

# Investment at the King's and Festival Theatres to make theatre 'dementia friendly'



A major investment from a charity set up with money from the Big Lottery Fund has just been announced whereby the Festival and King's Theatres in Edinburgh will become 'dementia friendly'.

The two theatres want to create dementia friendly venues so that people with dementia and those who care for them can continue to be part of the theatre-going community, enjoy participating in the arts and mix with their peers.

The two theatres plan to use the funding to make the building environments safer and more welcoming for people with dementia, to programme a series of shows specifically for those affected by dementia, and adapt existing theatre programmes to be more dementia friendly.

They will also provide dementia training to all their staff, as well as visiting theatre companies, and will recruit dementia champions.

With the support of the funding, the Festival and King's Theatres want to become exemplars so that other theatres and similar venues remain accessible to people whose lives are 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 £3million in 14 different

dementia friendly communities over the next three years.

Duncan Hendry, Chief Executive at the Festival and King's Theatres said: 'We are delighted that our application to the Life Changes Trust to create a Dementia-friendly community across our two theatres has been successful. We look forward to working with people with dementia and their families to address what the barriers to accessing venues like ours might be, so that we can create welcoming and supportive social environments in our theatres. Our staff fully support the creation of a dementia-friendly community at our venues and we are keen to take an industry lead in Scotland to encourage other theatres to adopt dementia-friendly practices.'

Anna Buchanan, Director of the [Life Changes Trust](#) dementia programme said 'Many people living with dementia stop taking part in activities that may have given them great pleasure in the past, or which allowed them to mix with their peers. Initiatives like these bring people together in a dementia friendly community of interest where they have opportunities to be part of something that is meaningful to them. This funding will support the theatres to create an environment where people affected by dementia feel welcome and included; a place where the door remains open and does not close just because someone has dementia.'