Preparations underway for free Boxing Day celebration for 80 vulnerable & isolated Newcastle residents

Tuesday 20 December, 2016

Newcastle, 20th December 2016

Preparations are underway to open the Oasis Café in Cruddas Park Shopping Centre to people who would otherwise spend the Christmas period alone and isolated. Organised by Mental Health Matters (a national mental healthcare charity) and sponsored by Bond Dickinson law firm, the community café will lay on a free three-course Christmas meal for around 80 people.

Volunteers from the café and MHM will be hosting the event, which is now in its fourth year running. The café expects to host around 80 people this year; since it started in 2013 the event has helped more than 200 people who would have otherwise spent their Christmas alone.

Paul Gorringe, one of the Café organisers, said: “We are over the moon that we can run the Boxing Day lunch again with MHM. It always sees great attendance and seems to be growing as the years go on.”

One previous attendee said “it was a real change; I wouldn't have got out otherwise. It was lovely company.” Others praised the ‘beautiful’ food and ‘excellent’ service from the volunteers, with one happy customer saying “I couldn’t have wished for anything better!”

The event will be open to anyone in need of company on Boxing Day, including homeless, elderly and otherwise socially isolated people. Tickets are needed for access, which can be obtained at any time until Christmas Eve by calling 0191 273 1629 or by visiting the Oasis Café, Cruddas Park Shopping Centre, Westmorland Road, NE4 7RW.

The Oasis Café operates year-round, providing training and employment experience to local residents. MHM is a national organisation based in Sunderland supporting people across the UK with mental health needs, learning disabilities, drug and alcohol and other problems through a range of evidence based and innovative services.

For further information, please contact: Michael Tait, 01915163512 or 07545437569, mtait@mhm.org.uk

Note to the editor: Further quotes from organisers/past attendees and a photo opportunity of volunteers preparing the café can be arranged upon request.

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