

## News release

### **Side by Side with people with dementia in Cardiff**

A local charity is seeking volunteers for a new service to help people with dementia to keep doing the things they love. Side by Side is a free service from Alzheimer's Society that provides one-to-one support, making it easier for people with dementia, who might sometimes feel isolated or find it difficult to leave their homes, remain active and feel part of their local community.

A survey by Alzheimer's Society found 40 per cent of people with dementia in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, have felt lonely recently (*Dementia 2014*). There is strong evidence that life satisfaction in general for older people is positively correlated with levels of activity. Social activity and social support are thought to be directly related to better physical and cognitive function and help slow down the rate of decline.

Charlotte Powell, manager of the charity's 'Side by Side' service in Cardiff, said: "This new service focuses on enabling people with dementia to lead more fulfilling lives and to continue to take part in the activities that they have always enjoyed and try new ones.

"We are currently piloting this service in 26 places across the UK. We need more volunteers to enable people with dementia to stay connected and help to reduce feelings of loneliness that may be felt after a diagnosis.

"By doing things like going for a walk, to a rugby match, or joining a local class together, our volunteers support people with dementia to take up hobbies and get out and about. What they do together is entirely based on what the person with dementia wants."

“Volunteers are crucial to the success of this service and can range from providing support once a week to once a fortnight at a time that works for the volunteer and person with dementia.

It might be taking a walk in the park, a visit to a café or a chat over the phone, sounds simple, but it can make a huge difference to someone’s life.” said Charlotte.

By 2017 we want every person with dementia in Wales, England and Northern Ireland to have opportunity to access Side by Side.

The service will help grow Dementia Friendly Communities by building local networks for people with dementia, bringing opportunity and widening what people with dementia can bring to their community, reducing stigma and social exclusion. Side by Side also aims to reach a greater number of people with dementia including groups who are under-represented in our services such as people with dementia from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds and people with learning disabilities.

If you are interested in becoming a Side by Side volunteer, please contact Charlotte Powell on 02920 434 977 or [charlotte.powell@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:charlotte.powell@alzheimers.org.uk) for more details. Training will be provided so that volunteers are confident about carrying out the role. Volunteering provides a great opportunity to learn new skills, share your hobby with others and enhance your CV in addition to supporting a person to live more independently with dementia.