



The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

# **Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy**



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*“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*

Martin Luther King Jr.

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## Introduction to the Principles and Standards

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### History and context of independent advocacy in Scotland

Advocacy is about standing up to injustice. It is something that happens all the time, is a part of all our lives and is something we all do. It takes place at a local level amongst family members, friends, neighbours and colleagues, but it also happens at a national and international level amongst people who will probably never meet.

Independent advocacy has been funded in Scotland for many years and there are a number of advocacy organisations that have been funded consistently for over 15 years. Over time the Scottish advocacy movement has grown and there are now over 100 independent advocacy organisations in Scotland. These organisations support a range of people to fulfil their dreams, wishes and desires as well as meet some very basic needs.

Advocacy is becoming better known and understood and is increasingly referred to in Government legislation and policy documents. The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 was the first piece of legislation that gave people the right to access independent advocacy.

### What is independent advocacy?

*“Many people in society are disempowered by systems which have a significant effect on almost every aspect of their lives. These are people who are disempowered to such an extent that they are unlikely to be able to fulfil their basic human needs or demand their basic human rights. A person’s initial hopes and dreams can be severely limited by this. Independent advocacy can help to widen a person’s horizons and enable them to become active members of society”.*

Principles and standards in Independent Advocacy organisations and groups, Advocacy2000 (2002)

Many of us find it difficult, at times, to get our voice heard about decisions or actions that affect our lives. Some people have family, friends or other carers to help them to speak up. Others do not have people in their lives to do that, and sometimes, if they do, family members may have their own ideas about ‘what is best’ for the person involved. Paid carers may have a duty to defend the actions of the organisation that they work for. This

means that they have a 'conflict of interest'. Independent advocacy is as free as possible from conflicts of interest like these, is completely separate from service providers and funders and does not provide services other than advocacy.

Independent advocacy aims to help people by supporting them to express their own needs and make their own informed decisions. Independent advocates support people to gain access to information and explore and understand their options. They speak on behalf of people who are unable to speak for themselves, or choose not to do so. They safeguard people who are vulnerable or discriminated against or whom services find difficult to support.

Advocacy is about broadening horizons and widening the options that people have. It is about speaking up if you notice that something is wrong. An effective advocate will observe the whole person and all aspects of their life. They will notice what is wrong in the person's life, things that the person tolerates perhaps because they do not know any different, and tries to address them.

Advocates are sometimes accused of having their own agenda or 'putting ideas in their advocacy partner's head' and we have addressed this issue in this document and the *Code of Practice for Independent Advocacy*. But it is important to recognise that an effective advocate will use their knowledge, experience and skills to enable their advocacy partner to have the best life possible. This might mean that the advocate tells their advocacy partner about an option that the advocacy partner does not know about or would never have thought of themselves. The SIAA believes that this is an example of an advocate helping to broaden an individual's life.

Sometimes people think that advocacy is about working in the best interests of an individual. In fact, sometimes the advocate is supporting an individual to do something that is not in their own best interests. Often professionals make decisions that are in the best interests of an individual because they have a legal duty to do so. Advocates do not have such a legal duty. An effective advocate needs to challenge, question and hold professionals to account when best interests are given as a reason for decisions made about their advocacy partner.

Advocacy is important to ensure justice, equality and fairness. It is something we can all do and something we can all benefit from, regardless of our skills and abilities because we can all be vulnerable in different situations and at different times of our lives. An important way of helping people understand advocacy and the role of the advocate would be for us all to think 'what would I do if this was happening to someone I cared

about?' This is about the importance of advocates being proactive and taking action because someone is being treated unfairly. This would be especially important if the person had limited communication or capacity or if they didn't have anyone to support them.

## The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)

The SIAA is a membership organisation responsible for promoting, supporting and defending independent advocacy in Scotland. It has the overall aim of ensuring that independent advocacy is available to any person in Scotland.

The SIAA provides information and support, gathers and distributes information, represents advocacy organisations at various levels and raises awareness and understanding of independent advocacy across Scotland. The SIAA works to influence legislation, policy and practice in relation to advocacy. More information about the work of the SIAA is available on our website [www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk).

## History and context of this document

The Advocacy Safeguards Agency (ASA) and the SIAA started to review the *Principles and standards in Independent Advocacy organisations and groups* (2002) produced by Advocacy2000. The SIAA took this forward when the ASA was dissolved.

