

Connecting Voices: Exploring Networks in Independent Advocacy



Scottish
Independent
Advocacy
Alliance

SIAA Members Conference 2025



Our Attendees

37 attendees from 20 member organisations - including chief officers, team leaders, trustees, and advocates - travelled from across Scotland, from as far as Stornoway!

Goal and Purpose

We wanted to understand key sector networks and strengthen connections between member organisations. With The Carnegie Trust, we worked to make the conference inclusive, providing extra support for members in rural and remote settings.

Ideate to Advocate

Dr Will Shepherd highlighted the role of creativity in independent advocacy, then brought ideas to life in an interactive ideation workshop.

We loved hearing laughter in the room!

The Carnegie Trust Research

Dr Mo Yan and Yingru Li shared ongoing research with a key message: independent advocacy in Scotland restores voice and credibility by tackling epistemic injustice.

Their work explores sector challenges and opportunities - more findings coming soon!

Partnership Working

Members collaborate widely: with each other and with external organisations, bodies, and professionals - for learning, awareness-raising, signposting, and representing Advocacy Partners' voices. Insights from these discussions are informing SIAA's Quality Project.

SMHLR - Next steps

Three years after the Scottish Mental Health Review, we explored priority areas to focus on in our policy and influencing work.

What we learned:

- A smaller group size works best for discussions - less is more.
- Academic partnerships add real value to the sector.
- Fun and lighthearted moments matter.
- Members deeply value opportunities for connection.



Next time

We want to engage more of our membership and are considering a series of smaller regional events to reach everyone.

What do you think?



The Day in Pictures



Attendees had plenty of opportunities to collaborate at their tables.



Mo made the most of every opportunity to connect with members.



Suzanne did a fantastic job emceeing!



Yingru walked us through the key themes of their ongoing research.



With humor and energy, Will inspired creativity and kept the room buzzing!



“Scottish or Nottish” Quiz Winners



Double function of your insights: data for projects and wall decor!

Bank of Ideas



Concept Idea:

TITLE: OPEN MIC / COMEDY NIGHT
FOR OUR PARTNERS



Benefits:

- 1 Place people to share their experience
- 2 no judgement
- 3 Reducing trauma.

Key target market: Anyone with a story.

Problem Solved:

Safe space, people to share experience not alone

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Attendees
generated these
under Will's
direction



TITLE: SUPER vision

Concept Idea: An AI, summarization tool that summarises user input with only joyful words of validation

Benefits:

- 1 Positive reinforcement
- 2 Wider access to validation
- 3 Fleet of resources

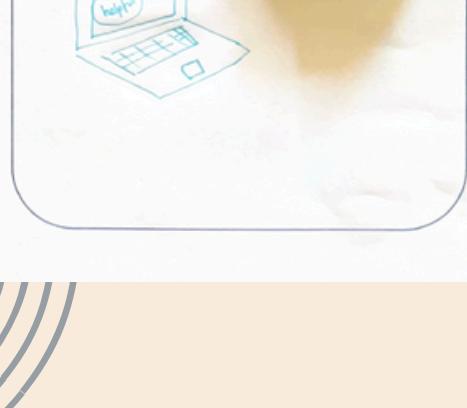
Key target market: Manager / Supervisor

Problem Solved:

Staff morale + effective leverage

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great - super efficient really



TITLE: Laughing our socks off



Concept Idea: Team trips to comedy clubs

Benefits:

- 1 Team will relax and be more productive
- 2 Sense of fun due to higher productivity
- 3 Staff can be paid more leading to greater staff retention
- 4 Better results for AEs

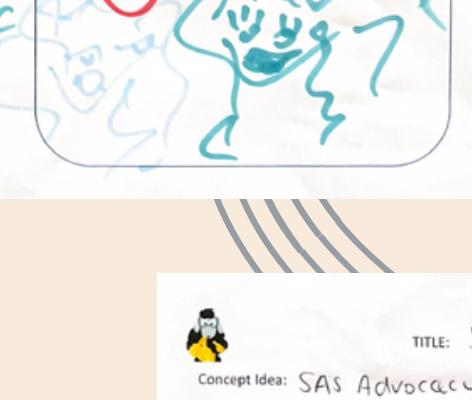
Key target market:

Board Funders / Commissioners

Problem Solved:

Miserable staff!

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TITLE: SAS Advocacy



Concept Idea: SAS Advocacy - whole team approach

Benefits:

1. Quicker response.
2. Wider talent pool
3. More people supported

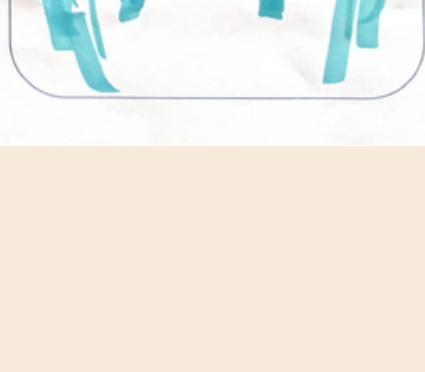
Key target market:

people in crisis

Problem Solved:

people waiting in fear

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TITLE: JUGGLING CHANGE



Concept Idea: USING CIRCUS SKILLS TO ENABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCEPT CHANGE & HAVE MORE CHOICE

Benefits:

- 1 RESILIENCE
- 2 INCREASED CONFIDENCE
- 3 INCREASED CHOICE

Key target market: YOUNG PEOPLE GOING THROUGH TRANSITIONS

Problem Solved:

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TITLE: Puppy petting prior to each team meeting.



Concept Idea:

- 1 Calm mindset
- 2 Team building
- 3 Increase enthusiasm

Key target market:

staff team

Problem Solved:

low team meeting turnout, low morale

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Bank of Ideas

Concept Idea: TITLE: Ring a ding bring

Benefits:

- 1 People get toot at time they won't tend
- 2 Don't need staff
- 3 Can also bring medication

Key target market: People with disabilities

Problem Solved: Care sector staffing

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Attendees generated these under Will's direction

Concept Idea: Support for people with anger issues due to low self esteem

Benefits:

- 1 Reduced anger issues towards others (social connection +service)
- 2 Less time spent on descration → efficiency
- 3 Reduction in self harm/suicide

Key target market: Advocacy partners +vulnerable people

Problem Solved: Reduction in referrals Employee stress Invest more energy into other projects

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Concept Idea: Create an advocacy Petting Zoo for partners to network out open up in a space created for them.

Benefits:

- 1 - Safe Space and accessible
- 2 - Division therapy
- 3 - Animal assignment

Key target market: Open to Partners + Groups

Problem Solved: Improve networking making it fun linking in services

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Concept Idea: Connecting Voices

Benefits:

- 1 STVINGS FOR SCOT GOV
- 2 PEOPLE ENPOWERED
- 3 STORIES IN ONE PLACE

Key target market: FUNDERS
PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND
INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

Problem Solved: LESS SYSTEMATIC DEDICATION
TOO LITTLE FUNDING

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Concept Idea: Life Saving Data

Benefits:

- 1 Saves Lives
- 2 Improved Quality of life
- 3 Evidence for change.

Key target market: People

Problem Solved:

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Problem Solved: Safe Space / People to share experience not alone

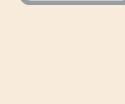
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We're grateful to everyone whose support brought this conference to life:

Dr Mo Yan and Yingru Li with The Carnegie Trust, co-sponsors of the conference



Dr Will Shepherd



Civic House in Glasgow



Parveen's Canteen



And a special thank you to all our Attendees.

See you next year!

Supporting
Promoting
Advocating



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