



Annual Report 2011

Background

The Advocacy Project was established in April 1992 to provide a community based, independent advocacy service for disabled people in the South East of Glasgow. It was set up by disabled people and others working in the field, who recognised a need for individuals to be supported to ensure their voice was heard.

Since it's set up 19 years ago it has extended and developed it's services to include specific client groups across Glasgow, Lanarkshire and East Renfrewshire. It has more recently developed an engagement and involvement service which further complements the independent advocacy

function by ensuring people are involved and have a say in their care and services.

The organisation is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. To maintain its independence it is managed by a Board of Directors comprising of individuals with an interest in, and commitment to the work of the Project. They give their time voluntarily and bring a variety of skills to the organisation, including direct experience of management in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. The Board's responsibility is to ensure the effective governance of the organisation ensuring it meets it's legal and corporate obligations.

Principles and aims

The Advocacy Project is based on the principle that any person has the right to

- » Be consulted about their needs
- » Be involved in decisions which affect their lives
- » Be treated in a dignified manner and valued as equals
- » Avoid being segregated from the rest of the community in work, education, recreation or where they live

In line with these principles, the Project provides advocacy, which aims to work with people on an individual or group basis to

- » Make sure their voice is heard and their needs and opinions listened to
- » Ensure they have as much control as they want of decisions which affect their lives
- » Access resources and information appropriate to them

“Allows patient to have a voice and believe that they are not on their own”

“The worker has always provided a quality service, so expectations are set high”

Chairperson's Report

Reaching the end of another very successful year for The Advocacy Project allows us to celebrate our achievements and look forward to the year ahead.

The organisation is proud to report that, for another year it has exceeded its previous service levels across all services and managed to do so within an environment of standstill resources.

Financial pressures have been at the forefront of our communication with all our partnership agencies this year, whether it be statutory bodies with commissioning responsibility or provider agencies referring to the Project, all are experiencing similar limitations. As an independent advocacy provider we see on a daily basis, the direct effect of such restrictions on the people we support. We believe that it makes it more important than ever, that our service reaches out to as many people as possible.

It is often easy, during a time of recession, to focus on the negative elements this presents for an organisation. The board of The Advocacy Project feels it cannot let itself be restricted in future planning and has forged ahead with the development of its Engagement and Involvement services and the creation of a strategic business plan.

This provides direction for the organisation on an operational level but also focus for each individual who contributes, at whatever level.

Across our commissioned services we are cognisant of service contract reviews and potential re-commissioning process in the forthcoming year and we are presently preparing for this. Measuring the impact of our work has been a priority for us over the past few months and we are close to finalising a quality evaluation framework that more effectively reflects the positive outcomes our support brings.

I would conclude by expressing my thanks to staff, management and my fellow board members for their contribution and continued commitment to the organisation. Also to members, referrers and people who use our services for their positive feedback over the year, which reinforces the philosophy and values that the organisation stands for.



Tommy McGuigan
Chairperson

“Good feedback from patients regarding the service”

Our Services and some examples of

Older People in Glasgow

- » Supporting older people recovering in hospital to access support services, return home and retain their independence.
- » Safeguard the care and human rights of older people subject to statutory intervention under mental health legislation and ensure their participation is maximised.
- » Help older people who wish to direct their care through a direct payment or personalised budget get the information they need and support to apply.
- » Offer assistance to older people affected by allegations of harm to reduce risk, keep safe and get the help they need from statutory agencies.



“The support the advocate provided was appropriate and professionally done”

“The advocacy worker is particularly good at persevering with patients who can be challenging due to their condition”

People from Black Minority Ethnic Communities

- » Help people fleeing persecution and claiming asylum to make contact with local services and get the help they need.
- » Support people to access legal support to have their immigration rights upheld and challenge decisions made by the UKBA.
- » Support asylum seeking parents have their legal rights upheld and engage with the local authority in Child Protection Investigations.



our work...



People with disabilities resident in the East End of Glasgow

- » Support adults affected by disability maintain their independence and access direct financial support to tailor their care.
- » Support local people to challenge the local authority decision to close the local disability resource centre.