The SIAA re-established the Principles and Standards Working Group which was made up of committed individuals from the advocacy movement. The Group worked to ensure that the Principles and Standards developed by Advocacy2000 were used as a foundation for this document to build upon. The Group ensured that the essence of the original document was reflected in this document. The Group also wanted to make sure that this document was as easy to read and understand as possible. The SIAA conducted a lengthy consultation process to ensure that everyone in the Scottish advocacy movement had an opportunity to give their feedback, thoughts and ideas at each stage of the document's development.

## What is the purpose of the Principles and Standards?

The purpose of this document is to give people an understanding of what independent advocacy is and what advocates do. Advocates and advocacy organisations will use it to assist them to operate in a clear and responsible way. The document will be useful for advocacy organisations to ensure that they are providing high quality advocacy. Also, it is designed

to help people who use advocacy and others who come into contact with advocacy have a clear understanding of what they can expect. A Code of Practice has also been developed to be used with this document, giving examples of how the Principles and Standards may work in practice.

We want this document to inspire and motivate people to advocate informally everyday. Also, we want people to be excited and passionate about advocacy and get involved with their local advocacy organisation. We do not want to restrict the role of the advocate or restrict the people who can become involved in advocacy.

This document is about safeguarding the people who use advocacy but also it is meant to safeguard advocacy itself. This is because independent advocacy is often still misunderstood, threatened and undervalued and sometimes it is viewed with suspicion and even hostility.

Ultimately, the aim is to make sure that the people who use advocacy are getting good quality advocacy and have confidence in the help and support they receive.

## Do the Principles and Standards apply to everyone?

These Principles and Standards are written to apply to all forms of advocacy. We believe that, although diverse in their approaches and beliefs, advocacy organisations have more similarities than differences, and that the core principles are therefore the same for all. Advocacy organisations may meet the standards in different ways, and this document allows for this flexibility. Advocacy organisations may use slightly different language and this is explained in the glossary. There is also a separate section about citizen advocacy.

## What happens if the Principles and Standards are not met?

The SIAA recognises that there may be circumstances when some of these Principles and Standards are not fully met. It is then up to the advocacy organisation, the commissioners, funders and the advocacy service users to put measures in place to ensure that the Principles and Standards are adhered to as closely as possible.

## What are Principles, Standards and Indicators?

**Principles** are the core beliefs about independent advocacy. These are the ideas that guide everything that advocates and advocacy organisations do.

**Standards** outline what should happen in order to meet the Principles.

**Indicators** are the evidence of how advocates and advocacy organisations meet each Standard.

## Why are they split into different sections?

Each set of indicators is split into three sections that outline the responsibilities for the advocate, advocacy organisation and collective advocacy group. This will make it easy for people involved in advocacy to understand what their different responsibilities are for making sure that what they do meets the relevant standard. The SIAA feel that peer advocacy organisations would use a combination of indicators for the individual advocate and the collective advocacy group, as appropriate.

## What about non-independent advocacy?

These Principles and Standards are designed primarily for use by independent advocacy organisations. The SIAA recognises that there are a number of organisations that provide advocacy as well as providing other services. For example, a carer's organisation may provide care, advice and training as well as advocacy.

The SIAA recognises that this is a pragmatic way of increasing the advocacy available to the people who need it most. However, as with independent advocacy, it is important that advocates work in a clear, accountable and transparent way. Therefore, the SIAA would encourage non-independent advocacy organisations to use the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* to monitor and evaluate themselves, ensure that good quality advocacy is happening and that the people who use advocacy have confidence in the support they receive. Ultimately, the organisation can use this document to work towards becoming an independent organisation.

It is important that the people providing the advocacy for the organisation are as independent as possible from the other services provided by the organisation and the SIAA feels that special consideration needs to be given to Principle 3: *"Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest"* and the associated standards: 3.1: *"Independent advocacy cannot be controlled by a service provider"*; 3.2: *"Independent*

*advocacy and promoting independent advocacy are the only things that independent advocacy organisations do”; 3.3: “Independent advocacy looks out for and minimises conflicts of interest”.*

It is the responsibility of the advocacy provider, the commissioners, funders and the people who use the advocacy to identify the potential conflicts of interest, identify ways of managing the conflicts of interest and to take action to enhance the independence of the advocacy organisation as much as possible.

