



Media Release

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One million pound funding to support people with dementia to live in their own homes

An organisation which supports older people to live longer in their own homes has been given one million pounds to provide customised support services for people affected by dementia.

The money will be used to improve the homes, independence and confidence of people living with dementia, ensuring that they receive equipment and adaptations to assist them to continue to live independently within their own homes for as long as possible.

The three year funding has been awarded to Care and Repair, a charity who provide housing support across Scotland, to boost three pilot projects in Aberdeen, Angus, and Lochaber, Skye & Lochalsh. These areas were chosen to reflect the different mix of city, urban, rural and remote demographics.

Traditionally, older people receive funding for support and adaptations at home when they have a physical need or a disability. Care and Repair want to extend this crucial support to people with dementia, who may not always qualify for these funded adaptations because the works required are not seen as 'typical' or 'traditional'.

For people living with dementia, the need for equipment or adaptations can arise from a change in how they perceive their surroundings as a symptom of dementia – a flat path may appear slanted or a patterned carpet could cause dizziness and disorientation.

Adaptations can range from fitting handrails, improving lighting, changing floor coverings, removal or repositioning of mirrors, mounting signage on doors to give clearer direction and highlighting light switches and electrical sockets.

Small changes to the home environment like these have been shown to reduce falls, accidents and confusion. This can lead to an increase in confidence and independence, and even better physical health. Early intervention could also be less costly in the long run.

Many of the specific changes needed are preventative in nature and are enabling or re-enabling, and while these physical changes in the home need not be dramatic, often the improvements in well-being and confidence for a person with dementia can be significant.

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.

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: “We are so pleased to award this funding to support Care and Repair Scotland. We all know how important it to so have somewhere to call home. Many older people with dementia have lived in the same place for numerous years and their homes provide reassurance, a safe space, and of course precious memories. Often, small and early interventions can make the biggest differences - not just to the safety and suitability of a home, but to the confidence and independence of a person living with dementia, and by extension to those who care for them. The longer a person with dementia can choose to live well and safely at home, the better quality of life they will have.’

Robert Thompson, Chief Executive of Care and Repair said,

'Care and Repair has a proven record over more than 20 years of assisting older and disabled people to remain in their own home and in their own communities. We are delighted that the Life Changes Trust has awarded this funding to three experienced Care and Repair areas to help support people living with dementia to continue to live in the home that they know and recognise. Assisting people to live at home rather than move into care or alternative housing enables people to retain neighbours who often give unpaid support and has also been proven to be more cost effective. For people living with dementia the need to remain in a known environment is not just a cost saving - it is beneficial to stop them falling, becoming more confused and keeping them as independent as possible. The different enablement and adaptation works used and learning from this project will be cascaded throughout Scotland and hopefully influence future enablement works for all people living with dementia to have the choice to remain at home for as long as they can do so.'

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 number of people living with dementia in Aberdeen and Angus is 3382 and 2329 respectively. Lochaber/Lochalsh & Skye, as part of the Highland region, currently has 398 people. However, it is estimated that only 64% of people living with dementia have a clinical diagnosis.

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For further information and for press enquiries contact:

Deborah Cowan, Communications Manager: 0141 212 9606

Deborah.cowan@lifechangestrust.org.uk

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.

Care & Repair services were established in the early 1980's to help solve the problems faced by older homeowners who lived in very poor housing and yet lacked the resources or the skills need to address the problem and has evolved to deliver a range of services to assist people to remain living independently within their own homes.

Care and Repair offers a home based and holistic service which puts the client in control of decisions to enable them to remain independent in their own community. The services offered include financial and technical support to people facing the difficult task of repairing, improving or adapting a home which no longer meets their needs. Staff work closely across multi-disciplinary and department boundaries with Housing, Health & Social Care and voluntary organisations. Through close collaboration with stakeholders and clients, a wide range of services have been developed that aim to ensure that older and disabled people are able to live independently at home in a safe environment that meets their needs, improving the quality of life not just for the individual but for family and carers also.

*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.