



## **Media Release**

**Embargoed until Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

### **£150,000 funding for dementia friendly Deaf community in Scotland**

British Deaf Association (BDA) Scotland has been awarded £150,000 by the Life Changes Trust to set up a dementia friendly Deaf community.

The project, called Transforming the Deaf Dementia Experience, will identify and work with Deaf people who have dementia and their carers, enabling them to share and receive information, knowledge and experiences about living with and managing dementia through British Sign Language (BSL).

The project also aims to explore the Deaf community's knowledge and understanding of dementia, attitudes towards those with dementia, and thoughts on where they would go for support or information.

There will also be work around reducing stigma and prejudice towards those living with dementia within the Deaf community, making it easier for Deaf people with dementia to attend and undertake activities at their local Deaf club or group.

BDA Scotland will also create a dedicated dementia webpage with accessible BSL videos, which will also be used to share reminiscence materials.

**Avril Hepner, BDA Scotland's Community Development Manager,**

**said:** "For some time I have been concerned about the lack of provision, care and support services for Deaf people living with dementia and their carers. I bring my experiences of caring for Jack, my father, who was Deaf and lived with Alzheimer's. This project will enable us to develop a toolkit for carers and families with ideas and tips on coping strategies and communication strategies. Diagnosis and provision of dementia support was not accessible for my father. An education programme and BSL dementia friendly training are needed for healthcare professionals in care homes, charities, organisations and dementia friendly communities.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for Deaf people with dementia and their carers to share experiences through a common language – being in the company of others with similar experiences in a situation where they can communicate freely is vital for their health and well-being."

The funding is part of a second phase of Dementia Friendly Communities investment from Scottish charity, the Life Changes Trust. The Trust invested £3 million in 14 dementia friendly communities in 2015, the success of which has led to a further investment of £2 million.

Dementia Friendly Communities are places where people affected by dementia, including carers and family members, are included and supported to do the things that matter to them. They also help empower those whose lives are affected by dementia so that they remain integrated in society, live as independently as possible and participate actively in decisions that affect their lives.

Some dementia friendly communities are geographical communities, relating to a specific location like those already established in West Dunbartonshire or Kirriemuir. Others are communities of interest that bring people together because they are interested in similar activities, for example, sport, art, walking outdoors or dance.

**Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said,** "By funding a diverse range of dementia friendly communities throughout Scotland, we are developing a deeper understanding of how to meet the needs of people with dementia and

their families. We are very pleased to be funding this important work. The needs of people who are Deaf and have dementia are quite particular and need specific focus. We believe that BDA Scotland will be able to greatly deepen understanding and develop new ways of meeting these needs."

### **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\*.
- Dementia costs the country more than cancer, heart disease and stroke put together.

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 two groups: people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

### **ENDS**

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### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

For more information on Life Change Trust funding for Dementia Friendly Communities, see the Trust website:

<http://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk/projects/dementia-friendly-communities>

\*Dementia Words - Our work with people with dementia has shown that the phrase "Dementia sufferers", or using the word suffering to describe dementia has a strongly negative view from people with the condition. We would request that you avoid using the phrase in headlines or in any article you publish to combat the negative way that people with dementia feel the condition is described.

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Dementia Friendly Communities include, empower and support people affected by dementia and their carers in every aspect of life, from accessing services to using public transport. They can be geographical communities or communities of interest. They also help empower those whose lives are affected by dementia so that they can remain integrated in society, live as independently as possible and participate actively in decisions that affect their day-to-day lives.