



is for Advocacy

Annual Report
2015-2016



Scottish
Independent
Advocacy
Alliance

Introduction

The past year has seen the culmination of two major projects for the SIAA. The Self-directed Support Project was completed with an interesting, well attended and well received event which allowed sharing of experience and knowledge between advocacy organisations from across Scotland. Phase 2 of the Families at Risk Project, which involved developing and launching a short animated film on advocacy for parents, was completed. Memberships of a number of Cross Party Groups and working groups continue as does the ongoing work on communication with the advocacy movement and more widely.

These and other achievements detailed in this report 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

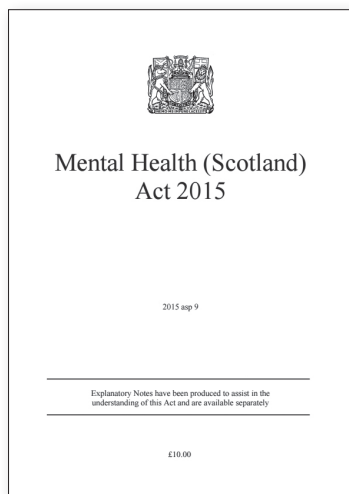
Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 – The Advocacy Duty

Throughout the life of the Mental Health Scotland Bill the SIAA lobbied for inclusion of an amendment that would strengthen the provisions in Section 259 of the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

As a result of this amendment Local Authorities and NHS Boards will need to produce Strategic Advocacy Plans and submit them to the Mental Welfare Commission. The Commission will work to ensure that all areas are fulfilling their statutory duties regarding access to independent advocacy.

Our vision for this amendment is that there will be more accountability around advocacy provision, planning and delivery through Strategic Advocacy Plans with the aim to ensure that those who have a right to access independent advocacy are able to do so.

Since the enactment of the legislation we have begun some work to support the Mental Welfare Commission on the new duties.



Policy Work

During the 2015 – 2016 year we have responded to a number of Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and other consultations.

These have included:

- + Carers Bill
- + Apologies Bill
- + Regulations and Statutory Guidance under the Welfare Funds (Scotland) Act 2015
- + Appropriate Adult Services: High Level Options Response
- + Education Bill
- + Lobbying Transparency Bill
- + Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee call for written views on palliative care
- + Changes to the Public Procurement Rules in Scotland
- + Human Rights Inquiry
- + Proposals to introduce a Statutory Duty of Candour for Health and Social Care services
- + United Nations Convention on the rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) – Scottish Local Government Delivery Plan
- + Shaping the work of your Human Rights Commission – Consultation
- + SPSO Scottish Welfare Fund Consultation
- + Draft Order to revise the procedures for complaints about Social Work

Working Groups

- + Scottish Government – Person Centred Care
- + Scottish Legal Complaints Commission Consumer Panel
- + National Care Standards Development Group
- + Welfare Advocacy Support Project
- + MH Person Centred Care Indicators Group
- + Expert Advisory Group – Centre for Mental Health and Incapacity Law, Rights and Policy Edinburgh Napier University
- + Mental Health Tribunals for Scotland Advocacy Reference Group
- + SPSO Sounding Board
- + Scottish Mental Health Partnership
- + SCVO Policy Committee
- + MWC Advisory Board

Cross Party Groups

- + Racial Equality
- + Older People & Aging
- + Human Rights
- + Learning Disability
- + Mental Health
- + Carers
- + Children & Young People
- + Survivors of Childhood Abuse

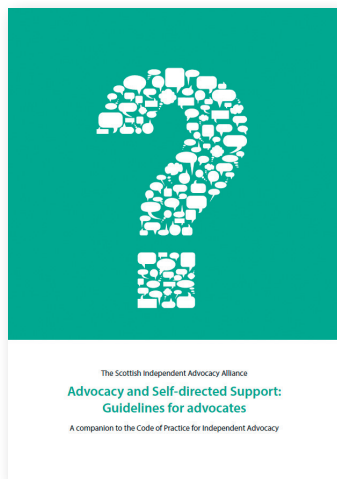
Self-directed Support

To round off the two year Self-directed Support Project an event, for independent advocacy organisations and workers, *Independent Advocacy – Supporting the SDS Journey*, was held on Thursday 28th May 2015. The aims of the day were to:

- + share learning among those advocacy organisations that have had funding for SDS and advocacy, and those that haven't;
- + highlight good practice;
- + explore the direction of travel – for better or worse – with regard to SDS and advocacy since the 2014 research that resulted in the publication of *Directing Your Own Support?*;
- + explore what difference has SDS made to the lives of advocacy partners and what impact access to advocacy has made for them.

Representatives from 25 advocacy organisations across Scotland attended. We were also pleased to welcome representatives from SDSS and the Health & Social Care Alliance who provided information stalls.

The conference was well received by participants. It provided a valuable opportunity for participants to update their knowledge and share experiences.



Families at Risk

Following the success of the Families at Risk Project we were successful in our funding bid for Phase 2 of the project. The key achievements for this period have been the planning, development, production, launch and distribution of an animated film, Opening Doors.

The film, developed with a focus group comprising parents and representatives from advocacy organisations that work with vulnerable parents, aimed to raise awareness about the power of advocacy for families in



difficult circumstances who are at risk of having their children taken into care. A group of parents, all of whom had been supported by an advocacy organisation through child protection proceedings helped inform the development of the stories illustrated in the film.

The film was launched at the Glasgow Film Theatre on 4th March with an audience which included parents who had used or might use advocacy; representatives from advocacy organisations; commissioners of advocacy services from NHS Boards and Local Authorities; staff from voluntary sector organisations; Scottish Government representatives.

Since the launch the film has been widely shared amongst a broad range of agencies and organisations so raising awareness of the role of advocacy and how it can help parents facing child protection proceedings.

Working with Children and Young People: Guidelines for Advocates

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) underpins Scottish Government Policy and Legislation in relation to children and young people. This outlines the rights of all children and the Convention defines a child as anyone under 18 years.

Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that when adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account. Independent advocacy for children will help ensure that this becomes a reality.

To support best practice in independent advocacy for children SIAA has worked with member organisations, Clan Childlaw and the Scottish Government on the development of Advocacy Guidelines.

In addition to providing guidance on practice for advocates this document will provide information for professionals working with children and young people, children and young people themselves, and their families or carers on what to expect from an advocate or advocacy organisation.



Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Promoting  Supporting  Defending

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