
Dochas Carers Centre

Summary

To inform the partnership of the different services the Dochas Centre provides across MAKI.

To inform the meeting of the structure of our organisation across MAKI

To be aware of the obligations of the Carer's Act

To raise the profile of the organisation

To enable us to discuss the future developments of the service

1. Purpose

I would like to tell the group about the work we do as many people do not understand what a Carers Centre does, not even carers themselves. They do not recognise themselves as carers, they are someone's wife, husband, daughter, son, friend or neighbour. They often struggle with caring till the situation reaches crisis point. If carers are referred to the centre we are in a better place to support them and look after them, to enable them to continue with their caring role.

Caring is something that is likely to happen to most of us

2. Recommendations

I would recommend that with the introduction of the Carers Act in 2018 that statutory services recognise how we can assist to support carers. It will be the responsibility of the statutory services to comply with the Act but investment needs to be in place to enable the Carers centre to continue to develop and support unpaid carers and in turn take the pressure off them by averting carer breakdown and crisis. We get most of our referrals from statutory services NHS and Local Authority and we will struggle to meet the demand without the investment from our local authority.

3. Background

The founders of the centre were John and Catherine Paterson, John had MND and Guillain Barre Syndrome, he died in 1998. John was a psychiatric nurse and an artist, John wanted his art work to help others with a similar conditions, what he wanted to give them was HOPE and that is what Dochas means. Catherine worked tirelessly to raise funds to build the centre and when it opened it was debt free.

The centre was opened officially in April 2007 by HRH Princess Royal.

I was the first paid employee in 2008 and was brought in to develop the service literally from scratch.

We now have an admin worker, workers in, Lochgilphead, Tarbert, Kintyre and Islay, a carer's assessment worker, a befriending co-ordinator and a lot of valuable volunteers.

4. Detail

Our primary focus is to support unpaid carers throughout their caring journey by providing, information, support and guidance through the maze of services that can support them and help the person they care for. As the cared - for person's needs increase, so too do so does the responsibilities of the unpaid carer. This is when we work closely with them and any statutory agencies to provide the best support and outcome possible for carer and the cared for.

We have paid staff across Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands offering support to unpaid carers.

We hold and organise support groups in all the above areas to allow carers to access information, get peer support from other carers and emotional and practical support for our staff.

We have a counselling service, which 8 trained volunteer counsellors, for people and their families who are experiencing long term/terminal illness or bereavement.

Due to increasing demand we have developed a Circle of Friends service (Befriending service with 18 volunteers) in Mid Argyll to tackle the problem with isolation and loneliness for older people and people with Dementia. We also have a similar project on Islay with 6 volunteers although their service bring people together once a month for afternoon tea and company. It is called

'Cairdeas' which means Friendship, we have 45+ attend these events.

Lastly we offer Playlist for life, (5 volunteers), is a service for those living with Dementia. This is a practical service whereby a volunteer works with a family to identify a playlist of meaningful music for the person with dementia, which is loaded onto an ipod/headphones and used as a tool to offer comfort to the person at times during the day when they may become distressed.

5. Conclusions

The Dochas Centre will continue to operate mainly on the goodwill and dedication of the workers and volunteers, who give so much, and will continue to give value for money to our communities but we need to be valued and have the investment to enable us to carry out the obligations of the Carers Act.

We plan to develop our services further and have plans for an extension to our centre and to develop a respite service for carers.

6.0 SOA Outcomes

Which outcomes of the SOA does this report relate to?

Outcome 5. People live active, healthier and independent lives.

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