

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2020/21**

David Wiseman - Chairperson

“

Welcome

to our 16th Annual Report. While it has been a year of challenges, it has also been a year of achievements as we have continued to connect with people creatively and supported them to make changes in their lives. We hope that this report will give you a flavour of the work we have been involved in.

This year has again provided us with many challenges as Covid 19 continues to effect the people we work with and the way we respond appropriately to their needs. On behalf of the Board of Trustee/Directors, I would like to thank the Ceartas team for how they have dealt with the challenges they have faced and for using these testing times to look at and identify new ways of providing support to those needing advocacy support within East Dunbartonshire.

The Board have been pleased that we have been able to appoint a new Management Team, following the departure of, Gordon Thomson, our previous Chief Executive. We are confident that the new management team of Sharon (Chief Officer), Patricia (Business Support Lead) and Muleya (Advocacy Lead), alongside the rest of the Ceartas Team, will continue to ensure that Ceartas's role in providing independent advocacy services to those that require such services in East Dunbartonshire is of high quality.

As Chair of the Board, I would like to thank my fellow Trustee/Directors who have helped us to ensure that Ceartas remains as a well respected provider of quality to advocacy services.

As stated in the last Annual Report, the very nature of advocacy is dependent on building relationships and communicating with the people we work with and while COVID19 has continued to present us with many challenges on this level, the team at Ceartas have again stretched their imaginations and found ways in which we could continue to connect with the people we work with and those within our wider community.

With continued restrictions in place as we move into 2022, Ceartas will continue to explore ways in which we can provide advocacy support for individuals across East Dunbartonshire.

2020 and 2021 brought us all many challenges and 2022 looks like it will bring more . However, the Board and all the team at Ceartas are committed to continuing to find ways in which we can provide, develop and improve the services we provide.

”



Sharon Bairden - Chief Officer

While this has been a year of changes and challenges for Ceartas, throughout an ever-changing landscape the organisation has continued to strive to build and maintain connections with people living in East Dunbartonshire.

Most of the year was dominated by Covid19 and many services, along with the rest of the world appeared to grind to a halt. The pandemic presented us with a number of challenges, not least, the issue of the continuation of our service during a period where face to face work was restricted.

The very nature of advocacy is dependent on building relationships and communicating with the people we work with. COVID19 presented us with many challenges on this level and the team at Ceartas stretched their imaginations as they sought ways in which we could continue to connect with the people we work with and to build connections with our wider community.

Our advocacy work continued throughout lockdown, with representation being provided at Mental Health Tribunals, Adult Protection Case Conferences; PIP/ESA assessments as well as supporting people to access services across statutory and third sector partners.

In addition to the advocacy work, the team also kept in touch with past and present users of the service through regular welfare checks. This allowed individuals the opportunity to stay in touch and to be kept informed about what was going on. The team worked hard through these calls to signpost and help access any supports identified and worked in partnership with other agencies to ensure that people were able to access the support they required.

Ceartas also supported individuals to participate in a national consultation event looking at people's experiences of health and social care throughout the pandemic.

Our group work remained online until recently, with additional sessions put in place to ensure people had the opportunity to connect with ourselves and their peers. Through the Digital Champion programme, team members were also able to work alongside individuals and groups to assist them in getting online throughout the pandemic.

This year also saw Ceartas launch their own Advocacy App;

The CCCC (Ceartas: Connect, Create, Change) app is a dedicated web-app offering an instant referral process and secure chat facility, helping streamline contact to ourselves for those who would rather do so digitally. It offers a new route to accessing key information and resources, including details about our groups. The development of this app was supported by the Scottish Government via the Wellbeing Fund

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, we were able to recruit a Development Worker to take forward the Connect, Create, Change Project, which aims to tackle loneliness and isolation through connecting people, creating opportunities for them to make changes in their lives and in the community in which they live.

It has also been a year of change within the Ceartas team and we were sad to say a fond farewell to our former CEO, Gordon Thomson; Senior Advocacy Worker, Gemma Graham, Information Worker, Roy Hunter and Advocacy Link Worker, Linda McGavin, who have all moved onto new posts and new beginnings.

With continued optimism as we move into a new year, we have gradually opened up our group work to include face to face meetings; the advocacy team are now back out in the community and we continue to strive to ensure that we have systems and processes in place which will allow us to remain connected with people should any further restrictions be put in place.

