

LifeCare's Chatty Café to help overcome loneliness

A scheme to encourage members of the local community to “get chatting” in cafés will begin at local charity LifeCare Edinburgh's community café, CaféLife, in early 2024.

This initiative is one way of tackling loneliness and social isolation and is part of the Chatty Café Scheme. The “chat and natter” tables offer a designated space in CaféLife where customers of all ages can get together meeting new people and having a chat.

The scheme is set to turn “Blue Monday” to “Brew Monday” as customers will enjoy free tea and coffee between 11am and 2pm, as well as the opportunity to meet lots of new and friendly faces, at the launch on Monday 15 January.

LifeCare Chief Executive, Sarah Van Putten, said: “Our community hub and café is a unique space, embedded in the local community, that brings together generations for activities, classes, and groups. Signing up to be part of the Chatty Café Scheme with the addition of our “Chat and Natter” table will further enhance our already significant social value.

“Around 100,000 older people in Scotland feel lonely all or most of the time, with Edinburgh named recently as one of the loneliest cities in the UK. Loneliness is an epidemic that can

affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race or background. Something as simple as a regular conversation could change a person's life.

"We're delighted to be turning Blue Monday to Brew Monday by offering free tea and coffee on the day of the launch, and we hope it will make the start of 2024 a little bit brighter for those in our local community who need it."

LifeCare Edinburgh is a local charity with a long history of providing uplifting, positive and practical support for older people. Their vision is of a society where no older person is alone or isolated, and their professional and high-quality support is delivered to the most vulnerable members of the community – including those living with dementia and unpaid (often older themselves) carers – both at home and out and about. Demand for the charity's services have risen at an unprecedented rate through the cost-of-living crisis, and they recently launched an urgent appeal to raise funds so they can continue to provide vital support during the difficult winter months.

The charity's community Cafe, CaféLife, has become a vital lifeline for many loyal customers.

David, 71, who has lived in Stockbridge all his life, has been coming to the Café for almost 10 years. He said: "I stay in sheltered housing in the local area, and they don't offer meals there. We can come, eat, and get a blether, we're made so welcome and it's a fabulous place with fabulous staff. It gets you out and about."

The Café also holds a special place in the heart of Sofiya and her friends. She said: "We've been coming to the café every Wednesday for over 10 years. In the beginning there were four of us, one person sadly died, the other person is now living with dementia and is about to go into a home so there's now only two of us left. We think the staff are exceptional. We've

got to know them all very well over the years and we have a good laugh every week.”

The “chat and natter” tables will be a permanent addition to CaféLife following on from the launch, with two-hour sessions, supported by volunteers, taking place on a weekly basis. All proceeds from CaféLife help to fund the charity’s vital services.

Jenny Bimpson, Volunteer Manager at Chatty Café, said: “The Chatty Café Scheme, launched in 2017, helps reduce loneliness via the use of Chatter & Natter tables. Designating a few tables in a café, pub or community centre creates a space for people to connect, have conversations and meet new people. The sessions are supported by Chatty Café volunteers, welcoming people to the table and helping to create a friendly atmosphere.”

The Chatty Café scheme is a brainchild of Alexandra Hoskyn, who founded it after a miserable day at a supermarket café with her infant son, where she noticed that no one was talking to each other. She found that by simply putting ‘Chatter and Natter’ signs on tables in cafes it created a space for people to talk. She said: “Anyone can join the table, and if you’re on your own, in a couple, with a friend, if you’re a carer you can sit there with the person you care for, mums and babies, dads and babies, grandparents and babies, young people, older people and anyone in between. It’s a great way to meet new people in your community.”

Chatty Cafe Scheme



At a loose end? Fancy a cuppa?

The “Chat and Natter” table is a wonderful way of encouraging people of all ages to talk to each other. During the time and day below, the table will be hosted by a friendly volunteer. Do come along and sit for a chat.

**When: Every Monday
(starting 15th January 2024) 11am - 1pm**

**Where: CafeLife, 2 Cheyne Street,
Edinburgh, EH4 1JB**

Stay for as long as you like - the choice is always yours.



Having a chat can brighten your day

www.thechattycafescheme.co.uk







