



## **Media Release**

### **25<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

## **Funding boost for wellbeing of Aberdeen's care experienced young people**

Young people with experience of the care system in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire will be given opportunities to become more creative and active thanks to a funding award of £150,000. The money comes from Scottish charity the Life Changes Trust.

Working in partnership, Aberdeen Foyer and Sport Aberdeen will use the funding to engage more care experienced young people in sports and creative activities.

The aim of the project is to develop the skill sets of the young people involved, to improve their confidence, their physical and mental wellbeing, their relationship skills and their long term quality of life. Participants in the project will be given opportunities to get involved in activities that matter to them, such as sport, music, drama, art and media.

Sport Aberdeen's Looked After Project will continue to use sport and physical activity as a vehicle to improve the lives of looked after children and young people. Current activities include skateboarding, boxing, horse riding, swimming lessons, ice skating, climbing, snowboarding, skiing and athletics.

Aberdeen Foyer will offer creative activities such as creative writing, painting, craft work, graffiti art, lino printing, hand casting, jewellery making and cooking.

**Heather Coady, Director of the Trust's Care Experienced Young People Programme said,** "Care experienced young people have often told us that they would love more opportunities to be active and have fun, developing their interests and trying out new things in areas such as music, art, sport and crafts. This project is great because it combines all of these things, and really does offer something for everyone. Care experienced young people don't often have ready access to opportunities like these. Not only will they have to chance to take part in a range of activities that matter to them, they will also be able to make new friends, improve their self-esteem and be valued for their contributions and talents."

Both Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen Foyer already have experience of working with young people who are care experienced, and have witnessed the positive effects when they try new things and experience positive opportunities that enable them to discover what they are good at, grow their confidence and feel good about themselves. The project will also encourage young people to understand and value their own aspirations, abilities, health and wellbeing.

**Simon Starr, Director of Sport and Active Lifestyles at Sport Aberdeen said,** "We are absolutely delighted to have been awarded this funding from the Life Changes Trust as it will enable the Looked After Project to work with more looked after children and young people. The partnership with Aberdeen Foyer is very exciting as it will allow both organisations to share experience and learn from each other. We're already seeing the positive impact the Looked After Project is having, so it is great to be able to expand the project and help to increase the number of looked after children and young people achieving positive destinations."

**Kathleen Singer, Operations Manager at Aberdeen Foyer said,** "Aberdeen Foyer is absolutely delighted to be working in partnership with Sport Aberdeen to engage with care experienced young people and make a difference together through the funding awarded by Life Changes Trust."

“Aberdeen Foyer is guided by the belief that it is a young person’s unique strengths and capabilities that will determine their journey and define who they are – not their limitations and our values align very well with those of Sport Aberdeen. Both organisations want to enable young people to feel ‘I can’.

“We are also aware of the health benefits (physical and mental) of engaging with positive activities and the improved resilience to deal with past and/or ongoing challenges in their lives. Young people will have space to be kind to themselves, to reflect on their journey and progress, recognise their strengths and talents. They will find lost and new aspirations and feel hopeful about their future.

“At Aberdeen Foyer we work with amazing young people who are vibrant and talented, and we can’t wait to see the outcomes of this project and to celebrate their achievements with the people that are important to them.”

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

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, so that care experienced young people can engage with their peers and increase their skills, self-esteem and social connections.

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.

## **ENDS**

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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.

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