



## Media Release

### 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017

#### **£1.4 million investment in Scotland's care experienced young people**

Care experienced young people in Scotland will be supported to have more say in the decisions that affect their lives thanks to £1.4 million funding for Who Cares? Scotland from the Life Changes Trust.

The money will be used over five years to give care experienced young people a voice so that improvements to the care system are informed by their real lived experiences and insights. The funding will also help Who Cares? Scotland achieve their goal of creating a lifetime of equality, respect and love for care experienced young people.

Who Cares? Scotland's efforts to transform care in Scotland have been driven by the determination, talent and skills of care experienced young people themselves. They have already supported young people to influence legislative change - their testimony was the catalyst to raising the care leaving age to 21 and last year, the First Minister commissioned a root and branch review of the care system to be driven by care experienced people. In announcing the review, the First Minister stated, **"every child deserves to be loved"**.

**Heather Coady, Director of the Trust's Care Experienced Young People Programme said,** "Care experienced young people are the real experts when it comes to their own lives, and they know best what would make the biggest difference to them. Our funding is focused on ensuring that young people not only have a strong voice, but can use that voice to create lasting positive change.

“We are delighted to be funding Who Cares? Scotland on the next stage of that journey, which will support care experienced young people to feel valued, respected and loved.”

Many care leavers do well despite the challenges they face, but as a group, they can experience poorer outcomes such as higher rates of early death, including higher rates of suicide, worse mental health and physical well-being, poorer access to continuing education or training and greater unemployment and homelessness.

The funding will help Who Cares? Scotland work alongside care experienced young people to address these issues by bringing together key decision makers, care service providers and members of the Scottish Government, to take counsel on how care is designed and delivered. They will also work to challenge the stigma and discrimination that care experienced young people face, enable them to build networks of support to increase their confidence and skills and improve their employment environment.

**Duncan Dunlop, CEO of Who Cares? Scotland said,** “The investment from the Life Changes Trust enables Who Cares? Scotland to continue to work with our care experienced members to achieve the world they want to live in. That’s one where they thrive as children and feel included and active as adults in our society. We want to secure a lifetime of equality, respect and love for care experienced young people. There is a lot to do before we can achieve this – continuing to ensure care experienced young people feel like they belong, and that their voice matters is crucial to realizing the change they and generations to come, deserve. We are grateful to the Life Changes Trust for their continued and important support”.

The Life Changes Trust was set up with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: care experienced young people and people affected by dementia.

## **ENDS**

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**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For more information on Life Change Trust funding for Champions Boards, see the Trust website: <http://www.lifechangetrust.org.uk/projects/champions-boards>

As of 31 July 2016, there were 15,317 looked after children and young people in Scotland.

There are several types of placements that looked after children or young people could be in, including being at home (subject to a Supervision Requirement), or away from home - in foster care, in residential care or in a kinship placement, where they are placed with friends or relatives.

We are committed to working with care experienced young people, care leavers, practitioners and other professionals in Scotland so that when young people leave care, they have positive life chances and outcomes just like other young people.