



Media Release

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£105,000 funding boost for Shetland dementia befriending scheme

A new befriending scheme for people with dementia in Shetland is the latest recipient of a funding award from the Life Changes Trust.

The one to one befriending project, delivered by charity 'Voluntary Action Shetland' is receiving a funding boost of £105,000.

The new scheme will match people with dementia with local volunteers, encouraging those who might otherwise experience loneliness or isolation to actively participate in their local community.

It is hoped these meaningful relationships will boost the well-being and confidence of those who are befriended. The friendships will focus on the person with dementia's needs and goals, though may be as simple as helping someone re-connect with a relative they have not seen in years, or take up an old hobby again.

The befrienders will help to positively motivate and encourage the person living with dementia to engage in activities, while at the same time supporting them to confidently make decisions for themselves, at their own pace.

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.

Lynn Tulloch, Project Co-ordinator at Voluntary Action Shetland

said: "It is fantastic news that our service has been successful in securing this funding. We will build on our current befriending service to support those with dementia to continue to connect with their local community by engaging in activities that will be positive, stimulating and purposeful"

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia

programme said: 'Befriending is a dynamic way of engaging with and empowering someone with dementia, through a one to one relationship. Befriending can help address isolation and loneliness and can keep people involved with their community and activities which help retain their sense of identity and belonging. We are extremely pleased to fund Voluntary Action Shetland, who we are confident will make a significant difference to 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.

Voluntary Action Shetland is a charitable company that seeks to respond to and support a developing and strong third sector in Shetland, by building the third sector relationship with community planning, developing social enterprises and supporting the development of volunteering in partnership with the public sector and other agencies and partners.

*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.