



# Annual Report 2025

## A Message from Ann Marie Docherty



### **Welcome to our 33rd annual report.**

Welcome to our 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Report. Once again, we have had a fabulous year, and we are going from strength to strength. The move to the new city centre office is working for everyone connected with The Advocacy Project.

We have taken the bold step to join Independent Advocacy Scotland to submit a consortium bid for a national advocacy contract. This has been a very interesting, challenging and rewarding piece of work for everyone associated with The Advocacy Project.

The Board identified innovative ways to provide additional value to the core services that we deliver, by investing in community-based support for a range of groups. These new initiatives have included the Connect Team, funded through our innovation fund, which is proving to be a huge success and continues to be a priority this year.

Another priority is the delivery of our community outreach projects which benefits other charities and the wider communities and additionally promotes the incredible work of The Advocacy Project.

Each year I think that we couldn't possibly achieve more, only to be surprised by the commitment and dedication of our staff team led by our CEO Jacqueline Norwood. On behalf of the Board of Directors I want to pass on my thanks to our senior leadership team and all our staff members for their contribution to the success of our organisation.

I also want to thank my colleagues on the Board who demonstrate their leadership and skills in every aspect of their role within The Advocacy Project.

We are looking forward to taking forward our plans for the future, and another successful year. I hope you enjoy this year's annual report.

**Ann Marie Docherty**  
**Chairperson**

## A Note from Jacqueline Norwood



It has again been a year of positives and change, working with the board and staff, as we continue to improve across the business, never forgetting that our key focus is to deliver excellent independent advocacy.

The members of the board have once again given up their time to ensure the wellbeing of the organisation and its staff. The sub-committees continue to tackle all issues and improvements in their specific area of strategy, people, and finance.

The board is led by our Chair Ann Marie Docherty supported by Vice-Chair Fiona Tall and Treasurer Heather Doig, and I want to thank them along with the other board members for their continuous support. I would also like to thank Olga MacAskill, who retired from the board in February 25, for her contribution to the board.

We are now in year two of our three-year business plan 'Striving for Excellence', this year we will concentrate on implementing strategies and frameworks that were approved in year one i.e. Wellbeing framework, Promotion Strategy, Performance framework as well as expanding the use of CharityLog our new case management system, by using the reports to be able to track and record our performance.

In August 24 we implemented our new operating structure, and we have begun, and will continue through 2025, to review how the structure is working and recommend changes, as necessary.

We have welcomed new members of the team, to support them we introduced our new 'on boarding' induction which has been successful.

The Connect Team (previously innovation team) which is funded through our reserves is now up and running and delivering new projects.

We continue to engage with commissioners to ensure that we are meeting all our obligations, and importantly we are seeing good outcomes for the people we are working with.

As always, the most important thing is delivering excellence for the individuals and groups that we work with.

**Jacqueline Norwood**  
**CEO**

## Our Vision and Mission

### **Our vision: A Fair Society**

**Our mission: to increase choice and control in people's lives and communities through independent advocacy**

We fulfill our mission by:

- promoting person-led decision making to increase independence, choice and control
- Safeguarding those whose rights are at risk
- Increasing knowledge by sharing skills and providing training
- Challenging to promote change in practice, policy, legislation and society, to protect and strengthen people's rights
- Encouraging creativity in all things
- Ensuring the sustainability of The Advocacy Project through effective governance and management



We are a member of the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA), the intermediary organisation for the independent advocacy sector in Scotland. We apply the SIAA's Principles, Standards & Code of Best Practice for Independent Advocacy in all that we do.

## What we do

Our core activities across East Renfrewshire and Glasgow are funded by each Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in accordance with duties set out in the 2003 Mental Health Act to make advocacy services available.



Throughout our service areas, we offer one-to-one, professional, person-centred, and independent advocacy to adults who may be experiencing:

- Disabilities
- Long-term health conditions
- Problematic alcohol or drug use



We support individuals who:

- Are subject to statutory interventions that affect their rights and freedoms
- Are impacted by health and social care decision-making processes
- Face barriers to accessing services and support that are essential for maintaining dignity, quality of life, and active participation in their communities



Our aim is to ensure that every person we work with is heard, respected, and empowered to make informed choices about their lives.



In addition to delivering advocacy services, the Connect Team plays a vital role in our work. Their focus is on encouraging active involvement, and promoting participation through both collective advocacy and tailored project initiatives.



## **Our Services**

We provide independent advocacy across Glasgow and East Renfrewshire, supporting adults facing a wide range of challenges including mental health conditions, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and long-term health conditions, problematic alcohol and drug use, and those navigating social care through Self-directed Support.

