



Scottish
**Independent
Advocacy**
Alliance



**Advocating
for advocacy**

Annual Report 2013–2014

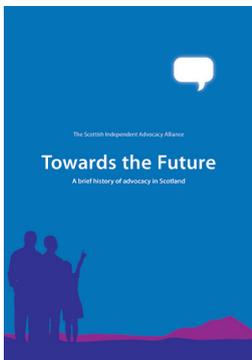
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

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Introduction

Our main themes of improving quality and increasing access have seen our work grow and develop in different areas. Over the year we have continued to advocate for advocacy through both our core work and through the developing projects working to increase understanding and awareness of independent advocacy in Scotland.

One initiative which aimed to increase awareness and understanding of advocacy was the Parliamentary Reception held in the Scottish Parliament and sponsored by Jim Eadie MSP. The keynote speaker at the reception was the Minister for Public Health, Michael Matheson. Other speakers included Sue Lavery who spoke about her experiences of receiving support from an advocate during her father's illness.



In the lead up to the Parliamentary Reception Malcolm Chisholm MSP submitted a Parliamentary Motion recognising the importance of Independent Advocacy and

welcoming the publication of *Towards the Future: A brief history of advocacy in Scotland*. He went on to state that there is a need for wider availability of independent advocacy for all who need it. The Motion received cross party support.

The Reception provided an opportunity to disseminate *Towards the Future: A brief history of advocacy in Scotland*. This research tracks the growth and development of the advocacy movement in Scotland. It is based on interviews

with groups and individuals involved in advocacy from the 80s to the present; from patients at Gogarburn Hospital who fought for the right to vote to those who campaigned for the inclusion of the right to access independent advocacy in the Mental Health Act of 2003 and its present legacy.

We also distributed copies of *AWOL*, a collection of poetry capturing the essence of independent advocacy and specially written by Jo McFarlane and donated to the SIAA. Jo performed a number of her poems at the reception.



In addition to the ongoing core work we have a number of projects underway.

Quality Assurance Pilot Project

The Scottish Government funded Quality Assurance Pilot project has been started with staff in post. A reference group made up of commissioners, service users, advocates and Scottish Government representation has been set up.

A group of sessional evaluators have been recruited from a range of backgrounds. They have received training on evaluation skills and advocacy and will be conducting a number of evaluation visits over the following 12 months.

Families at Risk Project

The Families at Risk project which is funded through the Third Sector Early Interventions Fund has also been established with staff in post and significant progress made on the work plan. The project has highlighted the vast array of issues and challenges faced by families, including mental illness, learning disability and substance misuse as well as child protection.

Advocacy & Self-directed Support Project

Our Advocacy and Self-directed Support project which is funded by the Scottish Government Self-directed Support Unit has also made significant progress. Work is underway on producing guidance for advocates, a training programme for advocacy organisations and awareness sessions for advice agencies.

Publications

We have continued work with advocacy organisations, and other partner organisations and stakeholders on other pieces of advocacy guidance including children's advocacy and advocacy for people working with solicitors. Work on the Guidelines for Advocates working in Prisons was completed with input from several advocacy organisations with experience of this work and also with input from the Scottish Prison Service.

In addition to these guidelines, *Towards the Future* and *AWOL* we have published research reports on *Ten Years of Advocacy Provision, Advocacy, the Patients' Rights (Scotland) Act 2011 and the Patients Advice and Support Service (PASS): A survey of advocacy organisations and Independent Advocacy and the Adult Support & Protection (Scotland) Act 2007: A survey of independent advocacy organisations*

Continuing the theme of raising awareness and understanding of the impact of advocacy we have had stalls at and spoken at several conferences and delivered training to professionals on advocacy. One example is the inclusion of advocacy awareness in training delivered by NHS Education for Scotland to dentists working with vulnerable people.

