

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2022-23



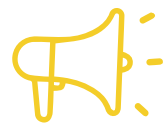
### A message from our Chair

**“At Ceartas we know that the services we provide can make a significant difference to those in our community who seek our assistance”**

### Breaking Down Barriers

“Our innovative approach and routes into advocacy model ensures that the organisation continues to strive to reduce barriers to independent advocacy for members of our community.  
*Chief Officer's Report.*”

#### OUR SERVICES



Independent Advocacy



Outreach



Peer Support



Information Services

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



Anne McNair

This last year has been a difficult year for so many people who have struggled to cope. At Ceartas we know that the services we provide can make a significant difference to those in our community who seek our assistance and we hope in this annual report to give an idea of some the work we have been involved in.

Support services work hard to provide help. My thanks go to all in the Ceartas staff team for what they have achieved in response to the challenges and for their work in delivering the excellent range of advocacy services which Ceartas provides within East Dunbartonshire. We have experienced some staff changes over the last year and I would like to extend a warm welcome to those who have recently joined us and are new to our team.

Over the last year too we have been fortunate in being able to increase the number of our Trustee/Directors on the Ceartas Board. My thanks go to the colleagues who have taken on this responsibility and for their commitment in ensuring that Ceartas continues to provide quality advocacy services.

Our work does not exist in isolation within East Dunbartonshire and I would like to extend my gratitude to our partner organisations who have helped us in sharing advice, assistance and information in a way which strengthens us all in the support we are able to offer across our communities.

Funding pressures do continue to cause some concern and to present challenges and I would lastly therefore like to thank those organisations which have provided us with the funding which has enabled us to help people within our community. With their continued support, Ceartas will strive to develop ways in which we can provide the best possible advocacy support in East Dunbartonshire.

**Anne McNair**  
**Chair**  
**Ceartas Board**  
**November 2023**

# CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT



**Sharon Bairden**

Producing our annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on all that has happened within the last 12 months and this year has seen a period of continued changes and growth within the organisation.

Some of the team have moved onto pastures new and we would like to thank Susie, Michelle, Eleanor, Kenny and Aileen for all that they contributed to Ceartas and the difference they made to the people we work with. In this year we have also welcomed Ryan as our new Information Development Worker and Kacey who previously completed her student Social Work placement with us and has returned as an Advocacy Worker. The advocacy team are also joined by Ross and our groups have a new support worker with Marged. We are all looking forward to working with you over the coming year.

Our Trustees have also said goodbye to David Wiseman, Chair as he retired last year and on behalf of the team and the board I would like to thank him for his valuable contribution to the organisation over the years.

We have welcomed new Trustees, Richard, Luisa, Neil and Anne to the Board and already their input and guidance has been invaluable.

Throughout 2022-23 Ceartas has continued to work diligently toward achieving its objectives and we have demonstrated our commitment to a flexible service to meet the needs of individuals who use the service. Our innovative approach and routes into advocacy model ensures that the organisation continues to strive to reduce barriers to independent advocacy for members of our community. Our continued commitment to partnership working increases the opportunities for individuals to link into and access other community based supports and promotes community inclusion and involvement.

## **Future Plans**

In the coming year Ceartas will continue to explore ways in which we can enhance good practice, recognizing the current and future challenges in service delivery and we will strive to ensure that the organisation is best placed to assist more people to access independent advocacy and have their voice heard in an ever changing landscape of post pandemic changes and economic crisis.

We are grateful for the continued support of funders – East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC), Life Changes Trust, National Lottery Community Fund, Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, as well as a variety of Trust Funds and individual donors who have enabled the organisation to continue supporting individuals across East Dunbartonshire.

And of course, a huge thanks to all of our staff, trustees and volunteers for their commitment and passion for the work that we do and who strive, every day, to ensure that we are making a difference.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work that we do.

**Sharon Bairden**

**Chief Officer**

**Ceartas**

**November 2023**

# The Year in Review



## Advocacy Highlights

In 2022/23 we worked alongside the Allander Resource Centre to deliver collective advocacy to adults with learning disabilities as they transitioned from Kelvinbank to their new venue in Bearsden. That move is now complete and Ceartas continue to work collectively with the "Have Your Say" Group in Allander gathering their views on the service, local and national issues that may impact them.

We have also been working collectively with service users at the Milan Day Care Services to gather their views on changes to their service over the coming months.



Thank you so much for all your help, advice, care, support and encouragement! I genuinely appreciate it and to be honest, I wouldn't have gotten this far without you and Ceartas.



"Independent advocacy is more than just 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 only access independent advocacy 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. People in need of advocacy should be provided with a range of advocacy models to ensure their needs are optimally supported."