## Advocacy for Specific Groups

### Children and Young People

These Principles and Standards apply equally to advocacy for those under 16, whether they live in the community, are detained or are “looked after”. However, there are some key factors that need to be taken into account. It is important to remember that although children under 16 do not have the same legal rights as adults, the advocate can still represent their wishes as vigorously as they would an adult’s.

Advocacy for children often necessitates a fairly close working relationship with the parents (unless that is not appropriate). Advocates should be clear (with themselves and others) that they are advocating for the child, not the parent, though their views may be similar.

Child protection legislation means that advocates must disclose any suspicions of abuse or neglect immediately, despite the fact that this may compromise the advocacy relationship. We believe that all advocacy organisations, whether or not they work with children, should have child protection policies, as some adults they work with may have contact with children.

For very young or profoundly disabled children the principles of non instructed advocacy may apply. Some organisations do not believe it is appropriate to provide advocacy for children before they are old enough to form and express a view. Parents in this case are normally directed to a carer’s advocacy organisation.

### People who Lack Capacity or have Profound Communication Difficulties

The SIAA feels that if people lack capacity or have such profound communication difficulties that they cannot tell an advocate what they want in life then they are additionally marginalised and therefore have a greater need for independent advocacy. The role of the advocate in such a situation would involve gathering as much information about the

person and their past and present wishes (if appropriate) as they can. This may be from family, friends, care staff and other people involved in that person's life. It is important to acknowledge that a person's capacity can vary from day to day depending on their condition or the issue with which they are dealing. An advocate should try to ensure that their advocacy partner understands the situation as best as possible and support them accordingly.

The advocate would use their common sense, the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy*, the *Code of Practice*, the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and any other relevant legislation or policy to help them think about enabling the person to have the best life possible. Advocacy in such situations would be called non-instructed advocacy.

### **Non-instructed advocacy**

*"Non-instructed advocacy is taking affirmative action with or on behalf of a person who is unable to give a clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation. The non-instructed advocate seeks to uphold the person's rights; ensure fair and equal treatment and access to services; and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences and perspectives." (Henderson, 2006)*

## Different types of advocacy

### **Citizen advocacy**

Citizen advocacy is when ordinary citizens are encouraged to become involved with a person who might need support in their communities. The citizen advocate is not paid and not motivated by personal gain. The relationship between the citizen advocate and their advocacy partner is on a one-to-one, long term basis. It is based on trust between the partner and the advocate and is supported but not influenced by the advocacy organisation. The advocate supports their partner using their natural skills and talents rather than being trained in the role. For a fuller explanation of citizen advocacy please go to page 12 at the end of this section.

### **Group or Collective advocacy**

Collective advocacy is where a group of people who are all facing a common problem get together on a formal basis to support each other over specific issues. Individual members of the group may also support each other over specific issues. The group as a whole may campaign on an issue that affects them all. A collective voice can be stronger than that of an individual, as groups are more difficult to ignore. Being part of a collective advocacy group can help to reduce an individual's sense of isolation when raising a difficult issue.

### **Peer advocacy**

Peer advocacy is when individuals share significant life experiences. The peer advocate and their advocacy partner may share age, gender, ethnicity, diagnosis or issues. Peer advocates use their own experiences to understand and empathise with their advocacy partner. Peer advocacy works to increase self awareness, confidence and assertiveness so that the individual can speak out for themselves, lessening the imbalance of power between the advocate and their advocacy partner.

### **Professional advocacy**

Professional advocacy is also known as one to one, individual or issue based advocacy. It is provided by both paid and unpaid advocates. An advocate supports an individual to represent their own interests or represents the views of an individual if the person is unable to do this themselves. They provide support on specific issues and provide information but not advice. This support can be short or long term.

## Citizen Advocacy

A citizen advocate is someone who is matched with a person who needs someone to be on their side. The person they are matched with is called their partner. Often the partner has no-one else in their life to watch out for them — often they have some difficulty communicating their wishes to other people, and may be quite socially isolated.

A citizen advocate is not paid, nor would they expect to receive any other financial or material benefit from being an advocate. They support their partner in an open-ended, usually long-term basis.

