



Media Release

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Dementia befriending service in North Ayrshire gets £105,000 funding boost

A new project which provides befriending support for people with dementia in North Ayrshire has been given the go-ahead thanks to a £105,000 boost.

The five year funding has been awarded to social care charity Quarriers, who will initially use the money to provide people with dementia in Largs and the Three Towns area with a volunteer befriender, but will gradually expand the service across North Ayrshire.

There are currently almost 2,500 people with dementia living in North Ayrshire, with around 40% likely to be living alone.

The project aims to provide companionship and encouragement to people with dementia, using befriending as a means of reducing isolation and helping them stay as mentally and physically active as possible. It will also support people with mild to moderate dementia to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible, and provide extra support for full time family carers.

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.

Alice Drife, Chief Executive of Quarriers said of their successful befriending funding: 'Everyone at Quarriers gratefully welcomes this funding from the Life Changes Trust. We're delighted that this will enable us to provide a valuable befriending service to people in North Ayrshire who are living with dementia. At Quarriers we value partnership working and are looking forward to working closely with existing dementia services. This helps us contribute to a joined up approach in supporting people living with dementia, their families and carer'.

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said: 'Befriending provides a specific and meaningful relationship in which an individual gives time to support a person with dementia or a carer. We know anecdotally about the power of these initiatives and their outcomes - people with dementia know that they have someone who will listen to and understand them, make them feel less alone, and more positive about life. This can increase their sense of well-being and confidence. We are thrilled to be funding Quarriers, who have a long history of developing community based solutions to support vulnerable people.'

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.

www.lifechangestrust.org.uk.

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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.

Quarriers is dedicated to working for better lives. They offer families resilience to deal with the challenges that life brings, give people affected by epilepsy a new life, offer young homeless people support to unlock their potential and give adults with disabilities more opportunities in life, and importantly, a voice. From their roots in Scotland, Quarriers is a charity which now shares best practice across the UK.

*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.