# The Year in Review

# Review

## Creating Connections Highlights

A Bite and A Blether provides peer support and a chance to catch up, have a wee bite to eat and a blether, across East Dunbartonshire. The groups aim to support people to connect with their peers, community supports and to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

The group has supported participants to access emotional support services, local cultural and leisure services as well as independent advocacy, income maximization and carers support.

Over the year, A Bite and A Blether has welcomed over 700 people across our sessions in East Dunbartonshire



“It is great to meet others and have a chat and a laugh which is very important for my mental health.”

“Without these resources so many people would be struggling for company, support and maybe even a hot lunch”

“To think I came in with nothing and am leaving with a smile and feeling wonderful”



# The Year in Review

# Review

## Living Life to the Full – Wellbeing Event

in September we brought together over 30 local and national organisations to host a wellbeing event aimed at older people and people living with dementia in East Dunbartonshire. This was an opportunity for networking, promotion and raising awareness of services and supports available. Short presentations, stalls, music and activities proved to be both informative and enjoyable for all who attended.



“

“That was a great afternoon. It was good to hear from different sources of information out there and with the breaks to have one to one talks. It was all very informative”

“A heartfelt thanks to YOU and all your wonderful colleagues for such a remarkable event you organised yesterday! It made us realise yet again how much our lives have been enhanced and enlivened by Ceartas.”

”

# Advocacy in Action

July 2022 – June 2023

Over 1000 people have accessed one to one independent advocacy support across East Dunbartonshire

Over 1000 active advocacy cases.

Over 50% supported for issues relating to Mental Health Act.

Over 50% of those accessing advocacy did so under their legal right to independent advocacy under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. This empowers individuals to fully participate in their Mental health Tribunal hearings and planning for their future care and support.

over 30% supported for other legislative work

Over 30% of casework involved other legislation, including Adults With Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000; Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and parents involved in Child Protection Proceedings

Housing; access to services; complaints

Other areas of advocacy work has included housing related issues, access to services and supports and complaint processes

10 Collective Advocacy meetings

We facilitated 10 Collective Advocacy meetings with service users at Kelvinbank Resource Centre as they prepared to move to the Allander Centre

Ceartas continue to work with the collective group at Allander Resource Centre



# ADVOCACY

## CASE STUDY

Brian\* was referred to advocacy service via our peer support groups.

Brian, who lives with poor mental health, received a utilities bill and believed it to be incorrect. He had tried unsuccessfully and was at risk of falling into debt and having utilities cut off.

Brian's advocacy worker supported him to communicate with the utilities company and helped establish the amount of debt the company claimed that he owed.

Advocacy supported Brian to contact EDCAB, local Councillor and MSP.

In partnership with the above, advocacy supported Brian to submit a formal complaint. This did not resolve the issue and EDCAB escalated this complaint to the Ombudsman.

The Ombudsman upheld the complaint and a resolution agreed.

### **Advocacy Outcomes:**

**Rights:** the right to complain and have complaints escalated to the Ombudsman

**Choice & Control:** advocacy supported Brian to have the power to choose his next actions and have control over decisions. .

**Participation:** through providing ongoing assistance with communications with services, advocacy ensured that Brian was able to participate throughout.

*\*name changed.*

# CASE STUDY:

## Non-instructed Advocacy



Non-instructed advocacy happens when there are issues with a person's capacity perhaps due to dementia, or limited communication due to a physical disability or a learning disability. In such situations a non-instructed advocate seeks to uphold their advocacy partner's rights and ensure that decisions are taken with full consideration of their unique preferences, rights and perspectives. SIAA



Fiona\* was living at home with a care package and family support from her family. She had been assessed as lacking capacity. Her care needs had increased and there were increasing concerns around her safety remaining at home. She was assessed as requiring 24 hour care. The family wanted Fiona to move in with them to be cared for.

The advocacy worker met with Fiona and her family. Fiona was unable to express any views around her future care needs or where/how she wished to be cared for.

Using a non-instructed advocacy approach, the advocacy worker discussed the recommendations, Fiona's care needs and her past wishes with family, as relevant others under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

Fiona was present through all discussions between the advocacy worker and family and appeared to be comfortable and content and appeared happy for the family to speak to the advocacy worker about her.

The advocacy worker then prepared a non-instructed advocacy report based on the principles of the legislation:

\*name changed

# **CASE STUDY:**

## **Non-instructed Advocacy**

### **Current & past wishes:**

The advocacy worker was unable to ascertain Fiona's current wishes but was able to discuss with family what her past wishes were, along with previous family caring responsibilities which indicated that caring for family members at home was in line with their family ethos.

In the past Fiona has also asked her family for support with her finances and other affairs.

### **Benefit to the adult:**

Family were able to explain that moving to a family setting was the best option for Fiona and that this is what she would have wanted. Fiona would have company from family members she was familiar with and who were able to communicate with her. Family also explained that Fiona had previously expressed a dislike of hospital environments where she felt lonely and isolated and they felt she would have a similar experience in a care home setting as she would struggle to engage or communicate with other residents.

