

Dundee Independent Advocacy Support

November 2013

Chairperson's Report

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As indicated in our AGM invitation letter, it has been another year of change and progress at Dundee Independent Advocacy Support (DIAS).

I'd merely like to record my grateful thanks, equally, to the entire DIAS staff, ably led by Shona, to our extended volunteer network, and to my board colleagues, also volunteers, for their hard work, focus and dedication in support of DIAS in 2013.

Your collective energy and commitment over the past year has been, and will continue to be, vital to ensuring DIAS can go on making a positive difference to the quality of life, care and choices available to those vulnerable people in our communities DIAS is here to support.

I should also like to give thanks to our colleagues at Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside for their continued support and confidence in DIAS over the past year. I look forward to continuing our partnership into 2014 and beyond.

Graeme Wallace, CHAIR of DIAS

Manager's Report

Our website is now live at www.diasdundee.org which has taken a collective effort from the DIAS Team and volunteers from the Board to work with the successful tenderer in producing what we hope is a modern, dynamic and welcoming door to our service provision. We also felt that our logo required 'refreshing' too with the help of a Graphic Design artist based at the Wellgate Centre who offers her services free of charge to community groups. This involved many drafts and reworking of the original design but one we felt we had to get right before adopting the final design.

With our client management system bearing fruit (Merlin), 2012 to 2013 has been the busiest year yet with a record **200** new client referrals across our Mental Health, Adult Service (citizen/crisis) and Older People projects. These figures do not include our work within the Castlebeck care units (now called Danshell Health) as resident figures in the earlier part of the year were fairly static.

We are also delighted about achieving an excellence rating in the reassessment phase of the Volunteer Friendly Award submitted by our two Volunteer Coordinators in February 2013, an award which we are immensely proud of.

Of course none of this would have been possible without the stoic enthusiasm shown by staff and volunteers to ensure that our clients have their wishes and views listened too in matters that affect their wellbeing and daily lives.

NEW Referrals (2012 – 2013)

Citizen Advocacy – 60
Mental Health – 140
Older People - 74
C/beck Residents – 42
DIAL-OP CALLS - 85

Mental Health Service

"Thank you for listening and helping. You're the only one who's listened to me" –

MH Advocacy Partner

"I feel reassured you are on the case" –

Mental Health Officer

Since the last AGM, there has been a significant increase in new referrals with most of the referrals coming from statutory agencies, Community Teams, Welfare Rights workers and Voluntary Sector organisations such as Positive Steps. The workload of both Mental Health Advocates remains at capacity with a lot of intense 1-1 input required with some advocacy partners – particularly those who are community-based. A large percentage of our workload is supporting individuals who are subject to the Mental Health & Care Treatment (Scot) Act 2003 supporting them at Mental Health Tribunals, pre and post support as well as Case Conferences.

We continue to provide fortnightly collective advocacy group sessions in all 3 wards at the Carseview Centre. During July 2012, we supported patients in the wards to express their views to the Mental Welfare Commissioners during their announced visit. We supported a client through a difficult and complex forensic Guardianship hearing in the autumn and have worked with individuals from Minority Ethnic Groups and Asylum Seekers which has involved translation services. Ensuring that all our advocacy partners, regardless of their mental ill health condition are having their voices heard in their own care and treatment pathways.

Over 65's Service

Of the 74 new referrals Brian Rapley has worked with during this period, a large percentage of his work is ensuring Older People are heard in respect of accommodation issues, which includes people living in a care home setting who want to return home or be given the opportunity to do so. Priority is also given to older people who experience difficulty in communicating with others. Communication in itself is difficult to assess as because in most respects, all the people supported by advocates have difficulty in communicating which could be anything from a lack of communication skills, perhaps as a result of dementia, or because the person does not have the confidence or knowledge of formal procedures.

Our Older Person's Collective Advocacy service has worked in two care homes over this period, namely Moyness and St. Columba's which finished in August 2012 and secured further agreement to work in Riverside View Nursing Home and the Pitkerro Intermediate Care Unit. This service provides an opportunity for the residents to have a chance to discuss or question any aspect of their well-being or care with someone who is not related to them or related to the care home.

Castlebeck/Danshell Health

Since the beginning of the contract in January 2012, all the Independent Advocacy workers now enjoy beneficial relationships with patients and residents in the Castlebeck Care Homes and by using the principles of empowerment and resolution are already proving that Independent Advocacy can benefit all concerned.

