



## **Media Release**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> November 2016**

### **Care Experienced Young People funded to think big about their future**

A unique funding opportunity that will allow care experienced young people in Scotland to think big about their future and help them achieve their potential has been launched.

Care experienced young people between the ages of 21-26 can apply for an 'Aspirational Award', to realise an ambition or dream which will create a long-term impact on their life, or to help them accomplish a long-term goal.

Application ideas might build on existing interests, for example in sports, arts, drama, dance or music. It could be learning a language to facilitate volunteering or working abroad, or the award could be used for an internship opportunity to get a foot in the door of a particular industry. Aspirational Awards could also help with something like getting a particular qualification or starting a small business.

The aim of the awards is to build the capacity of young people and show confidence in their abilities and potential, supporting them to flourish and grow.

'Aspirational Awards' have been designed and developed 'end to end' by a group of care experienced young people themselves, with input ranging from the overarching aims and objectives of the awards, to designing an evaluation process and supporting applicants with developing ideas.

The awards are the brain child of the Life Changes Trust, an independent charity established 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.

**Heather Coady, Director of the Trust's Care Experienced Young People Programme said,** "We are delighted to be launching our Aspirational Awards funding. At the Trust we believe that care experienced young people need more opportunities and choices so they can achieve their full potential. Aspirational Awards give young people the chance to think big, and will provide flexible financial support tailored to individual ambitions.

"We are also pleased that this funding opportunity has been designed by the Trust's care experienced advisors. These young people have shown great dedication and commitment in developing Aspirational Awards, and some of them will also be involved in assessing applications. This is a practical demonstration of the Trust's commitment to putting care experienced young people at the heart of everything we do, and we are hugely appreciative of the contribution the advisors are making to our programme."

## **ENDS**

### **For further information and for media enquiries contact:**

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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.

As of 31 July 2015, there were 15,404 looked after children and young people in Scotland.

Current challenges and poor outcomes faced by care experienced young people include:

- much higher rates of early death, including higher rates of suicide
- worse mental health and physical well-being
- greater rates of teenage pregnancy
- poorer access to continuing education or training
- greater unemployment and homelessness

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.

[www.lifechangestrust.org.uk](http://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk)