

Dementia Friendly East Lothian (DFEL) – Briefing Paper: January 2015

Background – who are we and what is our purpose?

We are a collaborative of local residents, carers, volunteers and paid workers who have experience of dementia and who want to make East Lothian a great place for people affected by dementia to live, visit and work in.

DFEL aims to support people and communities:

- raise awareness and understanding of dementia and its impact on people and their families and carers;
- provide a forum and impetus for community led discussions about how we collectively support people with dementia and what more we can do;
- develop a community response to dementia, where people living with dementia and those that support them inform local decisions that impact on people with dementia and the services they receive.

We started in North Berwick but have quickly developed activities across East Lothian as other communities said they too wanted to become Dementia Friendly.

Activities – what do we do?

We spent 6 months opening conversations in the community, talking to people as we went about our daily business and encouraging others to join in. We got great support from the local press. We set up a small flexible organising group for people who wanted to help us organise get together. This group included community volunteers, CLD, health, local authority staff from a range of departments, local businesses and social enterprises.

The group designed and ran 2 community events which we held in April 2014. 100 people attended and we got great ideas on where are the good places to go if you have dementia and what people would like to see changed. We continue to support people to develop their own dementia friendly activities and we produce regular information briefings on what's happening around East Lothian.

In the summer of 2014 we applied for support from the Scottish Community Development Centre's *Supporting Communities* Programme. This helped us organise a learning event which was held on 19th November 2014 in North Berwick. This event gave an opportunity for a wide range of people from across East Lothian to share stories and experiences and identify priorities to take forward in our action planning for 2015 and beyond.

Summary of recommendations from Learning Event

The full report of the learning event is available at the contact details below but the key recommendations are summarised here. People want us to:

- *Produce key 'messages' about dementia in attractive and accessible formats which can be disseminated widely and used with a wide range of audiences. This may involve production of new information or widening out access to existing information through signposting, web portals, etc.*
- *Ensure that we continue to focus on supporting and building community capacities, using a community development approach to dementia friendly work in East Lothian. Crucially this means that all activity is community-led with a focus on improving the quality of community life through building strong inclusive communities where people affected by dementia are valued and respected members.*
- *Develop opportunities for people with dementia to have more say and influence on the decisions that matter to them*
- *Take forward DFEL's draft dementia training strategy with the Health and Social Care Partnership and press for this to be effectively resourced.*
- *Develop case studies/examples which help service providers and decision makers understand the role that community resources and organisations can play in providing effective care at all stages of dementia, supporting people with dementia to live meaningful independent lives in the community for as long as they wish to do so*
- *Continue to raise the profile of dementia in local service planning structures (e.g. local area partnerships)*
- *Continue to develop opportunities for service providers (all sectors) and communities, people with dementia, carers and families to meet, share stories, develop learning and generate action around dementia*
- *Explore structure options for DFEL and continue to develop the activities of the collaborative.*
- *Develop 'funding opportunities' package/guidance for work on dementia across East Lothian.*
- *Analyse 'Support from the Start' model and identify possible parallel developments for working on dementia.*

Contact and further action:

If you are interested in any or all of these recommendations, would like to get involved with DFEL, or you would like a copy of the full learning event report please get in touch with us at: www.facebook.com/DementiaFriendlyEastLothian or

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/North-Berwick-Community-Centre/262153393850278>

Or you could drop us an email at sue.northrop@btinternet.com