



Media Release

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Alzheimer Scotland services in Glasgow and Lanarkshire awarded £210,000 funding windfall

Two projects run by Alzheimer Scotland have been given £210,000 funding to provide befriending services to people who have dementia.

The first project is Alzheimer Scotland's 'Forget me Not' service, based in Glasgow.

Forget Me Not was set up in 2008 to recruit and train volunteers to befriend people with dementia who are living in care homes or are in long term hospital care.

The purpose of the project is to provide people with dementia regular, consistent contact with a befriender, to give them companionship and to help improve their mental, physical and social well-being.

The befriending relationship also supports and encourages the person with dementia to feel more confident in taking part in social and community-based activities, lessening their isolation and keeping them connected for as long as possible.

Volunteers can also develop and gain in confidence themselves, encouraging a greater understanding about dementia, well-being and social inclusion in their own wider communities.

The second Alzheimer Scotland project is a new volunteer Buddying scheme for people with dementia in Lanarkshire. 10,000 people with dementia live in Lanarkshire, which is 11% of all people with dementia in Scotland.

This funding will provide reminiscence therapy sessions from trained volunteer befrienders, to people at all stages of the dementia journey, within their own homes.

The sessions can cover a broad range of reminiscence subjects, from sport and local heritage to working life or cultural changes, and are tailored specifically to each individual.

Memories are then captured in a life story book. These books can help families to connect with their loved ones in a way that can continue even as their condition changes.

The therapy sessions can also support improvements in the well-being of people with dementia, with a positive effect on their confidence to make more connections outside the family unit.

Both projects were awarded £105,000, over five years.

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.

The Trust will be investing a total of £1.2 million in both befriending and peer support initiatives over a five-year period.

Befriending and peer support are two of the services which people with dementia and carers say they most value because of the positive impact they have on the person with dementia and/or their carer. They have been identified through research as key ways in which isolation and loneliness can be reduced, factors which can have a significantly negative impact on a person's sense of well-being and their physical and mental health.

Fay McCormick, Co-ordinator of Alzheimer Scotland's Forget-me-not Service said, "I am absolutely delighted that the Forget-me-not service has received this award. People with dementia in hospitals and care homes can often feel isolated, even when they do get regular visits from family and friends. Our befriending service makes a huge difference to quality of life and helps people with dementia to stay socially active while in care."

Stuart Robertson, Service Manager of Alzheimer Scotland's Lanarkshire Service said, "I'm extremely pleased that the Life Changes Trust are supporting our one-to-one reminiscence activities for people in their own homes. Reminiscence work has great therapeutic benefits for people living with dementia and we are very happy that we can now support more people in this way."

Claire Lightowler, Chair of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme committee said: 'We're delighted to award funding for two important befriending services which provide consistent and meaningful relationships for a person with dementia, out-with their immediate circle of care. Befrienders offer tailored support to meet individual needs, and work with the person with dementia to grow their confidence and improve their well-being. We already know anecdotally about the benefits of initiatives like befriending but by supporting the effective evaluation of these services we will help to contribute to a better understanding about the impact of befriending for individuals and society. Alzheimer Scotland provide a wide range of vital services across Scotland and we are very pleased to be working with them.'

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.

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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.

The Trust will invest £1.2 million in befriending and peer support initiatives over a five-year period. Funded initiatives will be required to find match funding in years 3 to 5.

Befriending: by this, the Trust means a voluntary, beneficial and purposeful relationship in which an individual gives time to support a person with dementia or a carer of a person with dementia.

Peer Support: by this, the Trust means the help and support that people with a lived experience of dementia (including experience of caring for a person with dementia) are able to give to one another.

Alzheimer Scotland provides a wide range of specialist services for people with dementia and their carers. They offer personalised support services, community activities, information and advice, at every stage of the dementia journey.

*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.