

annual report  
2018 | 19

15 Years with people at our heart

ABI Café  
De Café OPAL  
Dementia Still Game  
Older People Addictions  
Mental Health Physical Disability  
Acquired Brain Injury Older People  
Dementia Voices Sensory Impairment  
Additional Communication Needs  
Be Heard Learning Disability  
A-Spire Mental Health  
Physical Disability  
ABI Café  
DAS

OPAL  
Shine A-Spire  
Be Heard  
DAS  
DAS

**Ceartas**  
Connect, Create, Change





# ANNUAL REPORT



## INTRODUCTION - CEO GORDON THOMSON

It has been another encouraging year for Ceartas. The current funding climate will always bring challenges but we have worked hard to continue to deliver independent advocacy in East Dunbartonshire effectively and efficiently and creatively. Our theme which underpins our work at present is Connect, Create, Change. This for me summarises our core objectives in our desire to build relationships with the people.

Advocacy is more than just going along to support individuals at meetings, at its very heart it is about connecting with people and supporting them to create a change in their lives or in the communities they live in. In addition to this advocacy is also about supporting individuals to make community connections thus reducing their dependency on services.

At Ceartas we believe an innovative approach is required to ensure that people who use our services are at the heart of decision making and they are given every opportunity to participate and connect in a way that is meaningful to them. We also believe that in order to increase access to the service we need to provide engaging and creative routes into the service. To this end we have established a number of different groups which enable people to connect with the service, for example, Creative Writing, Art, Sports and Café Models.

Each of these approaches has led to a reduction in social isolation and loneliness for participants as they make new connections within their communities. Friendships are built and opportunities for peer support are enhanced.

Such approaches have also led to an increase in individuals engaging with advocacy; it has led to an increase in self-referrals thus reducing the dependency on professional gatekeepers and more importantly it has allowed individuals to engage with advocacy out with periods of crisis and enabled them to be more proactive in decision making in their lives.

Our goal will be to enhance this approach in the years to come but in the reviewing the year passed we can be proud of our achievements to date as the people we work with have their voice heard through the provision of independent advocacy by Ceartas in East Dunbartonshire.

## SECRETARY OF SERVICE USER FORUM – DOUGLAS MACNICOL

Ceartas provides independent advocacy for people living in East Dunbartonshire and has been doing so for 15 years, which is testament to the hard work of both staff and volunteers.

The Service-User Forum is made up of Board members, Ceartas staff, and individuals who use the service, and during this past year have specifically met to consider ways of making people more aware of the organisation. As a result, plans are well underway for a range of activities with a few having already taken place, including hosting a stall at the Kirkintilloch Canal Festival, and setting up a sub-fundraising group which goes hand in hand with raising awareness: the group has already ran a cake sale, which raised over £150.

This is just a small snapshot of what we've been doing; other initiatives like the 12-week Creative Writing course, and the 6-week Get Set Go project (with Clyde Community Foundation) are just a number of other successful activities we've proudly been a part of. We look forward to the year ahead.

## CHAIRPERSON - DAVID WISEMAN

It has been my pleasure to be appointed by the board to the position of Chairperson. My own background was in Social Work working for Strathclyde Regional Council, South Lanarkshire Council and COSLA, and prior to my retirement I was



Acting Chief Executive of the Care Inspectorate. I hope I have brought this experience to the role of Chair of the Ceartas Board and that I am helping the organisation continue to offer high quality services and be equipped for the challenges it faces in its working environment.

Independent advocacy and the involvement of people in the design, monitoring and evaluation of the services they use was a constant objective of mine throughout my career. I continue to look forward to working with people who use Ceartas services, as well as the staff and volunteers of Ceartas so that we can continue to connect with people, be creative and help bring change not only in the life of an individual but in the communities that they live.

As we look to the future, the Board has considered how best Ceartas can progress. This process included capturing the views of the people who use our services, staff, and the board. Together we believed that for Ceartas to continue to progress we should focus on 6 priorities over the next 3 years -

- 1 Increase reach and uptake of Ceartas services
- 2 Development of different models of independent advocacy and aligned services
- 3 Increase non statutory services
- 4 Improve accessibility of the service
- 5 Strive for best practice
- 6 Improve efficiency and effectiveness of organization

We wish Ceartas and independent advocacy to be readily available to all communities within East Dunbartonshire. Statutory work can dominate our caseload but we wish to develop ways to ensure equality of access to advocacy. Advocacy is more than preparation or representation at formal meetings rather it is about giving people a voice in all areas of their life. Our work in whatever form should be empathetic giving people the confidence to express and work to achieve what they want to attain in their lives.