Citizen advocacy has developed a set of principles and practice. The principles and standards set out in this document for individual advocacy are also subscribed to by citizen advocacy organisations, although some of the terminology may be different. Citizen advocates do many of the things that other individual advocates do. However there are also some additional features which citizen advocacy organisations generally strive to achieve.

The main characteristics of citizen advocacy are:

- The relationship between the advocate and the partner is of central importance and is regarded as a beneficial outcome in itself
- The long-term nature of citizen advocacy means that advocates can get to know someone really well and therefore be in a relatively good position to understand the partner's interests and wishes from their viewpoint
- As well as focusing on particular issues, the citizen advocate has a role in supporting the person to make connections with other people and to be included in the community — they and their partner are free to choose from a range of roles and activities and do not have to account to the advocacy organisation for the activities which they and their partner have chosen to engage in (provided they are lawful and within the organisation's Code of Expectations)
- The advocacy relationship continues even if there are no particular problems to be sorted out — the advocate keeps a "watching brief", being there to see that the person's rights are upheld and trying to prevent problems from arising

- Advocates are only matched with one partner at a time
- Citizen advocacy organisations promote a view of citizen advocates as people who enter into freely-given mutually beneficial relationships with their fellow citizens, rather than people who provide a service to clients — for this reason they are generally referred to as “advocates” rather than “volunteers”, and advocates are supported in a non-directive manner rather than supervised
- The advocacy project is rooted in the local geographical community and aims to develop good links within it
- The advocacy organisation has a role in promoting a positive view of the group who receive advocacy, and demonstrating through citizen advocacy partnerships that partners contribute to their community
- Citizen advocacy staff give their attention to creating and supporting partnerships and raising the profile of advocacy and the rights of people for whom it advocates — they do not themselves engage in direct advocacy with people referred to the organisation
- Citizen advocates are encouraged to use their own personal networks and other people and organisations for support, not just the advocacy organisation.

Not all of these features are exclusive to citizen advocacy, but they are the main principles which citizen advocacy organisations are expected to follow, and which they would be evaluated against using a citizen advocacy evaluation tool such as CAPE (Citizen Advocacy Programme Evaluation).

*“Advocacy is about addressing the imbalance of power”*

## Principle 1

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# Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

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### ✓ Standard 1.1

*Independent advocacy is directed by the needs, interests, views and wishes of the people who use it*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a That they, and where possible, their partner are clear on the role of the advocate.
- b They represent the wishes and views of their partner, not their own interests or those of others.



The organisation must be able to show:

- c It makes sure that advocates and their partners are clear about the role of the advocate.
- d It makes sure that advocates can communicate with a variety of people and can access relevant communication training.
- e It has clear ways of starting and ending advocacy relationships.

**Principle 1:** Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

**Standard 1.1:** Independent advocacy is directed by the needs, interests, views and wishes of the people who use it

---

The group must be able to show:

- f** The work of the group is directed by its members.
- g** That it decides what its priorities are.
- h** Collective advocacy development workers and group members are clear about their roles.
- i** Anyone representing the group is clear about their role.



## Principle 1: Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

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### ✓ Standard 1.2

*Independent advocacy helps people to have control over their lives and to be fully involved in decisions which affect them*

#### Indicators



#### The advocate must be able to show:

- a They try to help their partner get as much information as possible about available choices.
- b They use different methods to explore choices and options, where appropriate.
- c They try to make sure their partner understands the options and what might happen if they make those choices.
- d They try to help their partner make informed decisions and choices.
- e They help their partner try to influence the way decisions are made.



#### The organisation must be able to show:

- f It makes sure that advocates understand their role in helping people make informed choices and decisions.
- g It makes sure any person using advocacy, regardless of their communication needs, has an appropriate advocate.
- h It supports its advocates to find information for their partners.
- i It has ways of checking whether advocacy helps people to influence the way decisions are made.

**Principle 1:** Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

**Standard 1.2:** Independent advocacy helps people to have control over their lives and to be fully involved in decisions which affect them

---

The group must be able to show:

- j** It tries to influence the way decisions are made.
- k** Collective advocacy development workers help the group get as much information as they can to make informed choices.
- l** It uses a variety of methods to help the members to share and discuss their issues.



