



A – Z Introductory Guide to Health and Social Care in Scotland

Advocacy

Brief description

Advocacy safeguards people who are vulnerable or discriminated against by ensuring that a person's voice is heard. It is about standing up for a person or group, and helping them to get their point across. It assists people to express their views and needs and helps them to make decisions when they need help to do so. It sometimes involves speaking up for someone who is unable to speak for themselves and to represent their views as if they were the advocate's own.

National Policy and Key Developments

The need for independent advocacy has been increasingly recognised as an important right for people using health and social care services and this is reflected in a number of policy documents including "The Same As You" document promoting services for adults with learning disabilities and the Mental Health Care and Treatment Act (2003).

Advocacy Models

There are two recognised models of advocacy in Scotland – **individual advocacy** and **group advocacy**. Some advocacy organisations may concentrate solely on one approach, whilst others may combine the two.

What is individual advocacy?

Individual advocacy refers to one person acting as another person's advocate. The advocate works with the person on whose behalf they are acting to try to improve their situation. Individual advocates can be either paid or unpaid and can work with people short-term or long-term.

In short-term individual advocacy, the advocate will usually support a person whilst dealing with a specific issue or problem and work with them until that issue is resolved. The advocate may work with a range of people at any one time and is accountable both to the person who is being advocated for and to the advocacy organisation.

In long-term advocacy, the advocate is partnered with a person on a long-term basis and will support that person on a range of issues throughout the life of the advocacy relationship.

All advocates who are attached to publicly funded advocacy organisations should be directly accountable to both the person they are advocating for and to the organisation to which they are attached.

Individual advocacy is sometimes referred to as professional advocacy, issue-based advocacy or crisis advocacy. Long-term advocacy can also be described as citizen advocacy.

What is group advocacy?

Group advocacy refers to people who have something in common working together to make their voices stronger.

The work of an advocacy group may include: campaigning, user involvement and consultation, and is often a combination of the three.

Group advocacy includes patients' councils, collective and self-advocacy groups.

Implications for Joint Working

NHS Boards across Scotland have the lead role for commissioning advocacy services jointly with other key partners, including the local authority, in line with the published guidance "*Independent Advocacy – A Guide for Commissioners*". [Note: at the time of publishing this information sheet in August 2005, new guidance is being developed by the Advocacy Safeguards Agency (ASA).] Each area is required to have a three-year Advocacy Strategy that details existing provision, future plans and funding. This should be a comprehensive plan covering the range of community care, children's services, education and housing.

The ASA has a key role to help health and local authority commissioners develop independent advocacy in their area. It advises on good practice and assists the statutory agencies to develop their three-year advocacy strategies. The ASA also provides a comprehensive map of advocacy provision across Scotland.

The ASA reports to the Scottish Executive on the performance of NHS Boards regarding advocacy through the Patient Focus Public Involvement framework (PFPI framework). It plays a central role in evaluating publicly funded organisations that provide advocacy and this role is carried out on behalf of the Scottish Executive. The ASA is currently developing an evaluation self-assessment toolkit.

There is also ongoing work to develop updated principles and standards on advocacy, which will be published by the ASA in the coming months.

Relevant legislation and statutory guidance

Independent Advocacy – A Guide for Commissioners, the Scottish Executive, 2001. New guidance will be available in late 2005.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/health/iagc-00.asp>

Supplementary guidance to the above was published in July 2001:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/health/iacs-00.asp>

The joint strategies that NHS Boards across Scotland produce in accordance with the above guidance are monitored and supported by the ASA, which has also published “*A Map of Independent Advocacy across Scotland*” Advocacy Safeguards Agency, January 2004.

<http://www.advocacysafeguards.org/files/map.ind.adv.2003-3.pdf>

[The Mental Health \(Care and Treatment\) \(Scotland\) Act 2003](#) provides the statutory framework for every person with a mental disorder to have right of access to independent advocacy, and places the duty of securing the availability of this advocacy collectively on relevant local authorities and health boards. New funds have been made available to health boards and local authorities to support this.

In 2000, *The Same As You?* Report was published by the Scottish Executive. A review of services for people with learning disabilities, it makes a number of key recommendations for the development of services, one of which is to continue to encourage the development of local independent advocacy services.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1095/0001661.pdf>

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 makes mention of advocacy for younger people and parents and the ASA is currently assessing opportunities to develop independent advocacy for this group.

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/20040004.htm>

How can I find out more?

Advocacy Safeguards Agency (ASA)

The Advocacy Safeguards Agency (ASA) is funded by the Scottish Executive to:

- Work with NHS Boards and local authority commissioners to facilitate the development of independent advocacy across Scotland;
- Evaluate independent advocacy organisations;
- Develop national policy and good practice in relation to independent advocacy provision;
- Undertake research about independent advocacy.

You can visit the ASA's website by clicking on the link below. Contact details are provided on the site and for ease of reference, they are also listed below.

www.advocacysafeguards.org

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The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)

SIAA promotes, supports and defends the principles and practice of independent advocacy across Scotland. SIAA provides direct support to advocacy organisations.

www.siaa.org.uk

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