We are members of a range of groups including:

- Mental Welfare Commission Advisory Group
- General Medical Council Advisory Forum (Scotland)
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Sounding Board
- Scottish Tribunals & Administrative Justice Advisory Committee
- Scottish Government Adult Protection Policy Forum
- Mental Health Tribunal Advocacy Reference Group
- Mental Health Tribunal User & Carer Reference Group
- Principles into Practice Network
- Mental Health Strategy Service User Group
- Mental Health Strategy Families and Carers Group
- SCVO Intermediaries Network
- SCLD Parenting Network
- Patient Advice & Support Service Reference Group
- Health & Social Care Alliance 12 Propositions Group
- Scottish Government Carers' Advocacy Practice Guidance Group
- People Powered Health & Wellbeing Network
- Mental Health & Deaf People Task Group

We continue to develop relationships with a wide range of external organisations:

Our engagement with the Scottish Parliament includes membership of a number of Cross Party Groups including Mental Health, Learning Disability, Older People, Health Inequalities and others. We have submitted responses to consultations on proposed legislation and policy development and produced both written and oral evidence on a number of topics.

We continue to foster links with advocacy groups across other parts of the globe and so were delighted to welcome Mark Grierson and Sonia Powazuk from Disability Advocacy New South Wales who were on a trip around Europe. Member organisations were invited along to our office to meet Mark and Sonia and also Martin Coyle, who many will remember from our former English sister organisation Action for Advocacy.

These and other achievements not listed here would not be possible without the hard work and commitment of the SIAA staff and Board members. Thanks also for the continued support of our sponsors in the Scottish Government Health Department.

Gordon Thomson, Chair
Moira Nicholson, Treasurer
Shaben Begum MBE, Director

The **BIG** Picture

I feel more protected now in regards to human rights and my basic rights.

Without advocacy I'd probably be dead.

Advocacy changed my life... I got more confident with it, it gave me the drive, the determination.



-1p per head

Total statutory spend equates to an average spend per head, per annum of **£2.07** as opposed to **£2.08** in 2011/12.

The total spend by NHS Boards, Local Authorities and the Scottish Government on advocacy was **£11,207,457** in 2013/14.



In **10 of Scotland's 32 Local Authority areas** children and young people with a Learning Disability or Mental Health issue **do not have access** to independent advocacy despite their statutory right of access.



Gaps remain in relation to access to independent advocacy for those with a physical disability. **7 Local Authority areas still do not have any advocacy provision** for people with a physical disability.



65% of respondents to our research said that their funding had either remained **static or decreased** in recent years.

1 in 5

Over **20%** of organisations **no longer** have the resources to undertake **awareness raising** activities.



As a result of **limited resources** and **increased demand**, many advocacy organisations report that they have introduced **waiting lists** and that people now have to wait for, in some cases, **considerable periods** before they can access advocacy.

The final words for this report are by Jo McFarlane, our Poet in Residence and the 'poet laureate of recovery' and are taken from *AWOL: Absent Without Leave Invisible When Here, Poems in celebration of advocacy*.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing

What does it mean to you?

I guess
like me, you want a home to call your
own,
a garden full of friends to share it with,
a street that's paved with riches of the
soul

I guess
you want fulfilling work to do,
leisure time to spend with loved ones,
opportunities to push the boundaries of
your world

I guess
like me, you need to feel accepted,
recognised and valued as you are

I guess that near or far,
you need to feel that you belong

All this guessing
gets me wondering if it's time to ask you:
Am I right or wrong?

Respect

Respect

Such a little word
two syllables
replete with meaning,
infinite of possibility

I take the time to listen
get to know you,
understand the shoes you walk in,
all the miles you've travelled,
the companions
and the stumbling blocks
you've met along the way

You take the time to tell me
all the colours of your journey,
how the meeting place of cultures
didn't happen overnight

I am richer, wiser for your story
so I listen with respect,
come to know you as a friend,
share with you my story
till we grow
in understanding of each other
Soon that little word respect
becomes a way of life



Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Promoting  Supporting  Defending

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