**Principle 1:** Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

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✓ **Standard 1.3**

*Independent advocacy tries to make sure that people's rights are protected*

**Indicators**



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They know about relevant legislation and policy and where to find out about it.
- b They try to make sure their partner understands their rights.



The organisation must be able to show:

- c Advocates receive appropriate training and information about relevant legislation and policy.
- d It has ways of checking whether advocacy helps to protect people's rights.



The group must be able to show:

- e Collective advocacy development workers are aware of relevant legislation and policy and where to find out about it.
- f Collective advocacy development workers try to make sure the group understands its rights.

Notes

*“We have created a society that does not allow opportunities for people to take care of themselves because we have denied them opportunities.”*

Mohammad Yunus

## Principle 1: Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

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### ✓ Standard 1.4

*Independent advocacy values the people who use it and always treats people with dignity and respect*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a Their partner is given space and time to say what they think.
- b Their partner can have their say in a number of ways.
- c The views of their partner are taken seriously.
- d They always keep their partner informed and do not keep information from them.
- e They do not do anything their partner does not want them to do except in certain circumstances laid out in the *Code of Practice for Independent Advocacy*.
- f They always show their partner in a positive and respectful way.



The organisation must be able to show:

- g It has policies about treating everyone involved in the organisation with respect and dignity and it makes sure that training is provided where needed.
- h It shows the people who use the advocacy organisation in a positive and respectful way.

**Principle 1:** Independent advocacy puts the people who use it first

**Standard 1.4:** Independent advocacy values the people who use it and always treats people with dignity and respect

---

The group must be able to show:

- i** People are given space and time to say what they think.
- j** It has agreed how members will work together and it follows this.
- k** It listens to its members.
- l** People can have their say in a number of ways and can have different views.
- m** It always shows the people who are or could be group members in a positive and respectful way.



## Principle 2

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# Independent advocacy is accountable

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### ✓ Standard 2.1

*Independent advocacy is accountable to the people who use it*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They are accountable to their partner and the advocacy organisation.
- b They are directed by the wishes of their advocacy partner.
- c Everyone they support knows how to make a complaint about the advocacy they receive.
- d When advocating for people who lack capacity or are not able to communicate clearly they work according to relevant legislation, the past and present wishes of their partner, observations of their partner's responses to different situations, and may need to consider the views of friends, family and others.



The organisation must be able to show:

- e It makes sure that advocates receive appropriate training on their role.
- f There is regular support and supervision or guidance for all advocates.
- g It is aware of who uses advocacy and uses this information to identify gaps and inform development.
- h It actively involves people who use the organisation in planning, managing, delivering and evaluating the service, wherever possible.
- i It is open about the way it makes decisions and the work it is going to do.

> *continued opposite*

**Principle 2:** Independent advocacy is accountable

**Standard 2.1:** Independent advocacy is accountable to the people who use it

---

### Organisations (continued):



- j** It has a simple, clear complaints policy and everyone involved with the organisation has been told about it.
- k** It makes sure that people using advocacy can say what they think about the support they get.
- l** It has an independent evaluation carried out at least every 3 years.

### The group must be able to show:



- m** It is open about the way it makes decisions.
- n** It can represent a range of different views.
- o** It regularly thinks about the way it works and how this could be improved.
- p** Collective advocacy development workers are guided by the feedback received from the group.
- q** It has ways for members to influence its work.

## Principle 2: Independent advocacy is accountable

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### ✓ Standard 2.2

*Independent advocacy is accountable under the law*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They work within the law.
- b They do not assist their partner to break the law.



The organisation must be able to show:

- c Advocates receive appropriate training on relevant legislation and policy.
- d Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure that everyone is working within the law.
- e It follows relevant legislation.



The group must be able to show:

- f Collective advocacy development workers do not assist the group to break the law.

Notes

*"Be the change that you want to see in the world."*

Mohandas Gandhi

## Principle 2: Independent advocacy is accountable

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### ✓ Standard 2.3

*Independent advocacy is effectively managed*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They work within the policies and procedures of the advocacy organisation.
- b They work within the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and the *Code of Practice*.



The organisation must be able to show:

- c It tries to make sure it has enough resources to do its work properly.
- d It seeks funding from a variety of sources.
- e It has its own Constitution and management structure.
- f It has relevant policies and procedures.
- g It is accountable to its funders, providing reasonable information to them, bearing in mind confidentiality.
- h It does not enter into any agreements that contradict the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and the *Code of Practice* and therefore compromise the ethos of the organisation.
- i It has a clear way of prioritising requests for advocacy.
- j It offers a choice of advocate, where possible.

