

Project Title

'Why do I do it?' The stories of people working with the LBC projects

Exchange Fellow

Ann Lingard

Novelist and non-fiction writer - Freelance

Academic collaborator

Professor Ian Deary

Director of the Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology (CCACE)

Duration of project

January 2012 – December 2012

The Centre for Cognitive Ageing and Cognitive Epidemiology (CCACE) works with older people currently aged between 75 and 90 to investigate the effects of lifetime cognition on the ageing brain. How much can you tell about someone from data on their health and intelligence? Why does someone volunteer for a long-term study of their cognitive ageing? How do you try to find the 'essence' of a person? One answer to the last question might be found by listening to and writing each individual's story.

The main objective of this project is to capture the 'human essence' of some of the older people who have volunteered to participate in the Lothian Birth Cohort studies on cognitive ageing, by talking to them and writing their personal stories. Novelist and non-fiction writer Ann Lingard (www.annlingard.com) will seek not only to show 'who they are', but also to attempt to put the study on ageing in context. Additionally, some of the people involved on the 'other side' - the testers, the radiographers, for example - will be interviewed and their stories written. 'Story-sharing' will be entirely voluntary.

These stories will be included in a dedicated section on the CCACE website with supporting images. We will seek to include the work in exhibitions and other CCACE public engagement events and at, for example, a reading/discussion at the Edinburgh International Science Festival 2013 or Edinburgh Book Festival. There is also the possibility of including this work in an arts festival in 2013. These events would be used to draw interest to the project website. We would seek to engage the media where possible. The material could also be used to develop school teacher resource packs looking at ageing research and the societal issues of an ageing population.