



Media Release

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£82,000 funding for East Dunbartonshire dementia peer support service

A project which provides peer support for people with dementia in East Dunbartonshire has been given an £82,000 financial boost.

The funding has been awarded to the advocacy charity Ceartas to develop their services that provide peer support for people with dementia in East Dunbartonshire. They will also use the money to expand the programme through their existing 'de Café' model.

De Cafés are aimed at people worried about, or living with, dementia as well as carers and former carers. They offer information and advice, and also provide space for a tailored peer support service for people with dementia who may find it hard to reach out - where someone who has a shared lived experience of dementia can connect with and listen to them.

De Café members will also be involved in telling professionals and others in the community about dementia, addressing head on some of the stigma still associated with dementia and demonstrating that people with dementia can be active contributors.

The funding will be used for cafés in Kirkintilloch, Bishopbriggs, Bearsden and Milngavie.

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.

Gordon Thomson, Chief Executive of Ceartas, said: 'We are delighted to receive this award. De Café is celebrating its 10th birthday this year and throughout its life, it has been a powerful route to advocacy and informal support. The investment being provided by the Life Changes Trust will enable us to further enhance our work. It will ensure that people affected by dementia are given real opportunities to utilise their skills and receive the appropriate support from their peers to have their voice heard within their local community.'

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: 'Peer support is a dynamic way of engaging with and empowering someone with dementia, through a one to one relationship based on shared experience. We know anecdotally about the power and benefits of initiatives like peer support. Using effective evaluation, we will be able to offer further evidence of their significant value to individuals and to society. We are extremely pleased to be supporting Ceartas, who continue to make a significant difference in the lives of people affected by dementia.'

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.

Ceartas Advocacy is a membership organisation. Ceartas provides an advocacy service for people in East Dunbartonshire irrespective of their cultural background, gender, beliefs or sexuality. They are committed to providing a service based on the principles of equality, fairness and justice. They strive to ensure that the views and opinions of individuals are heard and respected, affecting in a positive way the lives of people using the service.

*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.

www.lifechangestrust.org.uk.