

## National Dementia Learning and Sharing Network

*'The only experts in dementia are those living with the disease'*

Our two active voice groups - the Scottish Dementia Working Group (SDWG) and the National Dementia Carers Action Network (NDCAN) exist to raise awareness of dementia and to allow the voices of those with lived experience to be heard.



SDWG member Stuart Dougall

## The National Dementia Learning Network

The National Dementia Learning Network was created for Dementia Champions, Dementia Specialist Improvement Leads, Dementia Ambassadors and other health and social care professionals interested in learning more about dementia. The aim is to provide learning opportunities, to network, and to share ideas and projects. They meet regularly and their recent meeting in March was attended by over 100 people. It is vital that people working with people with dementia hear directly from the experts themselves, the people with lived experience.

## The March meeting

At their March meeting they were joined by SDWG member Stuart Dougall, who gave an invaluable presentation to the network members on what it's like to have a dementia. He spoke about early symptoms, getting a diagnosis, the challenges faced and about how to overcome those challenges and live well with dementia. Stuart has younger onset Alzheimer's disease and joined the group in 2022 to help others who find themselves in a similar situation.

This contribution will, without doubt, help those who attended to build a richer picture of the experience of people living with dementia and ultimately gain a better understanding of how to offer support. Our active voice groups want all those who work with people with dementia to have a better understanding of dementia and be empowered to work in partnership at all points from diagnosis.

The session received such positive feedback from attendees.

*"Nobody can tell the story quite like someone living the journey. The talk was so inspirational, and I got goosebumps just listening." - Attendee*

*"Joining SDWG has been such a positive experience for me. It's given me back a focus and purpose in life that I'd lost through having to give up work, however it's not really about me but more about what I can do to help others"*

*" - Stuart*