



Media Release

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Investment in well-being of Highland's care experienced young people

Care experienced young people in the Highlands and Northern Isles will be given opportunities to become more creative and active thanks to a funding award of £130,000. The money comes from Scottish charity the Life Changes Trust.

The funding has been awarded to Moniack Mhor, a creative writing centre in Inverness, who want to work with care experienced young people in the Highlands and the Northern Isles – as well as wider areas of Scotland - to enhance and widen their creative writing opportunities.

The aim of the project is to increase the confidence of care experienced young people, develop their creativity and support them to find their voice and tell their own story, something they may not previously have had the opportunity or confidence to do. Care experienced young people can also connect with one another and the wider Highland community, strengthening their collective voice and empowering them to make active choices about their future.

Heather Coady, Director of the Trust's Care Experienced Young People Programme said, "Often care experienced young people feel that they have no way of being heard, and are not able to tell their own story. This project is important because it supports young people to tell their story in a creative way that feels safe to them. It also provides a chance for young people to enhance their creative skills, make new friends, improve their self-esteem and be valued for their contributions and talents."

The project will start with taster sessions in a variety of genres of creative writing such as performance poetry, fiction, song-writing, storytelling, comic books/graphic novels and playwriting. Sessions will be led by experienced tutors, delivering high quality activities which are designed to be accessible, engaging and fun. Sessions can take place in any area of Scotland.

On completion of the taster sessions, young people will identify which genres they wish to explore further, working with smaller groups in differing genres. Each group will then have the opportunity to showcase their work

Moniack Mhor is the only dedicated residential creative writing centre in Scotland. The organisation enables people of all ages, abilities and walks of life, to access, participate in and celebrate creative writing. Through this project, they aim to connect care experienced young people throughout Scotland and give them a platform to tell their own stories.

Young people are also given further opportunities such as work experience or volunteer placements at Moniack Mhor and their partner organisations, support from a mentor and formal leadership training.

The funding award is one of fourteen made by the Life Changes Trust under the banner of 'Creative and Active Lives', with a funding total of £1.75 million.

Creative and Active lives awards aim to improve the physical and mental well-being of care experienced young people by increasing their participation in creative and physical activities. Each of the fourteen funded projects will focus on growing opportunities across a broad range of creative and active pursuits.

Rachel Humphries, Centre Director for Moniack Mhor said, "We are extremely grateful for the support of the Life Changes Trust which will allow us to run a wide programme of creative writing activity for care experienced young people in the Highlands and throughout Scotland.

“We are excited about strengthening links to provide the highest quality experience for those that we engage with and we believe this project will build confidence and empower the young people that we work with by developing their skills in creative writing. By offering them the chance to find their voice through the artform, through exposure to a nurturing setting and by providing the opportunity to meet and learn with other young people, we hope that we can enhance future life choices. We are thrilled that we’ve been provided this much needed opportunity and are very much looking forward to working with young people across Scotland to strengthen and develop their creative voices.”

Heather Coady added, ‘Research shows that these activities can actually support a healthy lifestyle, and help to improve physical, mental and social wellbeing. We very much look forward to watching these young people flourish as they develop and grow as individuals.’”

The Life Changes Trust was 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.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery 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.

As of 31 July 2017, there were 14,897 looked after children and young people in Scotland.

We are committed to working with care experienced young people, care leavers, practitioners and other professionals in Scotland so that when young people leave care, they have positive life chances and outcomes just like other young people.

Moniack Mhor is the only dedicated residential creative writing centre in Scotland.

The organisation enables people of all ages, abilities and walks of life, to access, participate in and celebrate creative writing. It places equality and accessibility at the heart of its work and offers a bursary scheme for individuals who may experience financial, social or access difficulties.