

2007 SPRING EDITION

A **BOUT** **DVOCACY**



Scottish
Independent
Advocacy
Alliance

WELCOME TO THE SCOTTISH INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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E-BULLETIN

Every Friday, many of you receive the SIAA's E-Bulletin which contains updates on developments in the advocacy movement, and relevant developments that impact on the voluntary sector.

If you do not receive this E-Bulletin, but would like to then please email your details to **enquiry@siaa.org.uk**, and we will add your name to our Emailing list.

If you have subscribed to the E-Bulletin but are not receiving it, please check the Spam settings on your email, as this may be the problem.

THE SIAA WEBSITE FORUM

Many advocacy organisations regularly contact us about advocacy practice dilemmas. As always we are happy to discuss any practice issues with advocates. In order to get a broader debate going, we would also encourage advocates to post their dilemmas on our Forum - **www.siaa.org.uk/forum/index.php**.

SIAA NEWS

Notice of the 5th SIAA AGM

The SIAA's 5th AGM will take place on Wednesday 27th June 2007 at The Scottish Youth Theatre in Glasgow. More details will be available nearer the time.

The Code of Practice for Independent Advocates and Organisations

Following on from the review of the Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy Organisations, the SIAA has produced a Draft Code of Practice for Independent Advocates as discussed at our AGM in 2006. The SIAA Good Practice Working Group has been consulted on this document and suggested a number of changes. These changes have now been made and the consultation period for advocacy organisations has begun. A copy of the Code of Practice is available on our website.

The Advocacy Book and DVD

As you will know from the SIAA weekly E-Bulletins, we have come up with a framework for the Advocacy Book, which can be read on our website. We have also posted guidelines for people involved in the advocacy movement to follow if they want to tell us about their experiences of advocacy in Scotland. The closing date for stories/contacts to be sent to us is Monday 12th March 2007.

EXPERIENCES OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT— HELP WANTED

The Scottish Executive Health Department has commissioned an evaluation of service users', carers' and a range of service professionals' experiences of living and working with the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. The study is expected to be the main mechanism for exploring service users and carers' experience in detail. The research has been reviewed by an NHS REC and the Faculty of Health's Research Ethics Committee as qualitative service evaluation, and has research management approval from NHS Greater Glasgow, NHS Fife, NHS Dumfries & Galloway and the State Hospital.

Researchers at the Universities of Central Lancashire and Edinburgh, independent research consultants, working in partnership with Voices Of eXperience are conducting interviews with people with first hand experience of compulsory care – including the use of short and long term orders in hospital and in the community and of emergency Compulsory Treatment Orders.

Additionally, a small number of experienced health service and social work practitioners including psychiatrists, Mental Health Officers, GPs, lawyers, mental health nurses, paid advocates and those working in specialist employment initiatives will be interviewed about their perspectives on how compulsory powers under the new Act are affecting service user experiences as well as highlighting any professional concerns and issues with the new Act.

They are looking for paid Advocates from any of the research areas - Dumfries & Galloway, Fife, or Glasgow - to volunteer to talk to them in confidence about their views and experience. If you are working as a paid advocate, are from one of these areas and would like to participate in the study, please contact Dr Julie Ridley at JRidley1@uclan.ac.uk or 01772 893402.

Research Team: Dr Julie Ridley, Marion Ulas, Dr Ann Rosengard, Susan Hunter, Simon Little and Voices Of eXperience.

ELDER ABUSE DEVELOPMENT WORK

A new prevalence study, the first since Bennett and Ogg published an article on Elder Abuse in Britain in the British Medical Journal in 1992, will be published in April 2007. The 1992 study suggested that up to 500,000 older people were subject to physical or financial abuse. Action on Elder Abuse report that 25% of the calls received in 2006 were related to financial abuse. Age Concern Scotland reports that up to 9% of older people in Scotland may suffer from at least one form of abuse and some suffer more than one form. In a GfK NOP (a custom research company) Poll commissioned by BBC Radio 2 in 2006, 25% of those polled said they knew an older person who had been mistreated. Nearly 50% said they thought mistreatment of older people was commonplace. Help the Aged report that around half of elder abuse cases involve family members but that 25% of people asked said they did not know what elder abuse was. Some said they would not know if it was happening to someone they knew.

The protection of vulnerable adults will be strengthened by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill and the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 15th February 2007 and awaits Royal Assent. Both Bills will impact significantly on the advocacy movement. The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Bill, which the Scottish Parliament hopes to be given Royal assent on 15th March 2007, is intended to complement the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. The Bill was introduced following the Borders Inquiry to ensure that powers exist to investigate and deal with abusive situations. Lewis Macdonald, the Deputy Health Minister, said that the passing of the Bill sent a clear message that the abuse of adults at risk would not be tolerated in Scotland. The new powers remove the uncertainty about the duty to act in abusive cases and introduce a statutory responsibility to investigate abusive situations.