> *continued opposite*

**Principle 2:** Independent advocacy is accountable

**Standard 2.3:** Independent advocacy is effectively managed

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### Organisations (continued):



- k** It has ways of finding out advocacy partners' views on the advocacy they receive.
- l** It tells advocates about everything in the Service Level Agreement, Funding Contract or Grant that they need to know for their role.
- m** Advocates are aware of and abide by the policies of the organisation.
- n** Advocates are aware of and abide by the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and the *Code of Practice*.

### The group must be able to show:



- o** Collective advocacy development workers abide by the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and the *Code of Practice* and the policies and procedures of the advocacy organisation.

## Principle 3

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# Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

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### ✓ Standard 3.1

*Independent advocacy cannot be controlled by a service provider*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a Their actions are not influenced by the views of service providers.
- b They are aware of boundaries in their relationships.



The organisation must be able to show:

- c It has its own Constitution and independent management structure.
- d Staff and volunteers of service providers and funders are not full members of the Board of Directors or Management Committee of the advocacy organisation.
- e It does not enter into any agreements which unduly direct, influence or restrict the work of the organisation.
- f It has clear policies and procedures in place about the things that advocates do and what to do in situations where service providers may try to direct what advocates do.
- g Appropriate preparation and training is provided for advocates.
- h It has procedures for identifying and managing any conflict of interest.

**Principle 3:** Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

**Standard 3.1:** Independent advocacy cannot be controlled by a service provider

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The group must be able to show:



- i** Collective advocacy development workers supporting the group are not employed by a service provider.
- j** Staff of a service provider cannot be full members of a group as part of their work.
- k** Staff employed by the advocacy organisation cannot be full members of the group.

**Principle 3:** Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

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### ✓ Standard 3.2

*Independent advocacy and promoting independent advocacy are the only things that independent advocacy organisations do*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They are clear about their role and act within it.



The organisation must be able to show:

- b It has a clear Constitution, Mission Statement, policies and procedures and job and role descriptions for everyone involved in the organisation and these are regularly reviewed.
- c It provides training to everyone involved in the organisation on what advocacy is and is not.
- d It does not get involved in activities that undermine or contradict the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and the *Code of Practice*.
- e It is eligible to be a member of the SIAA.
- f It produces information to tell people about everything that it does.

**Principle 3:** Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

**Standard 3.2:** Independent advocacy and promoting independent advocacy are the only things that independent advocacy organisations do

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The group must be able to show:



- g** It is clear about what advocacy is and is not.
- h** Collective advocacy development workers are clear about their role and act within it.

**Principle 3:** Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

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### ✓ Standard 3.3

*Independent advocacy looks out for and minimises conflicts of interest*

#### Indicators

#### The advocate must be able to show:

- a They are aware of anything that may compromise their role as an advocate.
- b They are aware of boundaries in all the relationships they establish in their role as advocates.
- c They always tell the organisation about any conflict of interest.
- d They tell their advocacy partner about any conflict of interest, where it will affect them.

#### The organisation must be able to show:

- e Everyone involved in the organisation receives training, support and supervision or guidance on the importance of independence and reducing conflicts of interest.
- f It has clear policies and procedures on relationships established by advocates and what happens when boundaries are not clear or are crossed.
- g It has clear guidance, policies and procedures on how everyone involved in the organisation can declare a conflict of interest and how this will be managed.
- h It has a clear policy for declaring conflicts of interest to funders and commissioners and other relevant parties.

**Principle 3:** Independent advocacy is as free as it can be from conflicts of interest

**Standard 3.3:** Independent advocacy looks out for and minimises conflicts of interest

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The group must be able to show:



- i** Everyone involved in the work of the group is as free as they can be from conflicts of interest.
- j** Members and collective advocacy development workers are aware of possible conflicts of interest and have procedures for managing them.
- k** Members are aware of boundaries in all the relationships they establish in their role as representatives of the group.
- l** Collective advocacy development workers are aware of boundaries in all the relationships they establish in their work.