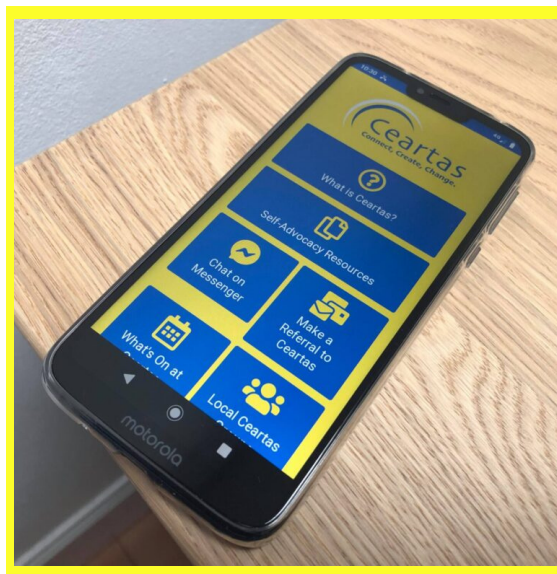
All the team at Ceartas remain committed to looking at ways in which they can continue to provide, develop and improve the service we provide and look forward to continuing to connect with you and create opportunities for change.

Special thanks go to East Dunbartonshire Council and our other funders for their continued financial support towards our work throughout the area.



World Book Night April 2021

In partnership with The Reading Agency, Ceartas participated in World Book Night 2021 and delivered books across East Dunbartonshire.

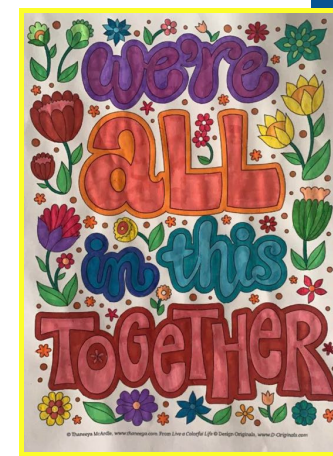


The Ceartas Web-app

Thanks to SCVO Wellbeing Fund, we developed a web based app to enhance digital accessibility. It is now even easier to get information, contact us or make a referral. The Connect Create Change App is available at <https://support.ceartas.org.uk/>

Wellbeing Packs

To help remain connected with those feeling isolated throughout the pandemic, Ceartas delivered 250 wellbeing packs throughout East Dunbartonshire.



Coop Local Community Fund

Thanks to the generous support of the Coop Local Community fund, we were able to provide a number of digital health and wellbeing activities for participants in our Digital Dementia Cafes, including Yoga, Comedy, Magician and even a day time disco!

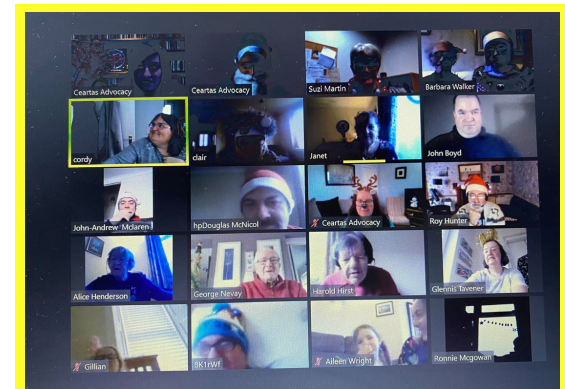


Ceartas Health Walks

In line with restrictions and with thanks to funding from Paths for All, we were able to increase the frequency of our Walk and Roll group and develop a number of new health walks across East Dunbartonshire

Group Work

The pandemic didn't stop us connecting; all of our groups moved online and we ran a number of digital activities, including the Christmas quiz below.



CREATING CONNECTIONS



Wellbeing Packs

What you said

“ Thank you all so much for the wellness pack that was just delivered I'm so pleased with it..... Thank you again such a good idea. ”

Thank you very much for my mum's Wellbeing Pack she is over the moon with it, and it's such a kind gesture J.

Dear Staff, I would like to thank you for the gift I received today. It means such a lot at this time to know that others care. Having had such a stressful time over the last few months and losing members of my family this has helped so much. Many many thanks for your support and kindness.

Just dropping a wee line to say thank you for my pack, read through it never thinking I'd have to use it but my other half got herself in a state to day, about her daughter who took her her life 5yrs ago. I also got myself into a bit of a state, then remembered the pack I got from Ceartas with phone numbers, then got in contact with Samaritans which helped me. I'm writing to let you know that the phone list was very helpful to myself and other half, so thank you so much for my pack. I hope other people don't need the numbers but when they do, they have them, so thank you once again.

Thank you for the pack delivered today it is much appreciated. I thought the book was a helpful item as I have read it before and now my son will too.

