Big Lottery Fund to help loving yet struggling grandparents in Leeds

Tuesday 15 March, 2016

Recently formed Leeds Community Interest Company '**ChildsSide**' gets a boost from a Big Lottery Fund award.

ChildsSide will use the funding to run its *Older Yet Wiser*© workshops which will be delivered to grandparents in the Leeds LS10, 11, 13 and 14 areas.

'We are thrilled to win an 'Awards for All' grant from the Big Lottery Fund. This is a huge vote of confidence in ChildsSide. With Big Lottery's endorsement, we can reach local grandparents to make a big difference to families in Leeds,' says Judith Shalkowski, one of the directors of the company and a grandparent herself.

Two groups of grandparents will be invited to participate:

• those providing either regular or occasional childcare

• those in a guardianship role

Grandparents who provide childcare take on an *enormous yet rewarding* responsibility. Increasingly, they are called upon to support their grandchildren's social and emotional development, often against a background of chaos and family stress.

ChildsSide aims to help grandparents fulfil their unique role by giving them access to recent information on child development and childcare approaches. The practical and interactive workshops will include a family resource pack. Participants will develop the skills to support their grandchild's wellbeing and, in the long run, dramatically improve their life chances.

Grandparents will be emotionally healthier and cope better with their caring roles when supported through the locally-based, group workshops run by ChildsSide. *Older Yet Wiser*© will provide the space and time to share experiences and concerns with those undertaking similar roles. It will also raise the profile of the important role grandparents play within the community.

ChildsSide's Older Yet Wiser Project reflects current high priorities within local and national strategic initiatives. As the population ages, the health and wellbeing of older people is a critical policy issue.

ChildsSide – the organisation

The directors of ChildsSide, Liz Ranson, Fiona Duncan and Judith Shalkowski, have a passion for prenatal and early years. The inspiration for starting the company came from recent developments in neurobiology and the application of this knowledge to emotional development in the prenatal and early years of children's lives.

The facilitating directors are familiar with healthcare provision in Leeds – Judith in the voluntary sector and Liz as an NHS Midwife. Judith is an Early Years specialist and has delivered specialist parenting courses and training. As a midwife, Liz has extensive experience embracing both holistic and high-risk management of pregnancy, providing counselling and support for families and professionals.

The *Older Yet Wiser*© project is only one aspect of ChildsSide's work. The team has also developed its unique '*Emotional Connections*©' programme which is a series of parenting-skills workshops for parents and families in the Yorkshire area.

Notes to Editors:

- The Big Lottery Fund supports the aspirations of people who want to make life better for their communities across the UK. We are responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by the National Lottery and invest over £650 million a year in projects big and small in health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

- Since June 2004 we have awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of

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people. Every year we fund 13,000 small local projects tackling big social problems like poor mental health and homelessness.

- Since the National Lottery began in 1994, £34 billion has been raised and more than 450,000 grants awarded.

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