

Keeping Edinburgh Active

Edinburgh Leisure's Danceability is featured in the new 'Keeping Edinburgh' podcast which has recently launched for people across Edinburgh to help boost social connections across Scotland's capital.

Danceability, funded by Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP), is one of several activities on offer as part of Edinburgh Leisure's Fit & Active Programme – supporting those with disabilities to access socially connected, wellbeing-boosting fitness activities. Support to get Fit & Active can be accessed by making a referral to Edinburgh Leisure's Active Communities team. Everybody who is referred gets an access card that gives them reduced-cost access to activities such as the gym, swimming, or fitness classes for 1 year.

Edinburgh Leisure takes referrals from the Local Area Co-ordination Team supporting young adults, from support providers and social workers or people with a learning disability can also self-refer to request support.

Using their card, participants can attend any of Edinburgh Leisure's gym, swim or fitness class sessions, as well as their specific Fit & Active activities for adults with learning disabilities that are available at Meadowbank Sports Centre and Leith Victoria Swim Centre.

Sara Kemp, Equalities Community Development Officer for

Edinburgh Leisure, said: “The funding from EHSCP is around supporting people to have more good days and physical activity is key to this.

“There is a lot of data out there that says that people with physical and learning difficulties were among the most affected by services closing and not restarting after the pandemic. They also experienced the most social isolation.

“If you think about lockdown, a lot of people who come to our classes rely on support workers to go out and meet other people so they can have fun in social situations – and all that was taken away. A lot of services didn’t restart after COVID-19 and that was due to a lack of funding for some of them, and at the beginning, due to restrictions on space. But Edinburgh Leisure has managed to restart Danceability and customers have started to come back after this period of potentially quite long isolation with the disabled community once again able to get out and socialise, and have a good time.”

The benefits of exercise are well documented. Beyond the physical benefits, keeping active can improve mental health, quality of life and overall well-being. The second episode, Keeping Edinburgh Active, explores how organisations are offering opportunities to improve accessibility for anyone to keep active, and how keeping active is helping build confidence amongst those facing emotional or physical struggles or other disadvantages.

The new ‘Keeping Edinburgh podcast’ is presented by Edinburgh-born singer-songwriter (and keyboardist to Callum Beattie) Gus Harrower. As well as a touring musician, Gus was approached for this project thanks to his ongoing work as an established Community Musician, working with major charities and organisations to empower and improve people’s well-being through music.

The initial six-episode pilot series is an investment by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, with the podcast designed and delivered in collaboration with partners across NHS Scotland and the third and independent sectors.

The series aims to highlight just some of the thousands of opportunities across the capital to support people's well-being and launches at the start of the winter period – a time that sees increased pressure on health and social care services with research showing that those experiencing loneliness are more likely to visit their GP or A&E during this time.

Each half-hour episode provides an immersive audio journey into some of the many free-to-access social-prescribing experiences across the Capital, that are helping individuals and communities to have more good days. The first two episodes are available now to download via Apple and Spotify and feature experiences from several established Edinburgh organisations including Capital Theatres, Edinburgh Leisure, and Volunteer Edinburgh.

Dr Linda Irvine Fitzpatrick, Strategic Programme Manager at the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership is committed to addressing social isolation as it is the number one public health issue globally. She says, "It's an issue we all have to try and tackle. Part of that comes from increasing our individual and collective awareness of the breadth and range of opportunities out there that can offer people the opportunity to connect with one another and have more good days."

She continues, "Whether it's arts initiatives, community meals, physical exercise, mindfulness, or simply getting outdoors, there are many different options to benefit from. We want to showcase a 'tip of the iceberg' view of what's out there, as well as help listeners, get a taste of what it's like to be part of different groups and activities –

experience what it's like to be in the room or places alongside people already benefitting from these activities. We hope to build that shared knowledge as well as that confidence with listeners to take their own first steps by hearing directly from others who are benefitting from these wonderful programmes.”

Launching with an initial two episodes – Keeping People Connected (ep 1) and Keeping People Active (ep 2) – further episodes of the initial six-episode series will be released monthly covering initiatives and spaces across the arts, physical activities, community gardens, volunteering, and more.

The ‘fly on the wall’ audio experience aims to offer an engaging content experience for anyone. For avid podcast listeners, its content and style of storytelling is one that sits within multiple genres, with a strong slant towards society and culture, as well as the podcast’s health and well-being-boosting intentions.

Listen now: www.podfollow.com/keepingedinburgh

Find out more: www.edinburghhsc.scot/moregooddays

More information on Fit & Active: <https://www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/fit-and-active>

To discuss a referral to Fit & Active get in touch by emailing: active@edinburghleisure.co.uk

“We make an effort to include everybody who comes through our doors. I am a dancer. I know how good dancing makes me feel so if we can pass that onto people in the room, that is wonderful!”



www.podfollow.com/keepingedinburgh

Keeping Edinburgh

Out now

- Sara, Equalities Officer,
Edinburgh Leisure

