

# Dorset Advocacy

## Annual Report 2016

### Letter from Mike Pochin, CEO

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Welcome to Dorset Advocacy's Review of 2016. The past year has been one of rapid change and development for our organisation, and I should like to thank our volunteers and staff team for rising to ever-greater challenges. I should also like to thank the 4000 people who trusted us to support and speak up for them last year; it is a privilege to work with the people of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole, and we will continue to strive to ensure that we are in touch with their needs, and merit their support.

Our Chief Executive, Nicki Mann, retired in May, and I should like to pay tribute to her for leading Dorset Advocacy to so many achievements during her 14 years with us. She led with integrity and compassion, and will be much missed. It is a great honour to have been chosen as her successor by the Trustees, following an open recruitment exercise.



I believe that Dorset Advocacy can make an even greater difference in people's lives. Alongside our many established advocacy projects, I want to see us developing new services that help older and disabled people to take fuller control of their lives. For this to happen, we will need to listen even more carefully to the hopes and concerns of these groups. Our new Personal Assistant Register is a first step in this direction; putting people with care and support needs in touch with suitably qualified personal assistants who can help them to get the most out of life.

I do hope you will enjoy reading the review; do please email me at [mike@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:mike@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk) with your thoughts and comments.

## Letter from Graham Willetts, the Chair of Trustees

I was honoured to be re-elected as chair in October 2015 and pay tribute to my Board colleagues for their continuing support and hard work. At our AGM this year we are rightly celebrating our volunteer work-force so it is fitting to recognise the important contribution made by trustees, who are themselves volunteers, to the work of Dorset Advocacy.

Last year's report noted our anxious wait for the outcome of a number of important tenders. These contracts were all retained, as announced at the 2015 AGM. We also finished a plan to help us strengthen our volunteer team. Most notably during the year we consolidated the relationship between the Board and the staff leadership team at a major development workshop. This was a fabulous opportunity for us to build relationships within the organisation and to plan for our future development. This work reflects our determination to be a forward-thinking and innovative organisation; a quality that has enabled us to help thousands of people in Dorset every year.

The year ended with the retirement of Nicki Mann after many years of loyal and distinguished service, latterly as our Chief Executive. I believe the most



important of her legacies was in laying the foundations for the new Leadership Team.

This provided much needed stability as the Board moved swiftly to appoint a permanent replacement for Nicki. The selection process involved the Trustee Board, a number of staff and volunteers, and an independent interviewer who was unfamiliar with any of the candidates. There was considerable interest in the vacancy. We were commended by the independent panel member on the robustness of the process, which resulted in the appointment of Mike Pochin. I am convinced we have the right Chief Executive and a talented team to take us forward.

The big ambition for the year ahead is to develop Social Enterprise to reach more beneficiaries and to diversify our income sources, in what is a challenging financial environment for charities and public services nationally.

# Our Advocacy Services

We have a highly skilled and experienced team of advocates, many of whom hold or are working towards the Independent Advocacy Qualification. They work on a wide variety of projects:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)
- Care Act Advocacy
- NHS Complaints
- Advocacy in Poole
- Learning Disability Advocacy
- Carers Representation
- ....and many more. Look at [www.dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](http://www.dorsetadvocacy.co.uk) for more information

## Voice

Visionary

Open

Independent

Choice

Excellence



## Accounts

A summary of our accounts is available on request from Clare Ryan ([clare@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:clare@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk)). All charity accounts are public, and can be found on the Charities Commission website:

[www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission)

Search for "Dorset Advocacy" or use our charity number, **1096040**



**D**uring 2015-2016 we laid the foundations for a new innovation – Link Me Up PA Register. We are very pleased to announce that the Link Me Up PA Register website is now ‘live’. It is being run by Dorset Advocacy and Ansbury, working in partnership.

#### What is a PA?

A Personal Assistant is a person who is employed by an individual with care and support needs. The nature of their work will depend on the needs of the individual who they are supporting. They might help with shopping, cooking and other domestic tasks, support the person to take part in hobbies or fitness activities, attend medical appointments or give personal care. It is a very rewarding and varied role, often with good rates of pay.

“Link Me Up” PA register can help PAs in the following ways:

- Free listing on our website, which will include your interests, availability and skills.
- Assurance to employers who are browsing the register that you have had a DBS check, and that your references are good.
- Independent verification of your training levels.
- Support to write effective advertisements.

#### Employing a PA

Employing staff can seem like a daunting and complex process, perhaps best left to large organisations with Human Resources departments!

However, with support from Link Me Up, and other organisations who are



also there to help (for example, Penderells and Compass who can help with Payroll and account management), it is certainly possible to employ your own staff.