*“Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each others’ welfare, social justice can never be attained.”*

Helen Keller

## Principle 4

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# Independent advocacy is accessible

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### ✓ Standard 4.1

*Independent advocacy reaches out to the widest possible range of people, regardless of ability or life circumstances*

#### Indicators



The advocate must be able to show:

- a They work within policies relating to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.
- b They do not discriminate against anyone who uses or may benefit from advocacy.
- c They always show a positive view of advocacy and follow the *Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy* and *Code of Practice*.



The organisation must be able to show:

- d Advocacy is free to the people who use it.
- e It tries to reach people who could benefit from advocacy, including those who may find it difficult to access advocacy themselves.
- f It presents the community of interest in a positive and respectful way.
- g It makes meeting with an advocate as easy as possible.
- h It has an equal opportunities policy and everyone within the organisation has received training on it and abides by it.

**Principle 4:** Independent advocacy is accessible

**Standard 4.1:** Independent advocacy reaches out to the widest possible range of people, regardless of ability or life circumstances

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The group must be able to show:



- i** People do not have to pay to take part in the group.
- j** It tries to reach out to particular marginalised people within the community of interest who could be members of the group.
- k** It tries to welcome and include a range of people as members of the group.
- l** It has an equal opportunities policy and it works within it.

*“A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

## Appendix 1 — Advocacy is, advocacy is not

### **Advocacy is...**

- about standing alongside people who are in danger of being pushed to the margins of society.
- about standing up for and sticking with a person or group and taking their side.
- a process of working towards natural justice.
- listening to someone and trying to understand their point of view.
- finding out what makes them feel good and valued.
- understanding their situation and what may be stopping them from getting what they want.
- offering the person support to tell other people what they want or introducing them to others who may be able to help.
- helping someone to know what choices they have and what the consequences of these choices might be.
- enabling a person to have control over their life but taking up issues on their behalf if they want you to.

**Advocacy is not...**

- making decisions for someone.
- mediation.
- counselling.
- befriending.
- care and support work.
- consultation.
- telling or advising someone what you think they should do.
- solving all someone's problems for them.
- speaking for people when they are able to express a view.
- filling all the gaps in someone's life.
- acting in a way which benefits other people more than the person you are advocating for.
- agreeing with everything a person says and doing anything a person asks you to do.

## Appendix 2 — Glossary

### **Advocate**

An advocate helps people express their views and make informed decisions. An advocate helps people to find out information, explore options and decide for themselves what they want. Advocates can be a voice for the person and encourage them to speak out for themselves.

There are different kinds of advocacy, though they all share things in common. Advocates will never tell people what to do, or allow their own opinions to affect the support they provide. All advocacy tries to increase confidence and assertiveness so that people can start speaking out for themselves.

Independent advocates are as free from conflicts of interest as possible.

### **Advocacy**

The process of standing alongside another, speaking on behalf of another and encouraging the person to speak up for themselves. Advocacy can help address the imbalance of power in society and stand up to injustice.

### **Advocacy agreement**

An Advocacy Agreement explains, for example, what the person can expect from their advocate, what issues they want the advocate to support them with, the contact details of the advocate, what happens at the end of the advocacy partnership and the advocacy organisation's complaints process.

### **Advocacy partner**

The person who uses advocacy. Some advocacy organisations use the term 'client' or 'service user'.

### **AGM**

Annual General Meeting, a meeting held once a year for organisations that are a registered charity or company. At this meeting representatives are elected on to the Management Committee or Board of Directors.

### **Capacity**

Ability to reason, make decisions and consider choices, express views and receive and understand information. The law assumes that people have capacity unless a doctor's assessment shows that a person lacks capacity.

## **Commissioner**

Usually representatives from the Local Authority or Health Board who fund advocacy.

## **Community of interest**

The group of people that the advocacy organisation has been set up to support, for example, people with learning difficulties or mental health issues.

## **Conflict of interest**

Anything that could get in the way of an advocate being completely loyal to their advocacy partner. For example, it would not be appropriate for an advocate volunteering for a mental health advocacy organisation to also work in the local psychiatric hospital, because this would affect their ability to be on the side of the advocacy partner. It would also affect their relationships with hospital staff. Other conflicts of interest could include relationships as well as financial investments.

