



Media Release

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£80,000 funding boost to support young people in South Ayrshire

A new project which provides peer mentoring support for care experienced young people in South Ayrshire has been given the go-ahead thanks to a funding award of £80,000 to Barnardo's Scotland.

Peer mentoring is a dynamic way of helping young people with experience of being in care by offering them the support and guidance of someone who has been there too.

For many looked after young people, a consistent and safe relationship with someone who cares helps them to know that they matter. Mentoring is also an important foundation for building better relationships and improving confidence.

This support can be vital for care experienced young people who often face significant obstacles in their lives and, as a group, face much poorer outcomes and quality of life than other young people.

Peers will act as positive role models, encouraging young people to engage with services that can help them in areas such as education, employment, health and safe accommodation.

Mentoring can also have a significant and lasting impact on a young person's life, providing individual one-on-one support that is so often lacking for care experienced young people.

Mentors will be recruited from the local community and will primarily be aged 18 to 30, with a wide range of life experience including periods in care.

This peer mentoring service is aimed at looked after young people aged between 14 and 24 and will be provided by Barnardo's South Ayrshire Families.

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 invest over half a million pounds in peer mentoring initiatives for care experienced young people over the next two years.

Barnardo's Assistant Director, Fiona Bennett, said: "We are delighted to receive this funding award from Life Changes Trust. Peer Support for care experienced young people in South Ayrshire is a welcome addition, and the funds will help support a vulnerable group of young people to achieve positive outcomes."

Harriet Dempster, Chair of the Life Changes Trust care experienced young people programme said: "The Trust is delighted to fund this new initiative for care experienced young people. Promoting peer mentoring is a key strand of our strategy geared at improving and transforming the outcomes for this group of young people."

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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 2014, there were 15,580 looked after children and young people in Scotland.

There are several types of placements that looked after children or young people could be in, including being at home (subject to a Supervision Requirement), or away from home - in foster care, in residential care or in a kinship placement, where they are placed with friends or relatives.

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.

Peer mentoring: by this the Trust means providing a means of both giving and receiving support in the context of a voluntary relationship where the people involved have shared experience.

Barnardo's Scotland has been working in Scotland for more than a century. Their purpose is to reach out to the most disadvantaged children, young people, families and communities to help ensure that every child has the best possible start in life. They run more than 122 community-based services based in Scotland working with over 26,500 children, young people and families on a wide range of themes, including: family support, disability, fostering & adoption, education & employability, substance misuse and advocacy. Their services are delivered in partnership with a range of organisations including: Local Authorities - Social Work, Housing, Education, Community Planning as well as NHS Boards and Government Departments.