

How Independent Advocacy has made a difference in people's lives:

Janet cares for her husband, Phil, who has dementia. She found it difficult at times to get help such as additional hours of day care and occasional respite breaks. A friend told her about the local carers' advocacy service. Sue, an advocate, now goes to meetings with her and has helped her to ask for more support to care for Phil.



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If you would like this leaflet in a different format, further information about the SIAA or a membership pack please contact us.



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The SIAA Guide to
Independent Advocacy for
Families and Carers

What is the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)?

A membership organisation, devoted to promoting, supporting and defending Independent Advocacy in Scotland.

What do we do?

- Represent advocacy organisations at various levels
- Work as a central agency to gather and distribute information to the membership, and other interested parties
- Raise awareness and understanding of Independent Advocacy across Scotland
- Provide training on Independent Advocacy and related issues.

You can find out about Independent Advocacy in your area by visiting the SIAA website www.siaa.org.uk or by telephoning 0131 260 5380.

How Independent Advocacy can help you and the person you care for:

As a parent, partner, friend or carer you will probably advocate for the person you care about every day in many different situations. For example, going with the person to see their doctor and asking questions about treatment. Or supporting the person at meetings with different professionals. Independent Advocacy does not stop you doing this.

Sometimes, what you want and what the person that you care for wants are not the same. If you are caring for someone who has many different support needs, then sometimes it is easier to agree with a suggested course of action than to 'fight' for something different. Or you want to protect the person you care for from the possibility of being ignored or treated less favourably than others.

Depending on where you live, you might be able to get an independent advocate to support you and help express your needs, if necessary.

Involving an independent advocate in the life of the person you care for can:

- Ensure that the person has a say in what happens to them
- Receive the appropriate support services that they need
- Be seen as an individual with their own needs
- Give the person independence and the opportunity to express themselves
- Make your life easier by taking the pressure off you to represent the person you care for.

The Independent Advocate will take time to get to know the person you care for and find out what their wants and needs are.

The independent advocate will not:

- Give their opinion
- Work to their own agenda
- Tell the person what to do or give them advice
- Speak for the person unless asked to do so.