

PRESS RELEASE 26/11/15

Volunteer Co-researchers needed to evaluate projects that will help older people across Chester and Cheshire West

Brightlife, the pioneering, Big Lottery-funded partnership set up to reduce social isolation amongst older people across Cheshire West and Chester, is recruiting volunteers to assist in the evaluation of its services.

Volunteer co-researchers will work with academics from the Centre for Ageing Studies at the University of Chester and will have the opportunity to take part in all aspects of the research process including data gathering, analysis and report writing.

“The Brightlife evaluation provides a wonderful opportunity for someone who either has research experience or would like to learn new skills in this area,” says Mandy Roberts, Brightlife Engagement and Volunteer Coordinator. “What is most important is that we recruit people who are genuinely interested in the Brightlife project and improving the lives of older people.”

Full training and support will be given to all volunteers through a five-week training programme (5 x 2 hour sessions) taking place from January.

Dr Paul Kingston, Professor of Ageing and Mental Health and Director of the Centre for Ageing Studies, who is leading the research, adds: “Volunteer co-researchers are crucial to the success of the Brightlife evaluation. The University is very excited to be able to train and support those recruited by the Brightlife team and as well as providing mentoring during their time within the project, we will be sure to make the experience fun.”

Anyone interested in volunteering as a co-researcher should contact Mandy Roberts on 01606 884444 or email mandy.roberts@brightlifecheshire.org.uk - alternatively visit www.brightlifecheshire.org.uk for more information.

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Notes to Editors:

- Brightlife is a partnership led by Age UK Cheshire (Registered Charity Number 1091608). It has been awarded £5m as part of the Big Lottery's Fulfilling Lives, Ageing Better fund, which has given a total of £82m to 15 areas throughout England in order to improve the lives of up to 200,000 older people.
- The Brightlife partnership includes: Age UK Cheshire, Older People's Network, Cheshire West and Chester Council, West Cheshire CCG, Vale Royal CCG, Cheshire and Warrington Social Enterprise Partnership, Chester Voluntary Action, Deafness Support Network, Rural Community Services, Sanctuary Housing and West Cheshire Inter Faith Forum.
- Over the next five years, Brightlife aims to work closely with older people to identify, design and implement a wide range of innovative solutions to address loneliness and isolation across Cheshire West and Chester.
- Nationally, over 1 million older people say they are always or often feel lonely, and two-fifths say the television is their main form of company. With the numbers of older people aged 65 or over in the UK predicted to rise by nearly 50% in the next 20 years, loneliness is an urgent problem.