Thanks so much for the pack. I'll enjoy reading it and colouring it in

Just to say thank you for the pack I got on Tuesday, lots of little goodies to try and spoil myself with, I haven't coloured in for years but looking forward to giving it a try again, cup of tea with a good book and a lovely pen to write my shopping list for my son to pick up for me and so much more. I really appreciate not just the bag but the thought and physical effort that went into getting all together and dropping it off as well, so once again thank you all for you thinking of us at this time, it's really appreciated 😊

“ My friend was delighted with her Wellbeing Pack thank you. ”

I received your pack, thank you. I could have done with help from Ceartas back in 2014 when I was having troubles in the family. Such a good idea to run such a service.

Received today, fabulous, thank you.

My mother-in-law received the Wellbeing bag and sends her thanks, it was very much appreciated and brightened up her day :) big thank you from me too, so kind.

Thank you so much for my sisters bag of goodies, you really brightened her day.



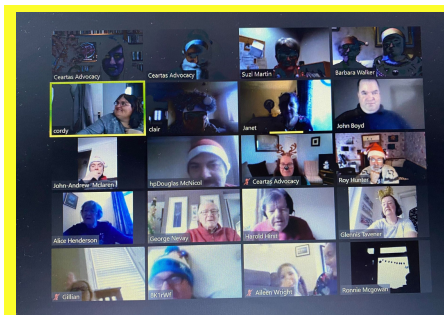
For more information contact us on
0141 775 0433 or info@ceartas.org.uk



250
Wellbeing
Packs
delivered



200+ online
sessions with
people who use
our services



51
newsubscribers
to mailing list



OPAL

2407
OPAL calls
(6.5 per day)



Time spent on
calls;
4 days
23 hours
21 minutes
3 seconds



Ceartas website

6871 different
visitors

19086 page
views



1185 followers

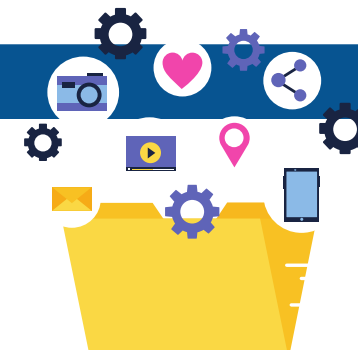


681 page likes



75 followers

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021
CREATIVE CONNECTIONS



How we did

From July 2020 to June 2021

Ceartas worked with

1778
people

**OVER
HALF**

the people we worked with
live with a mental health
condition or dementia.

“ People like me wouldn’t be
able to speak up if it wasn’t
for people like you. ”

“ Your support
was invaluable. ”

Prior to advocacy support

79%

of people reported high levels of stress
and anxiety about their situation.



After accessing advocacy

44%

reported feeling less
stressed and anxious

72%

of people felt their views
were not listened to



70%

of people felt advocacy helped their views to be heard

79%

felt they were not involved
in decision making



62%

felt more involved in decision making

69%

felt they didn't know, or understand their rights.



63%

felt advocacy helped them have a
greater understanding of their rights .

53%

felt they had very little control in their lives



62%

felt advocacy gave them more control in their lives.

“ Advocacy is so helpful
for our residents. ”

“ We need more people
like you, speaking up
for people. ”

Advocacy under Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance Standards

Summary

East Dunbartonshire Council were seeking Welfare Guardian Powers in relation to a young person who had been assessed as lacking capacity. By building a positive and trusting advocacy partnership, the independent advocate was able to establish A's views, connect them with appropriate legal representation and ensure that their wishes were heard

A is a young person with a learning disability who lives with their family. Social Work were of the opinion that a Guardianship Order was required to safeguard A.

Under the Adults With Incapacity Act, A had a right to independent advocacy. Over a period of 6 months, the advocate made weekly telephone calls to the advocacy partner in order to understand what was important to them.

The advocate was able to ascertain that residing with family was of paramount importance to A. Under the Guardianship Order, the Council were seeking powers to determine A's residence with a plan to eventually relocate A away from the family home.

Through the weekly telephone calls, the advocate worked to ensure that A understood the nature of the Guardianship Powers. The advocate was then able to explain the process of instructing a solicitor to challenge the Guardianship Order. Once the advocacy partner had decided that they did wish to instruct a solicitor, the advocate was able to connect them with a solicitor that deals with Adults with Incapacity Legislation.

Outcome

The advocate compiled a report which outlined A's views on the Guardianship Order and the powers they wished to challenge. A's overarching wish to remain with family was clearly outlined in the report. Such reports are provided to relevant others, including the Mental Health Officer and the solicitor.