The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Bill was introduced in response to the Bichard Inquiry into events leading to the murders committed by Ian Huntley in Soham in 2002. The Bill aims to establish lists of people who are unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults; put in place a new disclosure record scheme and a scheme for ongoing collection of vetting information and assessment of the suitability of individuals to work with children and vulnerable adults; and will place a duty on public bodies and organisations to disclose/share information when a child is at risk of harm.

The SIAA Elder Abuse Development Work is mostly concerned with building the capacity of the advocacy movement in responding to elder abuse situations. This will include training for advocates on elder abuse issues. A Training Needs Analysis will begin before the end of March 2007 and we will contact all advocacy organisations so that you can identify any elder abuse training needs that you may have. The feedback received will be the basis for the delivery of that training.

SIAA MONTHLY SURVEYS

As many of you know, one of the functions of the SIAA is to gather and distribute information for and about advocacy in Scotland. And therefore we have introduced the idea of a monthly survey, which should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. We appreciate that you are all very busy but we promise to collect all your responses and then make them available to the whole movement. We plan to use this information, initially for the Advocacy Book and DVD but we also want to use it for lobbying and campaigning and improving the overall profile of the movement. We would also be happy for you to use it as part of your funding proposals. Therefore a big thank you to you all for the responses that we got from the last survey. We look forward to building a clearer and more accurate picture of the Scottish Advocacy Movement with your help.

SIAA TRAINING NETWORK

Welcome to the first of our regular advocacy training articles. If you have any training issues that you want to discuss, please get in touch and use this spot to spark discussion about the things that are on your mind. After all, there are lots of us around the country delivering training on advocacy and two (or more!) heads are always better than one.

It can be difficult if you are the only person in your organisation who delivers training, whether that is officially part of your role or not. I find that part of writing a good training course is being able to bounce ideas off experienced colleagues, and talk about what has or hasn't worked in the past, as well as new ideas for future courses. Writing a training course in isolation can be dispiriting, and if you're not enthusiastic about your course you can't expect your trainees to be either. It's also difficult to find time to revise your courses, either to update information or just to keep them fresh and interesting. This is especially true of a small or geographically isolated organisation, or if you have a dual role where other priorities can seem more important. So what's the answer?

One idea is that the SIAA sets up a support network for advocacy trainers, where we can all share ideas, problems, training materials, flashes of genius, and generally lighten each others' loads a bit. There are a number of ways this could work, depending on the needs and interests of the members. The network could meet a few times a year, perhaps around a particular topic or theme decided by members. Or it might just be a 'virtual' group in which members support each other by phone and email, with less regular meetings or none at all. Maybe we could have a section in the SIAA forum for training issues? What about a section of the SIAA site for us to share training materials, and save people reinventing the wheel all the time? The accreditation debate is coming (see page 7) and we might want to think about issues around getting courses accredited, and discuss the best way forward for advocacy trainers? There are so many issues that concern training and trainers, so get your thinking caps on.

If you have any thoughts on the idea of an advocacy training network, including the form you would like it to take, please contact me on 0131 260 5380 or lking@siaa.org.uk

Training the Trainers

The SIAA will be running a 'Training the Trainers' course in Dunblane on Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th May 2007. The course is flexible and is appropriate for anyone in the advocacy movement who is new to training or for people who have been training for years but want to refresh their skills. Successful participants will have the opportunity to join the SIAA Pool of Trainers. The course will be a two day residential course and will cover all the skills and knowledge you need to deliver high quality training. For more information on this course or to book a place, go to the SIAA website training page at www.siaa.org.uk/training.

Lesley King

SIAA Training Officer

PRINCIPLES MEAN PROGRESS

The Mental Welfare Commission's Principles into Practice Network will be holding its first ever conference on Tuesday 13th March 2007 at the Scottish Youth Theatre in Glasgow.

The Principles into Practice Network is a good practice forum for people concerned with mental health and the law. For more information about the conference, go to www.principlesintopractice.net.

ADVOCACY PROFILE

Name: Morag McClurg

Organisation: AIMS Advocacy

Type of Advocacy you are involved in?

We provide individual advocacy for people from North Ayrshire over the age of 16 experiencing mental ill health or learning difficulties and for people living on the islands of Arran and Cumbrae who need independent advocacy. We also run group advocacy sessions on Arran which use philosophical inquiry methods and run weekly Advocafe drop in sessions from which our Artvocacy group has developed.

How long have you been involved?

I've been involved with AIMS since we started in 1997, before that I was a volunteer with East Ayrshire Advocacy Service (EAAS).

When and how did you first become involved in independent advocacy?

I first heard about advocacy when I met Irene Clark, the manager, at EAAS. I was involved in helping with their initial training activities and later volunteered with them. I came here in 1997 to do a short piece of research that was to last three months, but I was then employed to help develop the organisation which has now grown to have a staff of 14, and is still developing. In short, I blame Irene!