The biggest benefit is that you (or your family, if they are employing your staff on your behalf) are the boss! You know about the care that you need and when you need it. You are in control of the job description, and you interview and choose your PAs. The Link Me Up PA register enables you to browse our list of PAs and make a shortlist, according to their skills, interests and location. Our mentors can support you through the whole process, even including interviewing, if you need us to. You will have access to all of the resources you need to employ and manage your staff.

You might find that some PAs are self-employed. If they are on our register, then we will have checked to make sure that they fit the HMRC's definition of self-employment.

**We are currently looking for PAs to join the register. For more information, please visit the website, call Dorset Advocacy on 01305 251033 or email [linkmeup@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:linkmeup@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk).**

[www.dorset.linkmeup.org.uk](http://www.dorset.linkmeup.org.uk)

## Dorset Macmillan Advocacy

**WE ARE  
MACMILLAN.  
CANCER SUPPORT**



**D**orset Macmillan Advocacy is here for one-to-one support, help, and advocacy for people over 50 affected by cancer. Our service is free, independent, non-judgemental, and confidential. An advocate can be a valuable source of support if you are facing cancer alone. But even if you do have family support, you may find it easier to discuss concerns with someone you aren't close to. Here is a story about how Dorset Macmillan Advocacy helped a couple through their struggle with cancer and other issues last year:

Pat has been receiving support from Dorset Advocacy for over a year. She talked to us about her experience of having an Advocate, and the support that she received. When her partner Charlie became very ill in 2015 and was diagnosed with throat cancer, Pat went to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for support, and they recommended Dorset Advocacy to her.

Pat and Charlie had been together for many years, on and off, but were always there for each other when it mattered most. They first met more than 30 years ago. Pat said;

**“I walked into the room and Charlie was there. That was it, and from day one we were alright. It was love at first sight, more or less. Charlie was a free spirit. He was from a travelling family, and he was a bit wild!”**

As well as coping with cancer, Charlie was being exploited by some acquaintances and had battled with alcohol all of his life. For these reasons the Local Authority had assumed control over Charlie’s finances and there were some disagreements over this. Communication between Charlie and the local authority broke down, and that’s where Dorset Advocacy was able to help.

Pat had the support of her two sisters, and their advocate Karen now became another important part of this network of help. Pat described to me the support that she received:

**“Our advocate, Karen, helped such a lot. She used to speak up to the County Council for me, because I didn’t want to get into another argument. She helped Charlie to get to his hospital appointments on time. She’d meet him in Poole to make sure he arrived. I’d have been lost if it wasn’t for Karen.”**

Charlie and Pat married in September 2015. Pat showed me her wedding photos, from just six months ago: she looks very beautiful in a cream lace dress. Her husband Charlie stands tall beside her, proud and smiling broadly in his wedding suit. By the time they got married, Charlie had been in hospital for months. Pat said;

**“He got very depressed. They kept saying they’d release him from the hospital, but it didn’t happen. They couldn’t sort out his care at home, so they couldn’t work out how to discharge him. He couldn’t eat, but he could drink alright. He told me he’d had enough.”**

Charlie sadly passed away in December 2015.

Whilst Pat can easily list the large number of practical difficulties that Dorset Advocacy helped with (paperwork, bills, finances, funeral arrangements, probate and plenty more), simply having someone on her side, regardless of what was thrown at her, is the single thing that made the most difference.

# Appropriate Adult Service

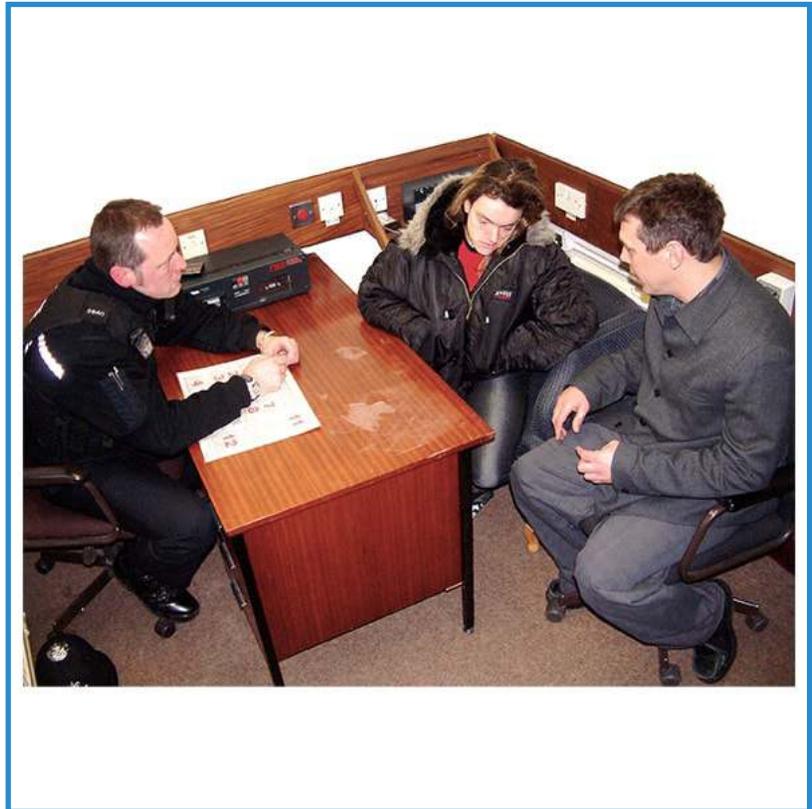
**D**orset Advocacy's Appropriate Adult Service recruits, trains and supports independent volunteers to safeguard the interests of vulnerable adults being questioned by the police.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) created the role of Appropriate Adult to ensure that adults who have learning disabilities or mental health problems who are questioned by the police:

