



## **Media Release**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015**

#### **£94,000 funding boost for Borders dementia peer support service**

A new project which provides peer support for people with dementia in the Borders has been given the go-ahead thanks to a £94,000 boost.

The funding has been awarded to Outside the Box, a Scottish charity and social enterprise, who will use the money to develop a peer support service for people with dementia and/or their carers, with a focus on food and keeping well.

While many older people need more advice and practical help around food – for instance with shopping, cooking and eating properly to stay well – the need for this help and support is even greater among people affected by dementia.

This initiative allows someone with experience of dementia to provide this practical advice and on-going individual support, using a 'Food Buddies' scheme.

The project aims to address concerns such as safety in a kitchen setting, losing skills around preparing and cooking food, safety around shopping and storing food as well as concerns around not eating – both for people with dementia and their carers, who may not be looking after their own well-being.

It also aims to share the experiences of people involved in the project more widely, to raise awareness about the benefits of peer support among people affected by dementia.

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.

**Anne Connor, Chief Executive of Outside the Box said:** 'We are very excited to receive this grant and to be working with the Life changes Trust to deliver our Food Buddies project in the Borders. Lots of people with dementia and their families find food stressful. People's appetites can change with the condition, or they may find it difficult to remember the recipes they've enjoyed for many years. Food Buddies will be bringing together people to share their tips on how to still enjoy food – shopping, cooking and eating it.'

**Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said:** 'Peer support allows someone with experience of dementia or caring for someone with dementia to provide a very specific type of support. We know anecdotally about the power of initiatives like peer support and befriending – individuals know that they have someone who will listen to and understand them, make them feel less alone, and valued as an individual. We are thrilled to be funding Outside the Box, an organisation which encourages people to think of themselves as citizens, rather than people who are restricted by a particular description or label.'

## **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.

## **ENDS**

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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.

Outside the Box is a Scottish charity and social enterprise. They are a source of independent community development support, information, training and advice to people who tend to be marginalised from their communities and who want to make a contribution. They give practical support and enable people to learn the types of skills that are important both for establishing new ventures and for sustaining them. They assist people to contribute on issues that are about how their community or how society works - such as when older people want to offer their skills and experience to families and young people - as well as on matters that are specific to their own circumstances.

\*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.

[www.lifechangestrust.org.uk](http://www.lifechangestrust.org.uk).