We believe advocacy is more than just for meetings. People can express their voice at different times and in various ways. We wish to give people opportunities to have their voice heard and not access independent advocacy solely when they are subject to legislation. By developing alternative routes to advocacy and varied ways of expressing opinions, we believe more people can have their voice heard.

There should not be any barriers to accessing, using or taking part in independent advocacy or other services provided by Ceartas.

Independence should be evidenced in how we are funded but also in how we act and how individuals access Ceartas. By increasing our financial independence and lessening our reliance on statutory funding we can further our ability to advocate and support individuals robustly, with freedom of interference and that initiatives are reflective of people's needs and preferences.

We wish to ensure that Ceartas is available for all communities in East Dunbartonshire enabling people to access all of our services in their local area and with their peers.

We wish to ensure that the individuals who experience our service receive the best possible support and that our practice is reviewed on a regular basis.

In a context of reducing mainstream and grant funding it is critical for quality services to be delivered with smart objectives and a best value approach. We need to achieve effective outcomes efficiently for the people we work with so that, as much as possible, resources are focused on delivering our valued services.

The six priorities will guide our work in future years and as a board we will work to oversee the implementation of these measures in the months and years ahead.

We of course recognize that our work would not have been possible without the financial support of individual donors but also the funding of East Dunbartonshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and The Life Changes Trust. It would also not have been possible without the commitment of staff, volunteers and people who have used our services working together to ensure we reached more people than before.

I wish also to take this opportunity to thank Martin Brickley. He did not want any special recognition for his years of service on the board but it is important to note the tremendous contribution he has made to the life of Ceartas during his tenure as a director and chairman which spanned over 10 years. As he stands down from the board, we will miss his presence, insight and of course his humour but all of us wish him all the very best for the future.

This annual report gives Ceartas a chance to reflect on our previous work and the impact that Ceartas has made, I trust that you will enjoy learning about the work we have achieved.



# A YEAR OF CEARTAS

# INVOLVEMENT



## CONNECT

### OPAL/ Ceartas CrossFit Project

Cross Fit was an 8 week programme run in partnership between Ceartas and OPAL. It offered opportunities for people to get active while learning about advocacy and local services.

After a successful pilot in July, the course was extended and developed for three community care groups including; older people, senior pupils at local ASN schools, and those in recovery from addiction. Crossfit wasn't just another exercise class: it allowed people of very mixed abilities to take control of their own personal fitness at their own pace and intensity. The exercise itself focused on functional movement: the type of movements that help you get up off the couch or lift your shopping in from the car. Each session lasted 30 minutes with an additional 15 minutes at the end for local services to come and chat.

### Communi\_Tea Party

To celebrate Learning Disability Week 2019 and in partnership with Empower, and Creative Spark: we hosted a Communi\_Tea party featuring catering from Empower; a short drama/presentation from Creative Spark; and a vision board exercise hosted by Ceartas looking at people's hopes and dreams for community involvement.

### Charity book and cake sale for World Book Night 2019

To celebrate World Book Night, Ceartas hosted a charity bake and book sale. We raised over £150 for Streetreads, a charity providing books and other opportunities to rough sleepers in Edinburgh and Glasgow.



## CREATE

### Walk n Roll relaunch

In April, Ceartas relaunched our Walk n Roll group, a free & fully accessible health walk open to anyone who wants to get active around their local community. In response to service user feedback we changed the day and time of the group to the last Thursday of the month.

Walk n Roll is an opportunity to keep informed and connected with the community, and it is a chance to learn a bit more about Ceartas and what we do.

### Connect-ED

With support from the SCVO Digital Participation Charter, Ceartas ran a digital group for people who wanted to improve their basic digital skills, from connecting to wifi to sending an email.

### Music for a Summer's Afternoon 2019

Ceartas hosted our 7th annual Music for a Summer's Afternoon in June. Over 85 people enjoyed live music, afternoon tea and some dancing.



## CHANGE

### Scottish Sensory and Equality Awards 2019

Ceartas were delighted to be nominated for the Scottish Sensory & Equality Awards in the 'Outstanding practice, innovation and dedication to sensory loss and inclusion' category.