- have support, particularly while they are being questioned
- are treated properly, fairly and respectfully by the police
- can communicate effectively with the police
- understand their rights.

It is a requirement that a person who is assessed as vulnerable should have an Appropriate Adult to support them during police interview. Appropriate Adults can be friends or family members. But often there is no one who can be called upon – and this is where Dorset Advocacy's scheme fills the gap.

The scheme operates from 8am to 10pm, seven days per week. Two volunteer Appropriate Adults plus a Dorset Advocacy manager cover each shift; shifts run from 8am to 2pm and from 2pm to 10pm. Last year our volunteers attended over 300 police interviews.



The scheme covers both custody centres in Dorset – at Bournemouth and Weymouth. Volunteers receive full training for their role, ongoing support and supervision, plus travel and out of pocket expenses.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Emily Brown, our volunteer manager on **01305 251033**, or by email using [emily@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:emily@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk)

# Thanks!

We are so grateful to our team of 60 volunteers, without whom many of our projects would not be possible. They enable Dorset Advocacy to help large numbers of people each year who each need somebody on their side, to listen and to help them to get the rights, services and quality of life that they are entitled to. We would also like to thank our funders, partners and suppliers who have enabled us to operate, develop and flourish over the past year:

Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Dorset County Council, Borough of Poole, Bournemouth Borough Council, Help and Care, Macmillan Cancer Support, The Alzheimer's Society, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Esme Fairbairn Foundation, Marks and Spencer, Access Dorset, NDTi, Studio Print Dorchester, Boo and Stu, Blue Door Software, Edwards and Keeping Accountants, Natwest Bank, Nantes Solicitors and Four County Services.

Many thanks to volunteer John Hobbs, for designing this annual report for us. [www.johnlakehobbs.net](http://www.johnlakehobbs.net)

## Contact details

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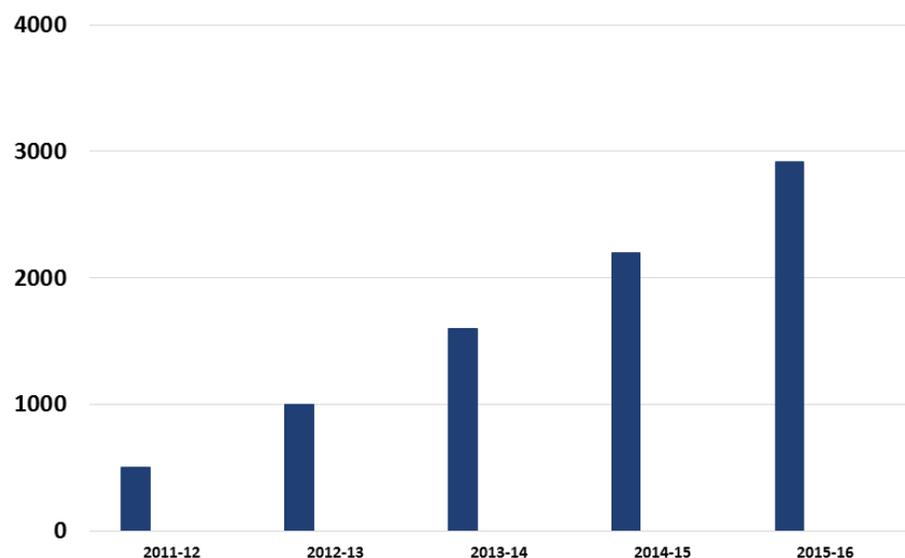
**Email:** [enquiries@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@dorsetadvocacy.co.uk)

**Website:** [www.dorsetadvocacy.co.uk](http://www.dorsetadvocacy.co.uk)

**Charity number:** 1096040



Number of referrals, year-by-year.



“How great is that? We are reaching more people.”