



Home care franchise company, Home Instead has announced their charity, Home Instead Charities, has been awarded a £43,750 grant by the Access Foundation to open 6 new companionship cafés located in York, Southampton, Lewes, Dudley, Doncaster and East Herts in early 2023 with more to follow later in the year.

Home Instead are the only home care franchise company to have their own charity, dedicated to helping prevent loneliness for ageing adults and to bring happiness and joy into the lives of the ageing population through days out, clubs and music therapy groups – and now companionship cafés too.

The cafés will offer members of the public good company, a hot drink and free help and support with using the internet and online services using equipment such as brand-new tablets and internet access purchased thanks to the grant. By making computer equipment and support readily available to all, Home Instead Charities aims to help bridge the digital divide for older adults in the UK, an objective shared by the Access Foundation.

At many of the cafés, the technology will be used alongside traditional activities, such as recording and sharing choir performances via email, using the internet to play games and sharing pictures of craft projects on social media.

Home Instead Charities are looking for volunteers in the initial locations to help run the cafés and will be working closely with Home Instead's local franchise owners to drive engagement and awareness in their areas, ensuring clients and the wider community have the opportunity to attend.

Piers McLeish, Trustee of The Access Foundation said "Our Foundation is delighted to support the work of Home Instead Charities which makes a real difference to the older generation, many of whom rely on home care services and find themselves vulnerable and isolated from society. The cafés will make the online world more accessible and inclusive for the older generation through technology. Many older adults are unable to afford luxuries such as smartphones and tablets and therefore miss out on being able to do simple tasks such as book GP appointments, online shopping, banking or connecting with friends and family.

"The cafés will provide a welcoming place for older people to learn how to use technology enabling them to become more connected and self-sufficient in their later life."

Speaking about the funding, Penny Hamer, Executive Director of Home Instead Charities said: “We are so grateful to the Access Foundation, as this grant will make a huge difference in local communities. These cafés will provide a fantastic source of advice and support and also an opportunity for those seeking companionship to meet up in a warm, friendly environment. We can’t wait to promote these cafes and we hope to increase the number of volunteers locally.”