

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

*Simon was supported by Anya, his advocate, when he wanted to move from a care home to live independently. Simon feels that it is thanks to Anya that he is living such a fulfilling life today. He says that, without her, he would never have been able to leave the care home or regain control of his finances.*



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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  
**Service Providers**

## 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](http://www.siaa.org.uk) or by telephoning 0131 260 5380.

### The benefits of Independent Advocacy for service providers

Staff in many different settings advocate for service users on a daily basis and this is appropriate. But sometimes it is not appropriate for professionals to advocate for people using services because they have a conflict of interest. This can be because:

- professionals may not agree with what the person wants
- it can be difficult for professionals to challenge their work related systems and procedures that have been put into place by their employers or professional bodies
- it can damage relationships between colleagues.

Often professionals make decisions that are in the best interests of an individual because they have a legal duty to do so. Independent advocates do not have such a legal duty. An effective independent advocate needs to challenge, question and hold professionals to account. Therefore it is important that the advocate is independent.

### The **independent advocate will:**

- Take time to get to know the person and significant others in their lives, where appropriate
- Ensure the person's rights are upheld
- Challenge service systems in order to promote a person-centred approach
- Advocate for the person even if they don't agree with their advocacy partners' choices, views or wishes.

### The **independent advocate will not:**

- Give their own opinion
- Work to their own agenda
- Do anything their advocacy partner does not want them to do.

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### **Types of advocacy include:**

- Collective or group advocacy
- Peer advocacy
- Professional advocacy
- Self advocacy
- Citizen advocacy.