What are the highs of your involvement?

Being able to assist people to have their voice heard and helping ensure that people are involved in the decisions that affect them.

Being able to be part of a service that constantly develops in the directions indicated by the people who use it.

Having to adapt everyday to what's important at the time; no two days are the same.

Having the freedom from our Board of Directors to find and pilot innovative ways of helping people express themselves.

What are the lows?

Our growing dependence on statutory funding, although we are trying hard to find other sources of additional funding, which is getting

harder and harder since the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. The demise of the ASA – I felt they hadn't had long enough to fully realise their potential. Frustration at the amount of time that was wasted on the local advocacy planning process.

How could your job be made easier?

Having a service level agreement for our core service which gave consistency of funding would certainly help, although we've managed to work for 9 years without one! Is there a world record for these things?

A wider acceptance and understanding of independent advocacy and an acknowledgement that the opinions expressed by an advocacy worker are not their own. I get fed up sometimes with having to spend time dealing with complaints about our advocacy workers doing their jobs.

What is the most important lesson you have learned since you became involved?

Never assume anything and there is no such thing as a stupid question. Is that two important lessons?

How do you see your involvement in advocacy developing?

I would like to have the opportunity to look at how advocacy really makes a difference in people's lives and the lives of their community. Maybe as part of a research project.

Who would be your ideal advocate?

Any member of our staff – if they didn't advocate for me 'properly', I would only have myself to blame.

If you would like to have your "Advocacy Profile" featured in one of our future newsletters, then please get in touch with us on 0131 260 5380 or email us at enquiry@siaa.org.uk.

ACCREDITATION DEBATE

After an analysis of the results of the recent consultation on the potential themes for the SIAA's 5th AGM, the overwhelming choice was the chance to discuss and debate the subject of accreditation for the advocacy movement in Scotland. This is a subject that has both supporters and opponents within the advocacy movement itself and in other areas where professionals come into contact with advocates. Some individuals and organisations have argued for a long time that advocacy needs to be recognised by other professionals and therefore the best way to do this is through a nationally recognised qualification. Others argue that the need for advocacy to be more accountable to the people who use it, commissioners and funders is the main reason for a qualification in advocacy. An argument that has been put forward is that the idea of accreditation devalues advocacy because advocacy is fundamentally about one individual standing alongside another. By creating a qualification it would take away the radical, innovative and barrier breaking ethos that is central to good independent advocacy.

The SIAA Board of Directors has been discussing the issue of accreditation for some time now with the debate reflecting a broad range of ideas. The consensus has been that the advocacy movement needs to be united and proactive about accreditation and the SIAA Board has taken the decision to use the AGM to discuss the best way forward.

There will be many issues raised and certainly more questions than answers. We need to establish who accreditation should be for. It could be for advocacy workers, volunteers or even management committee members. If the accreditation is too academic in style and content, it may not be accessible to a large number of people in the advocacy movement. If it is too simplistic, then it will be criticised for its lack of content and its value may be brought into question. There are cost implications to be considered. And all of this without even asking who will take responsibility for the administration of accredited courses.

It would be naive not to realise that there are a number of problems to overcome throughout the process of moving towards accreditation. The system may be too bureaucratic and unwieldy. It may result in marginalising individuals who do not want accreditation and may mean that their work is undervalued. At the SIAA AGM, we have a valuable and necessary opportunity to pool our collective knowledge and experience in order to address these problems. Accreditation can be a powerful tool in providing a quality service to those who make use of advocacy but to ensure this happens it is essential that the advocacy movement has ownership of the process.

MISSION POSSIBLE

SAMH and The Royal College of Psychiatrists (Scottish Division) are holding a Mental Health Acute Inpatient Conference on Wednesday 16th May 2007 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Glasgow.

The Conference is an opportunity to listen, participate and contribute to shaping the ideal acute mental health environment for people in hospital. The aim of the conference is to inspire delegates by creating a vision for service redesign and development in Scotland's acute units. For one day, staff, planners and people using services will take part in an event showcasing the positive and innovative work being implemented in acute units across the country.

For more information, contact Elizabeth McKenna at SAMH, Cumbrae House, 15 Carlton Court, Glasgow G5 9JP. Telephone 0141 568 7195 or email events@samh.org.uk. You can also register online at www.samh.org.uk/missionpossible.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance promotes, supports and defends the principles and practice of independent advocacy across Scotland.

It does this by:

- Providing a strong national voice for independent advocacy organisations.
- Supporting the growth of existing independent advocacy organisations.
- Promoting the development of new independent advocacy organisations.
- Encouraging existing advocacy organisations towards independence.

WHO FUNDS THE SIAA

Scottish Executive Health Department

Lloyds TSB

Scottish Executive Mental Health Division

Comic Relief

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