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

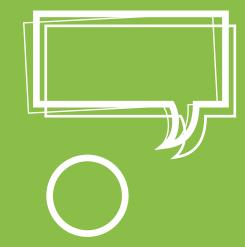
Simon was supported by Anya, his advocate, when he wanted to move from a care home to live independently. Simon feels that it is thanks to Anya that he is living such a fulfilling life today. He says that, without her, he would never have been able to leave the care home or regain control of his finances.



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The SIAA Guide to
Independent Advocacy for
Service Providers

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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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.

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.

Types of advocacy include:

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