

NATIONALLY

The work we are achieving in East Dunbartonshire is also making a mark across the country. Tam Willson our Forum co-chair was shortlisted for Self Management Champion of the Year in a presentation at the Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile, Ceartas was an integral part of the local Dementia Network that were finalists in the Scottish Dementia Awards in 2016. The organisation also made a little bit of history in becoming one of the first organisations in Scotland to achieve See Me in the Workplace and this followed the attainment of Healthy Working Lives Gold Award. It has been a real encouragement for all to see the organisation's successes recognised.



GORDON THOMSON - INTRODUCTION

Another year has passed at Ceartas and yet again it has been a busy time with the continued development of Ceartas and growth in independent advocacy provision in East Dunbartonshire. We hope this report gives a flavour of the work achieved by the service users, volunteers, trustees and staff of Ceartas, all of whom have worked together this year to ensure that more people have their voices heard and their rights protected.



Gordon Thomson at AyeME

CHAIRPERSON -

This is my first year as Chair and I am proud to take on this role from Martin Brickley - Our thanks go to him for his sterling service to the organisation and I am delighted that he will continue to serve as a director. My thanks also go to Dik McFarlane who stepped down this year after several years of serving as a director and we wish him well for the future. The role of the board is critical for any organisation and Ceartas is no exception. We are all working to ensure that Ceartas goes from strength to strength and as a group support the staff to advocate and support individuals. Providing advocacy for people who are in vulnerable circumstances is not easy but my thanks go to the staff who continue to meet the challenges each day and ensure that our service users are treated equally and fairly.

MARION MENZIES

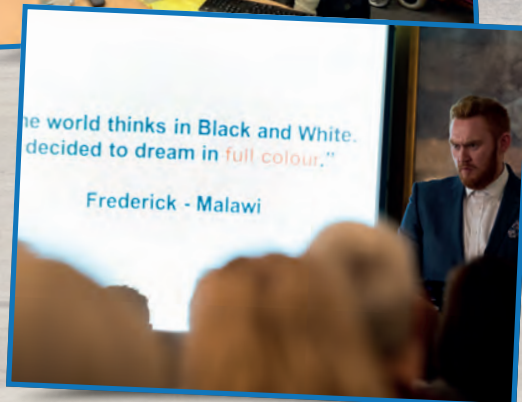
CHAIR OF SERVICE USER FORUM -

Since 2014 the group has been involved in many different activities in improving the organisation. The Forum continues to shape and drive the organisation forward as it works in partnership with the board and staff. The Forum continues to have consistent representation from the board and staff regularly attend the forum meetings: this assures us that things we discuss are taken seriously by the Ceartas Board. This group is not just another tick box exercise as we really do change things within the organisation. It is great that no matter what walk of life you are from, your opinion matters.

NICOLA WILLIAMSON

ADVOCATING

Ceartas delivers independent advocacy on an individual and collective basis. Casework rose again this year with further growth in our group attendance as well. An area which has seen particular growth this year has been our work in relation to welfare rights and the Department of Work and Pensions. This involves supporting individuals to attend meetings and tribunals which are critical to the person's wellbeing. Casework has risen from 23 working days in 2016 to 73 (& rising) this year. This area of work has been an adaption to our normal advocacy roles.



INNOVATING

Ceartas has continued its community based approach enabling people to be connected with the service and establishing strong links with advocacy and the area in which they live. Examples of this include the further development of our dementia services that has enabled us to meet more people and support them to have their voice heard at times of change. We recognise that advocacy needs to reach out and be creative so we have continued to look at using new approaches including creative writing and sport in order to engage with others.



INVOLVING

Ceartas has continued to involve people at the heart of its services. Collective work has continued to thrive with groups going from strength to strength. Membership has increased and new groups established such as Changes which brings service users together to consider local issues and our Forum has been involved in shaping this approach and this has included the further development of our Dementia Voices groups that enables people affected by dementia collectively advocate and influence local service delivery.



THANKS

Our thanks go to our individual supporters who have generously donated to Ceartas throughout the year and of course our main funders East Dunbartonshire Council, Life Changes Trust and the Big Lottery for their continued backing for our work in East Dunbartonshire.

GET IN TOUCH..

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