SUPER-CHEFS JOIN FIGHT TO SAVE SCOTLAND'S OLDEST COMMUNITY HEALTH PROJECT

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Media:











Tom Kitchin and Martin Wishart back Pilton Community Health Project crowdfunding campaign launched

Two of Edinburgh's – and Scotland's - top chefs have added their support to the campaign to keep the closure-threatened Pilton Community Health Project (PCHP) open.

Martin Wishart and Tom Kitchin helped launch a crowdfunding campaign that aims to raise at least £50,000 to help prevent PCHP having to close its doors to some of North Edinburgh's most vulnerable residents.

PCHP, which is Scotland's oldest community health project, was told in late December last year that its funding was being withdrawn by the new Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board for health and social care funding in the city.

In the 35 years it has been in existence, PCHP has transformed thousands of lives. The project provides a range of services to fight the often overwhelming results of health inequality in Edinburgh including mental health counselling, tackling food insecurity, cooking groups and community meals, tackling social isolation and loneliness, community crèche for local affordable childcare, and support for victims of domestic abuse.

By raising £50,000 the campaign will allow PCHP to continue to deliver a reduced level of its life changing services, for 12 months, until longer-term funding is secured again.

The 28 day crowdfunding campaign on **www.savepchp.com**

allows anyone to pledge a donation – large or small – to ensure the project can continue its lifeline services. Both Tom Kitchin and Martin Wishart have offered incentives and rewards to boost the project's 28 day #SavePCHP crowdfunding campaign, including Dinner for two Tasting menus and matching wines at their Michelin-starred Leith restaurants – The Kitchin and Restaurant Martin Wishart – for the first donors to pledge £1,000 or more.

Other generous donations have been made by the top chefs and these will be revealed throughout the campaign on **www.savepchp.com** and on social media.

Launching the crowd-funding campaign for PCHP, both Tom Kitchin and Martin Wishart said:

"We are delighted to add our support to this campaign. Leith and North Edinburgh have played a big part in our story so it's great to be involved in saving the lifelines so many local people rely on. We are passionate about food, and about food education and food security, and PCHP plays a really important role in ensuring everyone can access and cook healthy, nutritious meals. It's vital that these and other services continue."

Between January and December 2018, PCHP has:

- Provided mental health counselling to around 50 pupils at local high schools
- Worked with 42 people to provide adult counselling assessment appointments and 48 people attend regular counselling
- Supported over 140 women who are victims of domestic abuse or facing other difficulties in their lives
- Supported over 353 people who are new and settled immigrants, from 20 different countries
- Helped over 788 people access hot nutritious food and make social connections through community meals
- Provided 204 people with regular cooking groups, clubs and/or food related training leading to qualifications
- Supported 602 people and their families to access food through our local Sharing Shelves initiative and tackle holiday hunger with family food boxes
- Encouraged and supported over 467 people to lead healthier lives by getting them more physically active

- Trained and supported 30 local volunteer physical activity leaders
- Worked with 933 people and linked them into 249 services and resources through the GP Link Worker Service

Background notes

Why does Pilton Community Health Project need to crowdfund?

PCHP's mission is Equality, Wellbeing and Belonging for all in our communities.

The organisation applied by the August deadlines to the newly formed Edinburgh Integrated Joint Board (EIJB) for health and social care for funding of £220,000 a year, for three years, to continue to run its services including mental health counselling, support for victims of domestic abuse, physical activity and food work including tackling food insecurity, cooking groups, community meals and community creche.

The funding bid represented two thirds of the Project's ongoing work in the local community. PCHP has received local government and health board funding for over 34 years and annual reviews have consistently shown that targets have been met or exceeded. The new EIJB also "disinvested" in six other North Edinburgh voluntary sector service providers, cutting over £630,000 of financial support to vital lifelines for the people in North Edinburgh, decimating the Council's own ability to meet its Locality Planning objectives in the North West. The short notice given to organisations mean few will survive and it's the people living in the most deprived areas of Edinburgh that will pay the high price for the decision to disinvest.

The EIJB have admitted they did not complete a comprehensive risk assessment for vulnerable residents prior to making their decisions (EIJB meeting 14 December 2019), and are still to carry out impact assessments for the people affected by each of the support services they decided to cut. Coupled with the news last Friday reported by the BBC that Scotland's record on tackling poverty and health inequalities is unravelling and the rising tide of in-work poverty and high housing costs, combined with the benefits freeze, are making it harder for people to achieve a decent life continues to affect our most vulnerable citizens.

PCHP cannot give up the fight to tackle health inequalities at a time when economic setbacks, squeezed incomes and more and more people in Scotland are being trapped in poverty.

There are 820,000 people living in Edinburgh. If the equivalent of one in 16 people donate a £1 to the #SavePCHP crowdfunding campaign we can continue to support people who are being unfairly affected by multiple factors of deprivation and the cuts to local lifelines.





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