The family also explained that the layout of the family home was such that Fiona would always be able to be a part of the family.

### **Characteristics and skills being retained or enhanced by the intervention?**

Family explained that Fiona would be a part of a familiar family unit and routine which would support her to retain her characteristics and skills.

### **Re intervention being the minimum necessary in their life?**

Social Work assessment concluded that the risks to Fiona remaining in her own home could not be mitigated and 24 hour care was required. The family believed that a move into the family home would meet this required intervention and would be preferable than a move into a care home setting.

A move into the family home would also mean that Fiona's right to a family and private life would be respected.

### **Outcome:**

The advocacy worker's report formed part of the decision to agree and plan a move for Fiona into the family home. Despite being unable to offer a current view from Fiona, advocacy was able to gain insight into past wishes which influenced the decision made.

# STAFF TEAM



Alex Doherty



Jacqueline Noble



## OUR ADVOCACY WORKERS



Ross Fleming



Kacey Carmody



James Christie

# STAFF TEAM



## PROJECT WORKERS



Lynne Donoghue

CCC Coordinator



Ryan Gorman

Information  
Development Worker



Marged Ioan

Group Support Worker



Ronnie Whiteside

OPAL Coordinator



## Management Team



Muleya Mundemba

Advocacy Lead



Sharon Bairden

Chief Officer




Patricia Ovens

Business Support Lead

# MAGIC MOMENTS



We gather feedback from our service users for monitoring and evaluation purposes. We also do this to ensure that our support is tailored to, and led by, everyone that accesses our services.



“You’re the only one that listened to me and had my back”. Advocacy Partner

“Thank you for helping me communicate my views and wishes to Social Work – using Talking mat and Conversation support book”  
Advocacy Partner

“Thanks for your involvement and for your excellent report. One of the best advocacy reports I have ever received” Social Worker

“you are the only person outside the family who has actually listened to her, she thinks you are the best thing since sliced bread and we can't thank you enough, you are helping her to do this for herself now instead of the family taking things on for her” Advocacy Partner Family Member

“Thank you so much for all your advice & support earlier & all the information you’ve sent me as it’s extremely helpful.

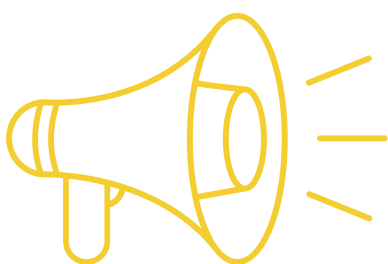
The last few weeks have been quite overwhelming but now I realise I can access support in order to do the right thing

You’ve really put my mind at ease that we’re not alone.” De Cafe Participant



# FEEDBACK & EVALUATION

We gather feedback from our service users for monitoring and evaluation purposes. We also do this to ensure that our support is tailored to, and led by, everyone that accesses our services. Here are some examples of feedback we've collected in 2023:



I didn't know where I stood. Thought my human rights were taken away. You helped me realise that I actually had a voice. Instead of feeling part of the problem, I felt part of the solution.

– **Advocacy partner.**

“Just being there and being moral support”.

“You guys have been completely life changing”.

Always felt in the driver seat & knew what was happening.

What can I say? I couldn't have done things without you. Phoning about landlord. If not for her I probably wouldn't be here, who knows.

– **Advocacy partner.**

# FEEDBACK & EVALUATION



**How easy was it to get in touch with our service?**

**Very easy. I have found communication to be easily accessible.**



**Did your advocacy worker listen to you?**

**Definitely- every word. A lot of respect and understanding.**



**Would you recommend Ceartas to others?**

**I would shout from the rooftops "Go there, go there!".**



# **PARTNERSHIP WORK**

## **OPAL: East Dunbartonshire Information Line**



OPAL is a free information service for vulnerable adults living in East Dunbartonshire and acts as an alternative route to Ceartas and other local partners.



*conversations  
between OPAL  
Advisers and  
callers*



*calls per  
week*



*days*



*hours*



*minutes*



*seconds*

*time spent on calls*

# **PARTNERSHIP WORK**

## **OPAL: East Dunbartonshire Information Line**



### **OPAL in Action**

#### **The situation:**

A family member called OPAL due to concerns about the support that they receive. They had a number of complaints but were unsure how to raise their concerns.

#### **OPAL suggests:**

Chatting directly with the **care providing service**, who would be very keen to hear of the concerns.

Another key contact would also be the **social worker** who completed the needs assessment, which determined the amount of support that should be provided.

They may also want to request an updated assessment.

Other key contacts;

**Ceartas** – independent advocacy for the family member to ensure they are kept central to everything and to ensure their rights are upheld.