“Can alleviate worries and concerns clients may have and advise on situations if the client is at a loss or doesn’t understand what to do”

East Renfrewshire.

- » Support older people affected by Guardianship restrictions access independent legal support to improve the quality of their life.
- » Help adults affected by a learning disability to have their desire to remain independent and make choices for themselves which are respected.



Adults affected by severe physical impairment.

- » Support adults affected by severe disability & who are in hospital make decisions about their future and have professionals and families listen to them.

Our Services and some examples of

Lanarkshire

South Lanarkshire

Adults who are affected by mental health issues.

- » Supporting adults in the community with the day to day issues that affect them e.g. housing or antisocial behaviour
- » Preparing and supporting adults at social work or NHS reviews and ensuring that they understand the process and outcomes
- » Preparing and supporting people to express their views and exercise their rights at mental health tribunals, in line with the principles of the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.
- » Supporting adults to understand and represent themselves as parents within the child protection and children's hearing systems and procedures.



“The advocacy worker is particularly good at persevering with patients who can be challenging due to their condition”

Older people in South Lanarkshire, in particular those affected by capacity and dementia issues.

- » Supporting individuals, who due to their mental health are subject to statutory orders, to express their past and present views, and safeguard their rights.
- » Supporting older people to access services which can assist with their finances and maximise benefits such as attendance allowance or pension credits
- » Supporting older people who are unhappy with their care and treatment in care homes, assisting them to address the issues which concern them
- » Working with individuals who are in the process of exploring the options available to them in considering their future care and support.

Adults resident in Rutherglen & Cambuslang, with a learning disability, physical disability and/or sensory impairment.

- » Providing support and representation to people with complex care needs to be as involved as they can be in their care planning.

our work...



North Lanarkshire

Adults normally resident in North Lanarkshire with a learning disability and/or communication support need.

- » Supporting people involved in the criminal justice system either as witnesses or offenders, assisting them to understand the court process and be aware of their rights
- » Supporting people to understand and participate in the process and assessment of Self Directed Support.
- » Building the confidence of individuals to represent their own views about where they want to live and how they want to live their lives.

Adults affected by adult protection legislation

- » Ensuring independent advocacy is available to individuals affected by adult protection legislation, when often the people closest to them may be causing the harm.

“Prompt and courteous responses. Professional presentation at hearings and reviews”



“Giving vulnerable older people a ‘voice’ in proceedings (AWI etc) they would struggle to understand or take part in themselves”

The Engagement & Involvement Services

What we do

- » Support people to be involved in shaping the services they receive
- » Support organisations and local authorities to ensure service user involvement and participation in all aspects of the provision of services
- » Promote the value and importance of empowering people to participate and be involved in the services they receive.

“I feel the input from my advocacy workers has made me able to be much more assertive and even challenging when necessary. I prepare before any meeting and this enables me to say what I need to”



“I was surprised and delighted that your people turned up at social work meetings to support my patients views when they could not do it themselves and that they turned up to everything and went to court too on their behalf”

Services we offer

- » Independent facilitation of service user involvement and participation
- » Coordination and facilitation of consultation events/projects
- » Support organisations to develop an engagement and involvement ethos within service provision to provide a person centred approach



Services provided this year have included:

- » Completion of a demonstration project commissioned by South Lanarkshire Council to consult with service users in care homes in South Lanarkshire
 - » Re-launch of a collective self advocacy group for people with learning difficulties living in North Lanarkshire
 - » Independent facilitation of service user involvement and participation in two large care homes in Glasgow
 - » Involvement in a project in Rutherglen which aims to move service users towards a more community based support plan through person centred planning.
 - » Independent facilitation of resident's meeting in two care homes which provide care for service users with limited capacity.
 - » Support given to a collective advocacy group of service users with learning difficulties who raised a complaint about how they had been treated in a recent review and reassessment process conducted by the local authority
 - » Consultation of service users and carers in East Renfrewshire who access dementia day services.
 - » Facilitation of the annual service user consultation event for South West Community Mental Health Project in Glasgow
 - » Facilitation of a focus group of service users and carers looking at the In Control support planning process in North Lanarkshire
 - » Facilitation of service user involvement within a residential service for adults with mental health issues in Glasgow
 - » Facilitation of service user involvement within a residential service for people with mental health issues in Rutherglen.
- We look forward in the forthcoming year to developing on-going projects and also starting new projects including:

