

# Media Release

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**Alzheimer Scotland**  
*Action on Dementia*

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**To: News/Health/Policy/Social Affairs editors**

## **Alzheimer Scotland welcomes first National Dementia Strategy and says now is the time for real action on dementia**

Alzheimer Scotland welcomes the Scottish Government's National Dementia Strategy, launched today in Coatbridge by Shona Robison MSP (Minister for Public Health and Sport). The charity believes it is a significant step forward in tackling many of the difficulties experienced by people with dementia and their families.

There are 71,000 people with dementia in Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland believes that no-one should feel that they have to go through the illness on their own. The organisation has been closely involved in the development of the strategy, which followed the publication last year of the *Remember I'm Still Me* report by the Care Commission and Mental Welfare Commission, highlighting serious deficiencies in the care many people with dementia receive.

Henry Simmons, Chief Executive of Alzheimer Scotland, says, "This strategy is a strong start - now is the time for real action on dementia. We must ensure that health and social care professionals, mainstream local services and communities across Scotland understand dementia and are encouraged to play a part in making a difference in the lives of people with the illness.

"It is unfortunate that it is only now, in such an uncertain economic climate, that dementia is receiving the necessary level of government priority. However, we are pleased that BIG Lottery has indicated their intention to aid the development of post-diagnostic support and early intervention. We welcome this strategic investment and will do all we can to assist in the effective use of these valuable funds."

Alzheimer Scotland believes that some of the most important issues do not require additional resources: respecting people with dementia and their families as equal citizens, with the dignity they deserve, costs nothing. The strategy is built on these principles and has at its

heart the rights of people with dementia and their families to support that is personalised, timely and consistent.

This year's Alzheimer Scotland national conference (Monday 7 June at the Thistle Hotel, Cambridge Street, Glasgow) will be on *Scotland's dementia strategy – making it work for people*. The keynote speech will be delivered by Shona Robison, Minister for Public Health and Sport and there will be presentations from Dr Donny Lyons (Mental Welfare Commission) and the Scottish Dementia Working Group.

## **ENDS**

### **Contact details:**

Kirsty Jardine, Awareness Manager, tel 0131 243 1453, 07747 025041, [kjardine@alzscot.org](mailto:kjardine@alzscot.org)

### **Notes for editors:**

- Dementia affects approximately 71,000 people in Scotland. (<http://www.alzscot.org/pages/statistics.htm>)
- Alzheimer Scotland's 2010 research report *Let's get personal – personalisation and dementia*, recommends improving access to personalised support, so that people with dementia and their families can have genuine choice and control, as the key to achieving the best possible outcome from both state and personal resources. (<http://www.alzscot.org/pages/policy/report-personalisation-and-dementia.htm>)
- Alzheimer's disease is the main form of dementia (60% of cases). The second most common is vascular dementia (17%). As yet there is no cure.

**Alzheimer Scotland** is Scotland's foremost voluntary organisation working for people with dementia and their carers. It:

- speaks out for the rights and concerns of people with dementia and their carers;
- operates services on over 60 sites throughout Scotland providing practical services such as day, evening and weekend centres, home care and befriending and carers' support services;
- provides the 24 hour national freephone Dementia Helpline **(0808 808 3000)**;
- provides the website **www.alzscot.org**;
- supports a network of over 40 carers' support groups;
- has a network of Dementia Advisors across Scotland;
- has a Specialist Dementia Nurse programme;
- publishes leaflets, booklets, reports and a quarterly newsletter keeping carers and professionals up-to-date;
- has a research programme.

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