base at Eskmills, students also enjoy getting out into the local community to create opportunities for learning and development in a range of settings.

Fiona Wilson, Chief Officer of East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership said: “This is another great example of partnership working at its best. Working alongside third sector agencies, we have collectively been able to enhance our Community Transformation Programme and bring specialist services to a convenient location within our county borders. Not only will this have an incredibly positive effect on the teens’ confidence and independence, it will provide a number of benefits for families and carers too. We are looking forward to expanding this service and welcoming more individuals in the months and years to come.”



Colin Beattie MSP with Haakon who cut the ribbon



Mercedes making a speech at the official opening of Teens+ new premises at Eskmills



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Members of staff at The official opening of Teens+ new premises at Eskmills