“I would just like to thank you for all the help, you’ve been absolutely wonderful. Without your help and without your input I don’t know what the outcome would have been”

- » Consultation of people who have been affected by Adult Support and Protection legislation in East Renfrewshire and compiling information on the level of public awareness regarding this legislation
- » Developing service user participation in care homes using involvement tools such as life story projects and reminiscence aids.

Partnership Working

In addition to the ongoing delivery of services, the organisation is committed to the benefits of consultation, representation and networking at a national and local level.

We recognise that many of the people who access our services, due to failing health and limited capacity are unable to contribute meaningfully to future planning processes. We feel it is important to represent the people who use services within these groups.

Over the year our ongoing involvement has included the membership of:-

- » Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance Board
- » North Lanarkshire Advocacy Partnership
- » South Lanarkshire Advocacy Network
- » Glasgow Advocacy Providers Group
- » Glasgow Adult Protection Learning & Development Sub Group
- » Lanarkshire Recovery Network
- » South Lanarkshire Mental Health Network Group
- » North Lanarkshire Disability Partnership Board.



“As a worker within a statutory organisation, I find it reassuring that an individual has independent representation at particularly difficult/distressing episodes within their lives”

- » North Lanarkshire Service User and Carer reference group to the Adult Protection Committee.
- » South Lanarkshire Adult Protection Committee
- » East Renfrewshire Adult Protection Committee
- » East Renfrewshire AP Practice and Development Forum
- » East Renfrewshire disability Workers Forum
- » Renfrewshire Mental Health Forum
- » Scottish Refugee Council
- » Refugee Survival Trust

We have also been involved in consultation in relation to: -

- » Reshaping the Care for Older People, South Lanarkshire
- » Stakeholder events for the development of the Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan.
- » NHS Lanarkshire Mental Health Communications and Engagement Group
- » SIAA – Quality Assurance Working Group
- » SIAA – Reshaping Care for Older People

Learning and Development

The Advocacy Project is committed to the principles of continuous improvement and as such is always exploring areas of learning that will enhance our skills and experience and ultimately improve the quality of our services.

Our training programme this year has included: -

- » Self Directed Support
- » Adult Support and Protection
- » In Control
- » Leadership
- » New to Management
- » Social Return on Investment
- » Supporting people Affected by Stroke
- » Mainstreaming Service User Involvement
- » First Aid
- » Display Screen Equipment
- » Fire Safety
- » Talking Mats
- » Confident Public Speaking

“They prevented various professionals riding roughshod over patients’ personal opinions and stated their cases calmly and clearly in exacting circumstances – a voice of clarity amidst dissent, accusation and hostility”

“I now feel in control of decisions made but when I was really unwell, decisions were made on my behalf as I was not able to do this”

- » Lone Worker Training
- » Incapacity Procedures
- » Equality & Human Rights
- » Criminal Injuries Compensation
- » Welfare Reforms
- » Employment Support Allowance
- » ASIST Applied Suicide Intervention
- » Scottish Mental Health First Aid

In addition to these formal training sessions the organisation provides regular practice development sessions that are themed and participatory to facilitate the sharing of good practice.

We have also delivered training sessions this year on: -

- » Advocacy & Adult Protection
- » An Introduction to Advocacy
- » An Introduction to Service User Involvement
- » Adults with Incapacity Act & Advocacy

Director's Report

As we come to the end of another, often hectic, but always productive year it is time to reflect on our accomplishments and celebrate these successes. Independent advocacy can often be an isolating, challenging and rewarding job, all in the one day, so it is always important to mark our achievements.

