



Press Release

Immediate Release

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Hartnell's Community Café in Lockerbie wins national award

A community café in Lockerbie, run by residents with learning disabilities, has been named the winner of a national award celebrating outstanding service user-led initiatives across the UK.

Hartnell's Café, based at Cygnet Social Care's Trinity Lodge, has won the Social Care Star Award at the National Lived Experience Awards 2025.

The National Lived Experience Awards are an annual celebration designed to highlight achievements by people accessing mental health, learning disability and autism services. The awards began in 2013, inspired by service users at Cygnet Hospital Derby, and have since grown into a nationwide event, recognising the power of lived experience in shaping and leading projects.

This year's ceremony was held at Colwick Hall, Nottingham, on 23rd September, bringing together finalists from across the country under the theme of Bridgerton and Rainbows.

Hartnell's Café is more than just a place to grab a coffee or a light bite. Opened earlier this year, the café was created through co-production with residents of Trinity Lodge and Trinity House, two specialist residential services in Lockerbie that support adults with learning disabilities and complex needs.

The café is named in memory of Greg Hartnell, a much-loved long-term resident of Trinity House, who lived there for 20 years before passing away in 2023.

The café provides meaningful voluntary opportunities for residents who take on roles including greeting customers, preparing food, serving drinks, and handling money. These experiences allow individuals with learning disabilities to develop vital employment skills, like customer service, food hygiene, and money management, while also boosting self-confidence and independence.

Since its launch, Hartnell's Café has been warmly welcomed by Lockerbie locals, many of whom have become regular visitors. The café offers freshly made toasties, soups, snacks and cakes, all served with a friendly smile by the residents themselves.

Beyond its daytime function, the café also acts as an evening hub for Trinity Lodge residents, creating a social and communal space that brings people together.

Lorraine Platt, Service Manager at Trinity Lodge, said: "I am beyond proud of our residents at Trinity Lodge and Trinity House and the incredible success of Hartnell's Community Café. Hartnell's Café has been an inspiring journey from the very beginning. To see the vision of our residents not only come to life but now recognised as a national award winner is incredibly special. This award celebrates the hard work of individuals, and the power of community, inclusion and co-production. We are so proud of everything the café represents.

"This award means so much because it recognises the heart of what we do, which is empowering people with learning disabilities to take the lead, showcase their talents and contribute so positively to the wider community. The café is run by our residents, and to see them welcoming customers, serving with confidence and gaining valuable life and work skills is nothing short of life-changing.

"It's inspiring to watch how much pride they take in running the café, and how their sense of belonging and achievement grows with every customer they meet. This award is a celebration of their dedication, their abilities and their voices, and I couldn't be prouder of what they've achieved together.

"I am excited to see how the café continues to grow and contribute to the local community because I am passionate about ensuring the individuals we support are given every opportunity to be part of our local community and achieve their goals. I believe that we can adapt anything to include our residents and offer them the best opportunities to be a part not only of our small community in the service but the wider community and beyond."

The National Lived Experience Awards provide a unique platform for people with lived experience of services to showcase their achievements. Each category was judged by a panel that includes people who themselves access mental health, learning disability or autism services, ensuring the process reflects the spirit of co-production and fairness.

Trinity Lodge is based on Townhead Street, Lockerbie, and Trinity House is located on Carlisle Street. Both are specialist residential services operated by Cygnet Social Care, supporting adults with learning disabilities and complex needs.