



## **Media Release 21<sup>st</sup> May 2015**

### **£1.1 million funding to give people living with dementia a louder voice**

Three charities are pooling their resources to invest in a groundbreaking project that gives people with dementia in the UK a louder voice.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Comic Relief and the Life Changes Trust will invest almost £1.1million to continue the successful Dementia Engagement and Empowerment Project (DEEP Project) in Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The DEEP Project started in 2012 with the aim of bringing people with dementia together in groups to organise activities that will influence policy makers, the media, service providers, professionals, and the general public. These groups have been raising awareness about dementia, challenging stigma and stereotypes, and improving services and the communities where they live.

There are currently 50 groups across the UK and the new funding will be used to strengthen these groups as well as support the development of many more.

DEEP groups have already made a significant contribution to addressing myths about dementia and challenging negative language.

For example, they have produced a guide on language about dementia, have met with researchers to advise them on how to best to engage people with dementia, and have produced online films about living with dementia.

**Philly Hare, Programme Manager at JRF, said:** “We are delighted to be part of this three-way package to support DEEP as it develops and matures. This network is truly ground-breaking and is helping people with dementia to find, at last, a strong collective voice and a real strength in numbers.”

**Members of the EDUCATE group in Stockport said,** “We’ve done a lot of work as a group to challenge the negative portrayals of dementia. This has kept us going on a personal and an emotional level. Being part of DEEP has given a national focus to our work, that maybe we are doing something important and it is paying off.”

**Agnes Houston, Vice-chair of the European Working Group of People with Dementia and member of the Scottish Dementia Working Group, said** “DEEP created a safe space for me to meet others with a diagnosis of dementia. We shared stories and strategies on how to live well with Dementia and how to get our needs met. There was no hidden agenda and they were independent. All outcomes became evident during our conversations, and were driven by us.”

## **ENDS**

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### **Editorial notes:**

- The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease or a series of strokes. The experience of living with dementia is affected not only by the symptoms but also by the cultural response of the society they are part of.
- DEEP will be managed by Innovations in Dementia with support from the Mental Health Foundation. Phase 1 of DEEP was funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, joined by Comic Relief in Phase 2.
- More information about DEEP can be found at <http://dementiavoices.org.uk/>

- The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery Fund in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to drive 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. For more information, [www.lifechangestrut.org.uk](http://www.lifechangestrut.org.uk)
- The Joseph Rowntree Foundation works for social change in the UK by researching the root causes of social problems and developing solutions. Together with the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust, we use our evidence and practical experience of developing housing and care services to influence policy, practice and public debate. For more about our work, visit [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)
- Comic Relief is a UK charity, which aims to create a just world, free from poverty. To date, Comic Relief has raised over £1 billion. That money has helped, and is helping, people living incredibly tough lives, both at home in the UK and across the world. For information about Comic Relief and the work it carries out, please visit [www.comicrelief.com](http://www.comicrelief.com). Comic Relief, registered charity 326568 (England/Wales); SC039730 (Scotland)
- There are approximately 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK (Alzheimer Society Statistics 30/04/2015).
- There are about 40,000 younger people (under 65) with dementia in the UK (Alzheimer Society Statistics 30/04/2015).
- There will be around 1 million people with dementia in the UK by 2025 (Alzheimer Society Statistics 30/04/2015).
- Two thirds of people with dementia are women (Alzheimer Society Statistics 30/04/2015).
- Two thirds of people with dementia live in the community while one third live in a care home (Alzheimer Society Statistics 30/04/2015).