



Media Release

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Dementia friendly funding for care homes in East Ayrshire

A new project in East Ayrshire will see care homes in the area become more dementia friendly, thanks to £225,000 funding from the Life Changes Trust.

The project is a partnership between the University of the West of Scotland and East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, and is based on a UK-wide initiative called 'My Home Life', which aims to improve the quality of life of people who are living permanently in care homes.

This project will specifically involve people living with dementia in twenty care homes across the region, in both rural and urban communities.

Care homes in East Ayrshire are already working to strengthen community ties and offer various activity programmes for people living with dementia. This funding will be used to build on this work and further strengthen relationships between people living in care homes and the wider community.

Each care home will explore with residents what community involvement means for them, and will look at how community connections can be developed and improved so that residents can be involved in ways that matter to them.

Staff, family and friends of those living with dementia will be involved in trying out a variety of new ideas, activities and initiatives in the care setting and in the wider community.

Care home residents and staff will also work together to develop relationships with community organisations such as volunteer networks, sports clubs, schools and private businesses to raise awareness about dementia.

As well as the £225,000 funding from the Life Changes Trust, the University of the West of Scotland and East Ayrshire Council will also contribute in-kind funding totalling £205,000.

Professor Belinda Dewar, Professor of Practice Improvement with the University of the West of Scotland, said, “We are delighted to have secured funding from Life Changes Trust for this exciting new project which will build on our strong relationship with East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Through this project we will work closely with care home residents living with dementia and those who support them to discover what matters to them, their hopes and aspirations and what being part of a dementia friendly community means to them.

“The project will be underpinned by My Home Life's commitment to appreciative inquiry and relationship-centred practice. By prioritising reciprocal relationships and valuing everyone living, dying, visiting, working and volunteering in care homes we are aiming to create an enriched care environment where older people with dementia and staff and families who support them experience a sense of security, belonging, continuity, purpose, achievement and significance.”

Councillor Jim McMahon, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Older People and Community Safety with East Ayrshire Council, said, “Dementia can really affect someone’s life in a number of ways and they can often end up isolated. Here in East Ayrshire, we are constantly striving to make sure no one is left feeling lonely and getting the community involved with our care homes is definitely having a positive impact on our residents with dementia.

“This funding from the Life Changes Trust is fantastic as it gives us the opportunity to further involve the community in our care homes and bridge the gap between all our residents here in East Ayrshire.”

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia

programme said, “When a person with dementia lives in a care home it is important that they maintain links with their friends, family and community. All too often this does not happen. This project will explore new and different ways in which care homes can better support people with dementia and help them remain included in their communities, rather than excluded. We are delighted that this work will be based on the values of My Home Life, which aims to create positive relationships between older people, relatives and staff, and between care homes and the wider community.”

The funding award 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, or walking outdoors.

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.

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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.