The advocate remained connected with the advocacy partner and assisted with communication with the solicitor to ensure full understanding.

The solicitor challenged the Order in Court. Whilst the Order was granted, the right to determine residence was not included in the Order. Accordingly, the advocacy partner continues to live with family as per their wishes.

The advocate continues to work with the advocacy partner and continues to help them identify what is important to them. From this, the advocate has been able to connect them to suitable social activities. The advocate is also able to continue to assist with communication with Social Work to ensure that A understands the exercise of the Guardianship powers that are in place.

This case study illustrates the following Standards:

Standard 1a: Independent advocacy follows the agenda of the people supported regardless of the views, interests and agendas of others.

Standard 2a: Independent advocacy recognises and safeguards everyone's right to be heard.

Standard 2b: Independent advocacy reduces the barriers people face in having their voice heard because of communication, or capacity, or the political, social, economic and personal interests of others.

Standard 3b: Independent advocacy enables people to have more agency, greater control and influence.

This case study illustrates the following Indicators:

Indicator 1: Enable your advocacy partner or advocacy group to understand their rights and ensure that they are recognised by others.

Indicator 9: Act on the issues agreed by your advocacy partner or advocacy group at the appropriate pace.

Indicator 10: Enable your advocacy partner or advocacy group to outline, record and review their expectations.

Indicator 12: Support your advocacy partner or advocacy group to gain information, understand options and explore possible outcomes.

Indicator 17: Support your advocacy partners or advocacy group members to gain more control and influence in the decisions and circumstances that affect their lives.

Aileen Wright - Advocacy Worker

CASE STUDIES

ADVOCACY

Evidencing the impact of Independent Advocacy

Summary

X is 51 year old man referred by psychiatrist for advocacy support after an attempt to end his life. He was estranged from his partner and suspended from current employment.

The presenting issue was regarding X's employment and related to a grievance against his employers. X's partner had offered support with this and the grievance had gone through ACAS process and conciliation certificates had been issued. However by the time the referral was made to advocacy, X's partner had withdrawn support and there was less than one week to present the conciliation certificates to Tribunal.

I met with X in the office and he explained how Dyslexia affected his communication and we agreed that Advocacy would offer support to get solicitor appointment before ACAS deadline.

Appointment with solicitor was made and X was asked to bring proof of income, bank account details, conciliation certificates and other information with him. At the appointment the limited timeframe was acknowledged, and unfortunately X didn't have the early conciliation certificates or bank account details and didn't know the bank account numbers. The solicitor explained this information would be required to accompany application for legal aid. Throughout this appointment it appeared that X's partner had full control over all monies and bank accounts and that X was unaware of what belonged to him.

Because of the approaching deadline and the need to make application for legal aid, X phoned his partner, who in turn agreed to speak to the solicitor, but refused to divulge any information and explained they were separated although the solicitor explained application for legal aid was based on household income. The solicitor told X proof of income/ bank details would be needed by the following day in order to apply for legal aid in time and X agreed to do this. X did not hand the required documentation as agreed and the solicitor withdrew. X's partner subsequently offered to lend him the money to pay a solicitor on the understanding X could repay this when the case was settled. This would be linked to the sale of the house and divorce proceedings. I explained that the two issues were separate and that if compensation was awarded, it could take time to be paid. I emphasized the need to seek advice regarding his matrimonial affairs as property was involved.

Outcome

Four weeks later X made contact for advocacy support.

X was still employed and Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) was being paid sporadically into joint account with his partner. I offered support to Citizens Advice Bureau and advisors were knowledgeable and able to tell X from sort code what bank joint account was with. The adviser contacted X's employers and asked for confirmation of where SSP was being sent. The adviser was told SSP had been paid into an account other than X's and that the details of this account had been given by X's partner. Confirmation of this was sent to the adviser by email. It appears X's SSP has been paid into an account held only in X's partner's name or jointly but to which X has no access.

The importance of X opening up a separate and individual bank account was stressed and he agreed to do this immediately. In the meantime the CAB adviser requested that all further payments of SSP are suspended until X does this. X was also strongly advised to seek legal advice regarding his marital and property affairs as his partner has already started these proceedings.

With advocacy support X set up individual bank account. Application made to Welfare Fund. Solicitor appointment made to discuss marital situation/divorce proceedings and right to property. Contact made with employers regarding return to work status.

