National charity extends services to support more people living with tinnitus

Thursday 2 January, 2020

Embargoed until 2 January 2020

24 December 2019: National charity the British Tinnitus Association (BTA) – the only national charity dedicated to supporting people with tinnitus – is extending its support services to help more of the 7.5 million people living with the condition in the United Kingdom.

To complement the existing Freephone helpline and email support, the BTA are launching two new text-based services – SMS chat and web chat which will provide free, accurate and personalised information to people with tinnitus in order to help them manage the incurable condition successfully.

Tinnitus is the sensation of hearing noises in the head or ears where there is no external source. There is currently no cure for tinnitus and although many people can manage it successfully, for around 10% of sufferers, it can seriously affect their quality of life, often linked to stress, anxiety or depression.

Colleen Hewitt, BTA Information/Tinnitus Support Manager said: “We have introduced our web chat and text facilities as it’s a great way of communicating discreetly and flexibly. Many people prefer to send a text or engage in web chat where they can feel more confident putting their feelings and emotions out there. The services are also more accessible for people who may have difficulties using a telephone due to hearing loss.”

She added: “We are a helpline aimed at people struggling with issues around and associated with tinnitus, such as anxiety, depression and low mood, but we are also here to answer questions, signpost people to other services and to support the families and friends of those living with tinnitus.”

Sam contacted the BTA at a very low point in their life: “I was extremely anxious and found myself in quite a dark place wanting to end it all, feeling I had no hope. The adviser helped me … they were very patient and time was not of issue. I left feeling a lot better and more positive. I am now doing lots of mindfulness techniques and doing what works for me. My tinnitus is still there but I’m able to manage it now and keep doing the things I love to do.”

Colleen concluded: “Our team of trained staff and volunteers are very knowledgeable and caring. Nothing is too large or too small for us to deal with. We are very much looking forward to helping people with tinnitus via these new services.”

The BTA web chat facility can be accessed at www.tinnitus.org.uk, and the BTA SMS text service at 07537 416841.Both services are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

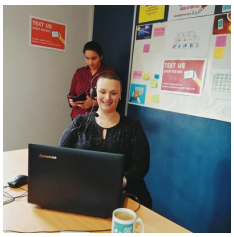
Name of service user changed to protect their privacy

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Editors Notes

- The BTA is an independent charity which supports over 1 million people per year who experience tinnitus and advises medical professionals from across the world. It is the primary source of support and information for people with tinnitus in the UK.
- The BTA needs to raise £975,000 each year to continue their UK wide support. Donations can be made via
- **Tinnitus">www.tinnitus.org.uk/donate**
- Tinnitus">... is defined as the experience of sounds with no external source, most commonly ringing or buzzing, but sometimes experienced as whooshing, clicking or even music. Around one in eight adults experience tinnitus. Many people aren’t troubled by sounds they hear, but for around 10%, the condition has a significant impact on their quality of life, often linked to stress, anxiety or sometimes depression.
- About 1 in 3 people will experience tinnitus at some point in their life. Over 7.5 million adults in the UK are living with persistent tinnitus, and for 10% of them, it can severely impact their quality of life, affecting sleep, mood, concentration, employment and relationships.
- There are around 1.05 million GP consultations for tinnitus in the UK each year, and tinnitus costs

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the NHS £750 million annually, with a cost to society of £2.7 billion per year.
- The number of people living with tinnitus in the UK is set to rise by more than half a million people by 2028

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