The use of 'Talking Mats' is proving its worth over and over again, not just with the individuals who all enjoy using this tool and working with the IAs on this, but statutory agencies such as Social Work, Police and Medical Teams are duly noting the value of allowing individuals to voice their views on their care and treatment but equally for their views to be acted upon. As photocopies are provided to the clients, they refer to it frequently, some even pin the copy up in their rooms. Castlebeck sadly went into administration in the early part of the year which was subsequently bought by Danshell Health with the registration process completed by September 2013.

"I know you will help me with this. You are a very determined person and someone I can trust" –

Over 65 Advocacy Partner

"It is great to talk to someone who is so unbiased. I feel much better" –

Advocacy Partner

"I really appreciate having the support from you and DIAS. You have no idea how much of a difference it has made for me" –

Advocacy Partner

Citizen, Crisis and Peer Advocacy

The Induction training for new citizen advocate volunteers was completed in early December with an additional recruitment event planned for spring 2013. Following the 12 hour training over 4 weeks, we complete PVG paperwork and once received, discuss potential advocacy partners and arrange 'matching' visits with all concerned. This is a detailed process to complete from beginning to successful matching stage and involves many hours of preparation and research, to offer our volunteers and those we support a worthwhile experience. We endeavor to include all our volunteers on any planned training either offered by ourselves or by external partners. One such opportunity was provided by Independent Advocacy Perth and Kinross in December about 'Endings' for the volunteers to enable them to think about why they may end an advocacy partnership, how they and their partner may feel and offered techniques in how to deal with these situations. Evaluation from the session was positive. After the training a social forum was held to allow the volunteers to meet Veronica, some for the first time, and to receive peer support. A buffet was provided. We aim to hold regular 'Social Forums' for all DIAS volunteers to come along, share stories, support each other and where we can, offer relevant small bite training.



*Citizen Advocacy Volunteer Training –
November 2012*

DIAL-OP

The helpline is operating well, and calls continue to grow steadily, thanks to the many promotional opportunities open to Leanne and the DIAL-OP Volunteers. Many of the calls received are around subjects such as benefits, befriending activities, transport and energy costs. We are now seeing referrals being made to DIAS and CANFICs as a direct result of individuals contacting the DIAL-OP service that require further assistance.

All the volunteers enjoyed PITMAN Helpline training in July 2012 along with database and independent advocacy training ensuring that they are ready and able to deal with any information request.

Regular Volunteer Forums are held where guest speakers such as Community Cars and a representative from the First Contact Team, Social Work share their organizational role and vice versa.

Of course the biggest event was the Lord Provost Civic Reception held after the national Older Persons' Week in October at the Caird Hall which generated 20 calls on the back of the publicity in the local press.

August 2013 will see the first anniversary of DIAL-OP, a good opportunity to evaluate the service from all perspectives, results of which will feed into the Reshaping Care Change Fund plans for the future of DIAL-OP..



***"Volunteers all ears
for Older People" –
headline in Dundee
Courier, 21/3/2013***

Staff Changes

With our farewell to Aileen Farquharson in August 2012 a distant memory, we welcomed Veronica Harris to our team who is now well able to support our ever increasing number of Citizen, Crisis and Peer Advocates.

We welcomed Lesley Russell to DIAS in May 2013, initially as our Sessional Mental Health Advocate due to the demands on our service but who is now our Older Person's Collective Advocacy worker on a part-time basis.

Mike Mochan, our Admin Officer of many years took the decision to retire from DIAS in September 2013 where he was able to enjoy an extended stay in Australia. We wish him a healthy and happy retirement.

Morag Owen joined us to take on the core role of being our Admin Officer from September 2013 who has stated "really enjoying getting to know everyone at DIAS and learning more about my role".



Lesley Russell



Morag Owen

A Volunteer's Perspective

"I have been a volunteer with DIAS since 2003 and been supporting my two current partners since 2007. Both ladies live in supported tenancies with different organisations and I visit them fairly regularly at their homes. They both have very different needs and personalities and I know they both have great support from staff in their respective environments. I think it helps them to talk through any issues which may be causing them concern or worry, with someone who is not associated with home/work. I feel a sense of achievement when things have gone well for my partners and I have been able to be involved in this process. I am also very much aware that I am the only person in their lives who isn't connected to home/work/professional organisations and I think it is important for them to have someone visit who is not connected to what is happening on a day to day basis."

Lorraine M.

"I would like to help people get what they want from life..... the experience would help me grow as a person".
Citizen Advocate



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