

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

The year 2017/18 has been a challenging year for The Disability Resource Centre and we anticipate the next year will be also.

Changes

During the year 2017/18 there was one change to the Board of Trustees following the retirement of Bob Graham at the AGM in October 2017.

Terry Garthwaite will not be standing for reappointment at our AGM in October 2018 as he plans to move away from the area. He has given us his time and financial expertise as a Trustee and Treasurer for two extensive periods, most recently since 2015. Our sincere thanks and best wishes to him.

Succession planning is a priority for our Trustee Board as we seek new trustees with financial and other relevant skills.

Achievements

Our services reached nearly 14000 disabled people and carers during the year. They all share a need to have as much choice and control of their lives as possible at a time when they are facing personal challenges.

Well over 5000 people received information and advice from our Disability Advice Service in Bedfordshire and Luton dealing with 9650 issues including over 2000 for equipment advice. 2223 people received welfare benefits advice. Over 1000 people in Northamptonshire received Disability advice provided at outreach events in 52 locations. Over 800 carers benefitted from our services. We supported 983 disabled people to employ their own 2720 personal assistants with payroll services and with holding accounts. Employment support and training courses reached 620 individuals. We have continued to win new contracts, especially in supporting disabled people into employment. We have also expanded the range of our services for example with more peer support groups and training and activities for disabled people and carers.

Challenges

Along with many organisations in our sector we must rise to the challenges of austerity and reduced funding and look for new ways to ensure that our services continue to reach those who need them.

This years report documents a significant financial loss of funding from the previous year due to the transfer of the Northamptonshire Personalisation Service to an in house service and a continued fall in tenant income. Such a significant loss was bound to have a significant impact both operationally and financially and we have posted a deficit for 2017/18. We are fortunate to be in a position where we can withstand this.

We have made cost savings and will continue to do so, but we have also made decisions to invest in our ability to deliver quality services, making use of our unrestricted designated funds to invest for the future, in IT and business development.

2019 will mark 25 years since the Disability Resource Centre was set up. We have built a reputation for meeting the needs of disabled people and carers and have adapted to the changing demands and aspirations of those we serve.

Jill Pick

I would like to thank staff for their hard work and commitment during a difficult year.

I would also like to thank Trustees for their support