The issues involved in this case involved disability, discrimination, possible financial abuse/fraud matrimonial and employment rights. X's said reluctance to act quicker was due to his hope of a reconciliation. Meantime it appeared that X's partner was taking steps necessary to secure future. The issue of joint property ownership and X's partner's offer to 'buy him out' for 7k prompted the urgency of seeking legal advice. X's dyslexia – and recovering poor mental health – also disadvantaged him at all levels of correspondence.

Advocacy services supported X to identify services that would offer specialist legal support and also helped him communicate his views regarding his matrimonial situation, his finances and employment circumstances. Advocacy helped X to have greater control over his situation by supporting him access and helped him ensure his rights were protected and upheld through legal representation.

Susie Martin - Advocacy Worker

Independent Advocacy and Human Rights

FACTS

- What is the experience of the individual?
- Is the individual being heard and if not, do they require support to do so?
- What are the important facts to understand?

- Man in late fifties admitted to hospital with suspected ARBD (Alcohol related brain damage).
- He was unable to process or retain information and was made subject to a short-term detention order.
- After the detention lapsed there was concerns surrounding his capacity due to ARBD, therefore was being considered under AWI (Adults with incapacity)

ANALYSIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT STAKE

- What are the human rights or issues at stake?
- Can the right be restricted? What is the justification for restricting the right?
- Is the restriction on the right 'proportionate'?

- The mans right to liberty is at stake, as well as, his right to privacy. These rights can be restricted.
- The justification for the restrictions are due to the concerns surrounding his capacity and lack of insight.
- The man prevaricated as to whether or not he would continue drinking when discharged from hospital, in the end he decided against this.
- Health and social care services questioned this and felt that he lacked insight into the severity of matters.

IDENTIFICATION OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

- What changes are necessary?
- Who has responsibilities for helping to make the necessary changes?

- Advocacy supported the man to express his views at an Adults With Incapacity case conference.
- Advocacy also assisted him to access legal representation, in order to request an independent capacity assessment.
- The solicitor contacted the Mental Health Tribunal Scotland to challenge him being kept in hospital unlawfully.

REVIEW ACTIONS

- Have the actions taken been recorded and reviewed and has the individual affected been involved?

- Prior to the tribunal taking place, the mans capacity was assessed as having improved, therefore was progressed to being discharged.
- With the new updated records, all matters concerning AWI were lapsed.
- With advocacy support the man was fully involved in the process and his views taken into account at each stage.

Alex Doherty - Advocacy Worker

Dementia Case Study

The lockdown was a very challenging time as the De Cafés were no longer allowed to meet face to face. Initially we invested a lot of time supporting our members with welfare calls. We had the time to listen and identify their individual needs, worries and concerns. Quickly sign posting the correct information and advice in order to keep them safe and informed.

We were quick off the mark to transition onto online meetings via Zoom as we were familiar communicating this way with The Deep Network. The Deep Network were a great support to us as they organised regular meetings with facilitators throughout the UK. A mix of people who had a diagnosis of dementia and paid workers. This provided a platform for us to discuss the difficulties we were all experiencing supporting our members and also time to explore how we were feeling and coping with this new challenge. A regular safe space to check in with each other and share ideas and information.

We invited members we had met through Deep Zooms, living with a diagnosis of dementia on to our De Café Zoom meetings to inspire and encourage our members. People with a diagnosis were able to talk about their achievements/projects they are involved in whilst being transparent about their difficulties. This was a very powerful form of peer to peer support. This would not have been possible face to face as we had people from Wales, England, Ireland and Fife.

Acknowledging all members were not connecting via Zoom we transferred discussions from Zoom into the De Café newsletter, which we implemented during Covid. For the De Cafes, the most productive achievement over Covid has been the stronger connections we have made with The Deep Network which we hope will continue and grow.

Michelle Candlish - Dementia Link Worker



“My doctor suggested I grant Power of Attorney after I had a stroke. I did not know anything about it really, but my OPAL Adviser talked me through my options, and helped me to come up with a plan. They also helped me find a stroke support group close to me”

William - Bishopbriggs

“I was finding it really hard to arrange services for my elderly mother who lives in East Dunbartonshire, because I live and work in London. OPAL helped me by putting me in contact with local services, helping me with phone calls, they knew the right things to say, and I could pick up their emails in the evening after work.”

Susan – London

“The Practice Nurse suggested I call OPAL because I was trying to become more active and lose some weight. The OPAL Adviser gave me a list of exercise options to choose from, and now I have managed to find a group of regular weight loss buddies!”

John – Kirkintilloch

CASE STUDIES: OPAL

CEARTAS STAFF

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PARTNERS



WHO WE ARE

*Ceartas is the provider of
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