### De Café expansion

De Café now operates in 6 areas across East Dunbartonshire including Lenzie, Bearsden. De café is free and open to anyone affected by dementia. It's a place where you can get information on a variety of topics in a safe and friendly environment.

### Fundraising for ABI Café

ABI Café member, Helen, raised £200 in aid of Ceartas and Headway Glasgow. Instead of asking for gifts to celebrate her 50th birthday, Helen asked family and friends to donate towards two organisations she holds close to her heart.



# ADVOCACY IN ACTION



## CASE:

Advocacy support provided to a client with long term poor mental health whose children are subject to child protection measures.

## OUTCOME/REFLECTION:

Advocacy support has been provided to the client in relation to child protection meetings. At times the role of advocacy has been questioned by other agencies who perhaps misunderstand the role of independent advocacy.

When working with individuals who have a number of issues, it can be difficult to encourage them to participate in meetings to prepare for statutory case conferences. The client failed to attend meetings with



the advocacy worker which then meant that the advocacy worker was unable to provide support at the case conference. This can be distressing for clients but there requires to be an agreement of the advocacy role during the meeting with a client who has capacity in order for the advocacy worker to provide support.

This case highlights the importance of joint working between partnership agencies and the need for a clear understanding from all around the role of independent advocacy. It also highlights the difficulty for advocacy in working with individuals whose lifestyle may be quite chaotic and the individual is unable or unwilling to participate in preparatory meetings with the advocacy worker.



## CASE:

Ceartas initially received an information enquiry through OPAL (East Dunbartonshire Information Line) for Power Of Attorney information for a client in hospital. While in hospital the client was detained under Mental Health Legislation and the case was transferred to an advocacy worker.

## OUTCOME/REFLECTION:

As partners in the OPAL service, Ceartas are able to quickly identify advocacy issues for client's presenting with information enquiries. This is a positive aspect of a partnership approach and allows access to advocacy at an earlier stage and without the reliance on statutory referrals.

Information has been gathered for the client for a time where they are able to process the information and in the meantime advocacy provision is being provided in relation to the legislation, this allows for a seamless transition between both services and will hopefully result in the client being able to fully participate in future planning.

## CASE:

Advocacy support through hospital discharge process and subsequent AWI assessment.

## OUTCOME/REFLECTION:

Advocacy support was initially provided to support the client to express their views in relation to future care options following hospital discharge. A number of visits were made with the client in hospital to gather views. The client was keen to return home with supports and these views were relayed back to the social worker. The client subsequently returned home with support change to was readmitted to hospital shortly after.

Further discussions took place following intimation from the local authority that guardianship would be pursued. The advocacy worker was able to use prior knowledge of the client and their conversations to inform future visits. While in hospital the client was assessed as lacking capacity and requiring 24 hour care. It was clear that the client still wished to return home; these views were fed back to the social worker.

This case highlights the importance of independent advocacy in ensuring that clients are supported, as far as possible to achieve their desired outcome, and also to ensure that where legislation is being used that the client's views are paramount in the decision making process. It also highlights the benefits of early referrals to advocacy to allow a relationship to be built up, for the advocacy worker to gather views which can be used to inform future decision making when the client loses capacity.





## Staffing

Gordon Thomson -  
CEO

Sharon Bairden -  
Services Manager

Patricia Ovens -  
Finance and Admin Manager

Gemma Graham -  
Senior Advocacy Worker

Susie Martin -  
Advocacy Worker

Alex Doherty -  
Advocacy Worker

Katherine Moir -  
Advocacy Worker

Michelle Candlish -  
Dementia Link Worker

Linda McGavin -  
Advocacy Link Worker

Ronnie Whiteside -  
Marketing Assistant

Roy Hunter -  
Information Worker



## Who are Ceartas?

Ceartas is a free, independent advocacy and information service available to adults in East Dunbartonshire. We support people to have the ability and confidence to speak up for themselves and make their voice heard.

We have service users at our heart, shaping the way the service is run.

## What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent Advocacy is a way to make a person's voice stronger and to give them as much control over their lives as possible. Advocacy workers do not make decisions for a person. Independent advocacy will help a person get the information they need to make good choices, and support them to express themselves clearly. We are independent of any other service provider like Social Work or NHS.

**Get in Touch...**

By Letter  
Ceartas Advocacy  
Suites 5 – 7  
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10 Donaldson Crescent  
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G66 1XF

**Connect Online**

  

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### Partners



sustainable thriving achieving

**East Dunbartonshire Council**

[www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk)

