

1000 people needed to shape neighbourhoods of the future

Volunteers will define Scotland's future-proof communities 'Peoplehood'

A 1000-strong volunteer taskforce is being assembled to shape a £12.5 million project that will transform the future homes and communities of three distinct Scottish neighbourhoods.

The Blackwood [Peoplehood](#) Project is a pioneering concept which will develop a future-proof model for independent living for thousands of residents in Glasgow, Dundee and Morayshire, allowing people to live healthier and happier for longer.

The three-year initiative will create a blueprint for welcoming communities with age-friendly homes, supported by cutting-edge technologies, making independent living achievable and sustainable as people grow older, with safe outdoor spaces to sustain physical activities.

The funding will see the three communities benefit from free tablets and Wi-Fi for participants to help them get digitally connected, while also delivering e-bikes, electric cars and a host of equipment and activities within communities, all according to local demand.

Fanchea Kelly, Chief Executive of Blackwood Housing and Care, which is leading on delivery of the project, said: "This rips up the rule book and Scotland has never seen anything quite like this. It is a chance to completely transform how communities are shaped.

"The volunteers who take part are absolutely essential as they

will shape how initiatives look and work in each community according to what the people living there need and want. We already have 350 volunteers signed up, but we need at least 1000 people to give us their vision, insights and skills.

“At no stage do we tell them what they are getting. Instead, they will tell us what local people want and they will be involved in co-creating every aspect and every project from the ground up. It is incredibly exciting for us and our partners.”

That co-design process is at the heart of Peoplehood, which received £6 million UK Research and Innovation funding as part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund/Healthy Ageing Challenge. It is the only project in Scotland to win funding, it has also received a further £6.5 million from Blackwood and its nine industry partners.

Already more than 350 volunteers have signed up to support the schemes in Glasgow’s Cardonald area, Charleston in Dundee and in the Moray Firth fishing port Buckie. As part of its “charter”, another 650 volunteers are needed to provide valuable input.

Fanchea added: “We need volunteers to work with us to help create the places, homes and neighbourhoods of the future. Peoplehood is an exciting new programme designed to give older people a life in their own homes that feels easier, happier and healthier.

“We want to co-design each peoplehood by asking new questions and testing new ideas with real people living in our chosen areas. Together, we’ll learn what it really takes to develop the thriving healthy neighbourhoods of the future.”

Anyone living in the three neighbourhoods can sign up to take part. They will spend time working with the project team in various ways, such as taking part in interviews or focus groups, testing new systems or services, and potentially

joining co-design workshops.

Detailed research was carried out to identify the three areas. Charleston in Dundee was chosen because it already has a high number of specialist Blackwood Homes. Cardonald is best suited to explore the development of an integrated community, while Buckie, situated between Banff and Elgin, presents challenges around its rural location, frequency of public transport and WiFi accessibility.

The Peoplehood programme will champion independent living that focuses on five healthy ageing challenges:

- Designing age friendly homes that are accessible, affordable, beautiful and connected.
- Sustaining physical activities by providing local people with a range of activities and equipment such as electric bikes and stations.
- Helping people to age well and to feel safe and secure in their neighbourhoods through the use of products and services.
- Supporting social connections by helping people to become confident online, particularly through the use of new technology.
- Creating healthy and active places by making the neighbourhoods welcoming, accessible and beautiful places to live.

The nine partner organisations working with Blackwood on Peoplehood are: University of Edinburgh; Canon Medical Research Europe; Carebuilder UK; CENSIS; Cisco International Ltd; Enterprise Rent-a-Car UK; Lewis & Hickey Architects; Mydex CIC and The DataLab.

Blackwood pioneers technology innovation in the social housing sector. It operates more than 1500 properties across 29 local authorities. The charity has already built two developments of tech-smart 'Blackwood Homes' in Glasgow and Dundee which use a

“CleverCogs” digital system to make life easier for older people and people with disabilities.

People looking to join can find more information at www.blackwoodgroup.org.uk/peoplehood or by messaging: getinvolved@blackwoodgroup.org.uk

