

What is Advocacy?

Many people in society are disempowered by systems which have a significant effect on almost every aspect of their lives. These are people who are disempowered to such an extent that they are unlikely to be able to fulfil their basic human needs, or demand their basic human rights. A person's initial hopes and dreams can be severely limited by this. Independent Advocacy can help to widen a person's horizons and enable them to become active members of society.

(Extracted from 'Principles and Standards in Independent Advocacy Organisations and Groups', Advocacy 2000)

The main themes of advocacy are:

- Safeguarding people who are vulnerable and discriminated against or whom services find difficult to serve.
- Empowering people who need a stronger voice by enabling them to express their own needs and make their own decisions.
- Enabling people to gain access to information, explore and understand their options, and to make their views and wishes known.
- Speaking on behalf of people who are unable to do so for themselves.

There are a number of models of independent advocacy. These are:

- Independent Professional Advocacy
- Citizen Advocacy
- Collective/Group Advocacy
- Self Advocacy
- Peer Advocacy

To find an advocacy organisation in Scotland, visit our [Directory Page](#).

Independent Professional Advocacy

In this model, advocacy is provided by both paid and unpaid advocates. The aim is to support people to represent their own interests. If this is not possible, the advocate will represent the person's views.

The advocate provides support on specific issues. He or she provides information not advice and Will provide short or long term support. Independent professional advocates will support several people at any time.

We have produced a leaflet on professional advocacy - please download it or contact us and we will send it to you.

Citizen Advocacy

This model of advocacy encourages ordinary citizens to become more involved with the welfare of those who might need support in their communities. It is based on trust between the person being supported and the advocate. The advocate's loyalty is to the person being supported not to the advocacy project.

The advocate is not paid and is not motivated by personal gain. The advocate will gain the right to be involved with their partner from the personal relationship they have with the person.

The advocate will support their partner using their natural skills and talents rather than by being trained for the role.

The advocacy relationship will be on a 1 to 1 basis and long-term.

We have produced a leaflet on citizen advocacy - please download it or contact us and we will send it to you.

Collective/Group Advocacy

This is when a group of people who are all facing a common problem who get together to support each other. The individual members of the group may support each other over specific issues. The group as a whole may campaign on an issue that affects them all.

Some of the benefits of group/collective advocacy are:

- an issue may arise that is to do with the planning of services and their impact on a group of people. The collective voice can be stronger than that of the individual. Groups are difficult to ignore.

- raising a difficult issue can be an isolating experience for someone. The group experience can reduce isolation and provide support.

We have produced a leaflet on collective/group advocacy - please download it or contact us and we will send it to you.

Self Advocacy

- is an identified group of individuals
- is made up of users, likely users, or past users of care or support services which are provided by, or on behalf of, local authorities or health boards
- points of view to be put forward are identified collectively
- the group is free to decide how to act
- the group may or may not have a formal structure, name, and so on.

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Peer Advocacy

Peer Advocacy is about individuals who share significant life experiences. The peer advocate and their advocacy partner may share age, gender, ethnicity, diagnosis, or

issues. Peer advocates use their own experiences to understand and empathise with their advocacy partner.

Peer Advocacy works to:

- Increase self awareness, confidence and assertiveness so that the individual can speak for themselves.
- Lessen the imbalance of power between the advocate and their advocacy partner.

We have produced a leaflet on peer advocacy - please download it or contact us and we will send it to you.