## **Dementia**

Dementia is the loss (usually gradual) of mental abilities such as thinking, remembering, and reasoning. It is not a disease, but a group of symptoms that may accompany some diseases or conditions affecting the brain. There are many different types of dementia, each with their own causes. The most common dementia symptoms include loss of memory, confusion and changes in personality, mood and behaviour.

## **Discriminatory practices**

Anything that an organisation or individual does that directly or indirectly shows prejudice or favouritism towards an individual or group of people.

## **Diversity**

Differences, for example, in age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, nationality or religion among various groups, at different levels such as within a community, organisation, or nation.

## **Equal opportunities**

The prevention, elimination or regulation of discrimination between people on the grounds of, for example, gender, marital status, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language, social origin or other personal attributes, including, but not limited to, religious beliefs or political opinions.

## **Financial guardian**

A guardian appointed by the court with property and/or financial powers to act or make decisions on behalf of another adult.

## **Funding contract**

The agreement, usually between Local Authority or Health Boards and the advocacy organisation, which outlines how much funding the organisation receives, which geographical areas will be covered, who the advocacy is for and how long the funding is for. (Also see Service Level Agreement)

## **Independent advocacy organisation**

Advocacy organisation that is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from service providers and other services.

**Structurally** — an independent advocacy organisation is a separate organisation in its own right. For example, they are registered as a charity or company and have their own Management Committee or Board of Directors. Everyone involved in the organisation recognises that they are separate and different from other organisations and services.

**Financially** — an independent advocacy organisation has its own source of funding that does not cause any conflicts of interest and that does not compromise the work it does. (See conflict of interest)

**Psychologically** — Everyone involved in the organisation knows that they are only limited in what they do by the principles of independent advocacy, resources and the law. It is important to recognise that although there may be conflicts of interest present, psychological independence is vital.

## **Jargon**

Words that have special meanings that are only understood by certain people. For example: MHO (Mental Health Officer), CPN (Community Psychiatric Nurse), OT (Occupational Therapist), CTO (Compulsory Treatment Order).

## **Register of interests**

A register lists any conflicts of interest that people who are involved in the organisation have. The level of information recorded in the register will be decided by the organisation. The organisation will decide who is able to access this information in accordance with relevant legislation, such as the Data Protection Act 1998.

## **Safeguard**

Ensuring that people's rights are protected.

## **Service Level Agreement**

The agreement, usually between the Local Authority or Health Boards and the advocacy organisation, which outlines how much funding they receive, which geographical areas will be covered, who the advocacy is for and how long the funding is for.

## **Service provider**

A person or organisation involved in giving support or care services to an individual.

## **Service User**

The person who uses advocacy. Some advocacy organisations use the term 'client' or 'advocacy partner'.

## **Support and supervision**

Reflective practice, problem-solving, peer support, individual support and guidance for all members of staff and volunteers in an organisation. Supervision should be a positive experience for all and should take place regularly.

## **Third party**

A person or organisation not directly connected with the advocacy partnership.

## Appendix 3 — Policies and Procedures

- Absence Management Policy
- Abuse and Neglect Policy
- Access to Employee Data Policy
- Accident Reporting Policy
- Advocacy Partnership/Relationship Policy
- Annual Holidays Policy
- Appraisal Procedure
- Assigning the Appropriate Advocate Policy
- Breastfeeding Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Case Management/Recording Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Comments, Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Compassionate Leave Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Employment/Volunteer Contract
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Finance Policy
- Gifts Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Guidance for Dealing with Difficulty
- Harassment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Induction Policy

- Internet Procedure
- Lone Working Policy
- Maternity and Paternity Policy
- Monitoring, Review and Evaluation Policy
- Non-instructed Advocacy Policy
- Personal and Professional Development Policy
- Respect for Diversity Policy
- Procedure on Seeking Hard to Reach People
- Protection of Vulnerable People Policy
- Recruitment of Ex-offenders Policy
- Recruitment/Selection Policy
- Redundancy Policy
- Referral Policy
- Relationship Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Self Harm Policy
- Smoking Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Support and Supervision Policy
- Temporary Employees Policy
- Training/Preparation Policy
- Volunteering Policy
- User involvement Policy
- Whistle blowing Policy

This is not an exhaustive list of policies. An organisation may have different policies depending on the way that they practice advocacy or the community that they provide advocacy for. It is advisable to review policies on an annual basis.

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