



Media Release 13th April 2015

Half a million pound funding to raise dementia awareness

More than half a million pounds worth of funding has been awarded to Age Scotland to raise awareness of dementia and promote early intervention among older people in Scotland.

The £515,000 funding will help Age Scotland to ensure that more older people will have diagnosis and treatment **at an early stage of their dementia** so they will have:

- a longer period of independence
- greater awareness of the help and choices which are available to them and their carers
- access to information, resources and knowledge
- experienced support to reduce the stigma and fear surrounding dementia
- time to take steps to protect their individual choices in future (Power of Attorney, wills, where they will live, who will support them)
- interaction with services which will then have a better awareness of their needs and priorities

Age Scotland will also use the funding to promote better health and well-being, and explain how these improvements can help prevent or slow the pace of dementia.

They also plan to deliver early stage dementia awareness campaigns, promote early diagnosis and influence service providers and policy makers so that people with early-stage dementia will have better lives.

Funding has come from the Life Changes Trust, an independent charity set up with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: people affected by dementia and care experienced young people.

Brian Sloan, Chief Executive of Age Scotland said, 'Age Scotland is passionate about promoting health and well-being for later life in Scotland. We are incredibly grateful to The Life Changes Trust for their support and funding. This is a unique opportunity to support older people living with early-stage dementia. This resource gives us the ability to deliver a strong campaign raising dementia awareness among older people across Scotland. As the number of people living with dementia in Scotland is steadily increasing, it is more important than ever to support individuals that have been diagnosed, as well as their families and carers. This vital funding will allow Age Scotland to ensure that more people will have diagnosis and treatment at an early stage. It will also promote healthy living while influencing decision-makers. It's important that we all act so that people with early-stage dementia will have better lives.'

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: 'Given the number of older people within the daily reach of Age Scotland, it's a very natural and positive step to work together to raise awareness of dementia and promote early diagnosis and intervention. This project will bring significant benefit to thousands of older people in Scotland who may one day live with dementia or be a carer. It provides a very real opportunity to demonstrate that dementia is "everyone's business" and that awareness and early intervention is something everyone should be aware of. We are extremely pleased to be working with Age Scotland to achieve these goals.'

In Scotland:

- It is estimated that around 90,000 people have dementia
- The number of people with dementia in Scotland is increasing, because the population is getting older. Based on current dementia prevalence rates, the number of people with dementia in Scotland is projected to double by 2038*.
- Much of that financial burden falls on family carers and friends, who may also experience social isolation, exhaustion and health problems associated with the demands of caring.
- Dementia costs the country more than cancer, heart disease and stroke put together.

ENDS

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EDITORS NOTES:

The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery Fund in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvements in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

Age Scotland is the largest older people's charity in Scotland with 1250 group and individual members. They serve 849 older people's groups across Scotland.

Age Scotland has 15 charity and information shops in key locations in Scotland. In the past year, they merged their Helpline with Esther Ranzten's Silver Line and take in excess of 12,000 calls each year, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

*Based on current dementia prevalence rates, the number of people with dementia in Scotland is projected to double by 2038. However, while ageing is a major risk factor for dementia, there is growing evidence that an increase in protective factors such as healthy eating and regular physical exercise and reduction in risk factors such as alcohol and tobacco use, could reduce people's risk of dementia, or delay the age at which they may develop it.