Our Delivery Team support people whose rights, liberty, or quality of life may be at risk due to hospital detention, adult protection interventions, or substitute decision-making under the Adults with Incapacity Act.

Our work spans hospital, community, and custodial settings. Across all service areas, we promote meaningful participation, informed decision-making, and improved outcomes for the people we support.

We receive funding from Support in the Right Direction/Inspiring Scotland to provide independent advocacy to people using Self-directed Support to access social care services in Glasgow. This enables us to support individuals in making informed choices and navigating complex systems with confidence.

We operate a responsive, person-led service model through our Response Team. This team provides short-term support, brief interventions, and accessible information and signposting, helping people understand their rights and access support without delay. The team also leads our outreach and promotion strategy, building strong connections with local communities, third sector organisations, and community groups.

We actively contribute to steering and working groups, helping to ensure a rights focused and inclusive approach across other services.

# The Connect Team

Through a range of innovative projects, the Connect Team has created opportunities for people who use services to share their views and collaborate in shaping the support they receive. Highlights include:

### Help Yourself Grow Evaluation.

- Redesigned the evaluation process for this training programme for 18-35-year-olds with learning disabilities, making it more inclusive through group-based engagement activities.

### East Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Lived Experience Panel.

- Continued development and facilitation of this panel to ensure lived experience informs local policy and practice.

### Supported Decision Making Training.

- Delivered bespoke training sessions—both online and in person—for Self-Directed Support Scotland.

### Peer Advocacy Training for Unity Sisters.

- Designed and delivered a tailored programme for refugee and asylum-seeking women.

To further enhance engagement, the team completed training in visual facilitation and became certified Talking Mats trainers, expanding the tools available to support inclusive communication.

### Feedback Highlights

**“You really drew out what people enjoyed about HYG... brilliant for our audience (including our funding officer) to hear.”** - Help Yourself Grow

**“Really enjoyed the training... Everything was great.”** - Unity Sisters



## Our Impact

Everyone who uses our service is offered the opportunity to give us feedback. We use the information to understand the impact we have on people's lives, and to continually improve what we do.

### In 2024/25...

**We supported**

**2217**

**people**

**across all of our services**

**63%** of people we supported

were subject to

**statutory  
interventions  
that restricted  
their rights**

**91.5%**

of respondents

felt their

**rights  
were  
respected**

as a result of our  
advocacy support

**100%**

of respondents

**felt listened to**

### Jim's Story

#### Background

Jim had been in Glasgow Royal Infirmary for over a year. He was deemed medically fit for discharge; he remained in hospital. Jim was waiting to be housed and had declined several offers of housing as he felt they were unsuitable.

Professionals were concerned about the risk of an unsafe discharge to the street. Jim had refused a final accommodation offer and was facing imminent discharge without a safe alternative.

#### Advocacy Input

Jim explained that he had declined the offer due to safety concerns based on past experiences in that area.

Jim agreed that a meeting with his consultant and social worker, might help ensure his views were clearly heard and understood.

Initially, the consultant declined to attend, citing previous difficult interactions. The advocacy worker emphasised Jim's vulnerability. Eventually, the consultant agreed to the meeting.

#### Communication and Participation

The meeting was attended by Jim, his advocacy worker, two hospital consultants, and his social worker. The advocacy worker presented Jim's concerns.

The social worker acknowledged Jim's concerns about the accommodation and explained the limitations and available options.

Jim agreed to accept the accommodation, recognising it as a safer option than emergency hotel placement. The discharge plan was paused until the accommodation was ready.

#### Outcome

The outcome of the advocacy input was that Jim increased his level of participation and control in the situation, the result of the meeting contributed to an improved quality of life for Jim, back living in his own home.

## Feedback

**The Advocacy Project have supported me twice and both times I have felt listened to and heard.**



**Advocacy made the whole thing bearable, the advocate made all the difference and was my shining light of hope.**

**I had a really good experience and felt supported by advocacy, like someone had my back.**



**I am able to speak up for myself now and demand my rights.**

## What the future holds

In the coming year, we will continue to build on momentum from the last 12 months:

- A key milestone will be the launch of our new website, currently in the final stages of development. This will enhance our visibility and improve accessibility to our services.
- Internally, we will finalise the review and rollout of a refreshed suite of policies and procedures. These will support our staff in delivering high-quality, rights-based advocacy, aligned with best practice and sector standards.
- We will continue to refine to our structure to ensure it is effective for the people we work with.
- Charitylog will support the development of our performance measurement processes, helping us to better demonstrate the impact and value of our advocacy work.
- Together, these developments reflect our ongoing commitment to innovation, inclusion, and excellence in all that we do.



## **The Advocacy Project**

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