**Carers Link** – for the family as they will be eligible for carers based support and possibly carers advocacy.

**Take Control** – for information and support around self-directed support.

# ★ OPAL VOLUNTEERS ★

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## **Michael reflecting on his time supporting OPAL**

*“My most challenging phone conversations have been with people that I find hard to understand, usually because of a poor connection with the telephone line.*

*I try to restructure my questions; if I can't understand the full address or name of the street, I do small things that helps me change my approach. I ask the person the number of their house address, then ask for their postcode, which makes it a little bit easier for myself and the caller.*

*The majority of people are very understanding when they know I've had trouble understanding them. The main thing I've learned that before, I used to hate asking people to repeat themselves, but now I have the confidence to do so as it's perfectly okay to ask people to repeat themselves.”*

## **John reflecting on his time supporting OPAL**

*“Very often we receive requests from family members who live out with East Dunbartonshire, on behalf of their parents who live locally.*

*I personally have spoken with a person living in London, and a person from Birmingham. The former was straight forward, a list of local tradesman for her father-in-law, and the latter a bit more challenging, where I did some research and found local resources for Punjabi speakers, as the caller's mother was feeling very isolated as this was the only language she spoke, and the caller was living far away.*

*Often when a client phones for something simple, such as the delivery of a prescription, we get the chance to discuss the circumstances which often leads to other, underlying issues such as loneliness, a mental health condition or a financial crisis. We build a rapport with the client, so they trust us when we point them in the right direction for assistance.*

*In my role at OPAL, I often do outreach and attend group's which are run by OPAL partners, such as De Cafés and A Bite & A Blether. I chat to the people that are there and can often signpost them to further support and other groups.*

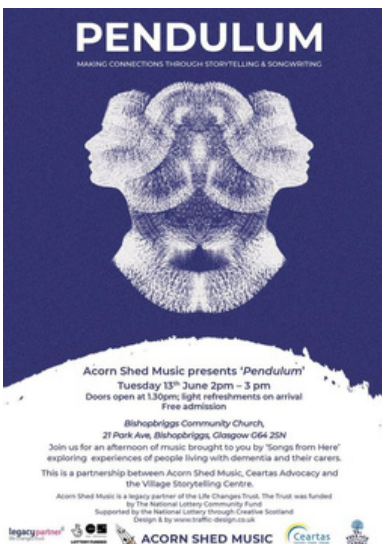
*Another example is when I found myself at a Carers event being run by a local partner. By chance, I was sitting next to a couple and the husband had recently been diagnosed with early onset dementia. It sounded like there was a role for advocacy, so I was able to give them the contact details for Ceartas. I seen the couple again and they mentioned they were given lots of useful information including what support each of them are eligible for, and where they can go for further information. They both now regularly attend De Café.”*

# PARTNERSHIP WORK

## Songs From Here



‘Songs from Here’ is a partnership between Ceartas, Acorn Shed Music and The Village Storytelling Centre and it provides an opportunity for people with dementia and their carers to come together to learn why our stories are important and look at creative ways of telling them. It achieved this through spending time together and sharing experiences in a safe and supportive environment and then transforming those stories into songs. In June, the group celebrated their work with a live music event to launch their CD, Pendulum.



# The Year Ahead



The team at Ceartas are looking forward to an exciting year ahead as we continue to develop and enhance the services we deliver.

In the coming year Ceartas will continue to explore ways in which we can enhance good practice, recognizing the current and future challenges in service delivery and we will strive to ensure that the organisation is best placed to assist more people to access independent advocacy and have their voice heard in an ever changing landscape.

Building new, and enhancing existing partnerships, across East Dunbartonshire

- Link with ADRS to increase access to advocacy alongside the implementation of the MAT Standards
- Collaborate with EDLCT on a project to encourage access to libraries, community hubs and the services they provide.
- Working in partnership with Community Mental Health Team to raise awareness and uptake of Advance Statements

Increasing the reach and accessibility of the service

- Develop additional collective advocacy opportunities
- Reestablish outreach provision
- Build on our peer support activities
- Commitment to the provision of accessible information
- Develop a range of involvement opportunities across the organisation
- Promotion

Improve effectiveness and best practice

- Build upon our existing evaluation programme to demonstrate the outcomes achieved through service delivery in line with SIAA outcomes framework
- Review our current training and development programme for staff and trustees, ensuring we are consistently delivering the highest quality service
- Develop and promote volunteering opportunities across the organisation

# SOCIAL MEDIA



Ceartas Advocacy | Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/ceartasadvocacy](http://www.facebook.com/ceartasadvocacy)



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Ceartas Advocacy | Website  
[www.ceartas.org.uk](http://www.ceartas.org.uk)

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# WITH THANKS TO





**Thank you to our funders, donors, trustees, staff, volunteers and most importantly to the people who have used our service – we couldn't do it without you!**

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