Last September we reported on a successful review of the structure of the organisation with the development of a specific Engagement and Involvement service. You will see within this report that the work it has already accomplished has exceeded our expectations and we are delighted with the way this approach, while not direct advocacy provision, complements the services and contributes to the aims and principles of the organisation, as well as reaching out to people who are often overlooked when views of services are being sought.

Some of our headlines this year include: -

- » The establishment of the Engagement and Involvement Team.
- » A positive and complementary IIP Report that focussed on the restructure process.
- » Signing the "See Me..." campaign and formalising our commitment and support to challenging the stigma of mental health.
- » Jointly hosting a successful service user stakeholder event to contribute to the development of the Lanarkshire Advocacy Plan.

- » Through staff practice working groups, developing organisational procedures for working with people who lack capacity.
- » Developing a Strategic Business Plan to provide direction for the organisation.
- » Getting the advocacy message across to practitioners involved in Adult Protection.
- » Positive and constructive evaluation feedback from our referrers and people who use our services.
- » Progressing towards an outcome based evaluation framework that better reflects the impact of advocacy.
- » Progressing towards a Social Return on Investment Report on our Glasgow service.

Every year brings us different challenges and we feel it's important to embrace these as potential opportunities. As ever, I express my appreciation to my colleagues within the Project for their hard work and commitment and the board for their continued support and direction.



Moira Nicholson

Director

Independent Advocacy

What is Independent Advocacy?

We all need an advocate at some time in our lives. It helps to have someone around to make a difficult phone call, someone who can help write a letter or someone to go with you to a difficult meeting.

In many cases, the advocate is a friend or a family member; in others it is a teacher, nurse or social worker. This is fine, but what if we don't have any of these people around? Or what if the problem relates in some way to your family, teacher, nurse or social worker? This is where independent advocacy can help. This is when people are supported to speak up for themselves by a person who is only there for them and has no ties to the other agencies or people in their lives.



The Advocacy Project employs staff to act as independent advocates for people who have difficulty speaking up. The advocates are well trained and supported by the Project. They are all subject to checks under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme and are bound by a range of policies and procedures that include things like confidentiality and adult and child protection.

Unfortunately, independent advocates cannot guarantee results but they can ensure that a person's voice is heard and considered in all situations. Neither are advocates a substitute for other services like health or social care, welfare rights, solicitors etc.

“I was most impressed by the organisation, practical, pleasant approach and sound service received”

Staff



“You offer a very important service and I feel empowered to speak up for myself and others when being put down for having mental health problems”

Who's who

Board

Thomas McGuigan Board Member

Colin Menabney Board Member

Frank Murphy Board Member

Ann Marie Docherty Board Member

Angus Reid Board Member

Derek Langfield Board Member

Bailie Iris Gibson Board Member

Cllr Philip Braat Board Member

Management

Moira Nicholson Director

Gerry McGuire Operations Manager

Jacqueline Cameron
Operations Manger

Michelle Knox
Engagement & Involvement Manager

Caroline Cadden
Business Support Manager

Engagement & Involvement

Catriona Rowley
Engagement & Involvement Co-ordinator

Ann Lafferty
Engagement & Involvement Facilitator

Advocates

Catherine Atiken Advocacy Worker

Dougie Baird Advocacy Worker

Olivia Fitton Advocacy Worker

Michelle Hay Advocacy Worker

Leanne Jamieson Advocacy Worker

Maureen A Kane Advocacy Worker

Tony Leith Advocacy Worker

Stuart Minnis Advocacy Worker

Muleya Mundemba Advocacy Worker

Cameron Macfarlane Advocacy Worker

Charlie McBride Advocacy Worker

AnnMarie McGregor Advocacy Worker

Leanne McGurl Advocacy Worker

Angela McManus Advocacy Worker

Antoinette Quinn Advocacy Worker

Tracy Smith Advocacy Worker

Jimmy Smith Advocacy Worker

Evelyn Theriault Advocacy Worker

Valerie Topping Advocacy Worker

Business Support

Joyce Dougal Administrator

Catherine Middleton Administrator

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NHS Lanarkshire

Glasgow City Council

South Lanarkshire Council

North Lanarkshire Council

East Renfrewshire Health & Care Partnership



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