



Scottish  
**Independent  
Advocacy**  
Alliance



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# Independent Advocacy – the national perspective

Scottish Welfare Fund – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018

# Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

- Advocates for independent advocacy
- To promote, support and defend independent advocacy in Scotland
- Good practice guidance for the development, commissioning and delivery of advocacy across Scotland
- Inform and lobby Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament on independent advocacy
- Provide information and support for member organisations



# Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

Anyone with a mental disorder has a right to access independent advocacy.

This includes individual and collective advocacy.

Mental disorder covers;

- Mental illness
- Learning disability
- Dementia

# Independent advocacy

- Advocacy is an equal partnership
- It helps build capacity
- Advocacy helps the advocacy partner;
  - know and understand their rights
  - navigate the system
  - access the right support
  - access choices
  - make informed decisions
  - understand the consequences of decisions

# Different types of advocacy

- Individual;
  - a) 1.2.1
  - b) Peer
  - c) Citizen
  
- Collective or group

# Profile of Advocacy in Scotland

- Approx. 60 Advocacy organisations in Scotland
- Mental health problems, learning disabilities, dementia/older people
- At any one time in Scotland 21% of population have statutory right of access
- Scottish Public Health Observatory estimates that 8.3% of children (around 80,000) have a diagnosed mental health problem and therefore a right of access to independent advocacy

# Advocacy Map 2015-16

- Demand has gone up by 11.5 %
- Statutory funding has gone down by 4%
- 30,500 people accessed independent advocacy
- Number of staff and volunteers has gone down



# Gaps in provision

- Children & young people
- Older people
- Carers
- People in prison
- People with substance misuse issues

# Impact of advocacy

*“Advocacy helped me to be heard”*

*“Advocacy saved my life”*

*“I don’t want to think about what my life would be like without  
advocacy.....”*

*“Advocacy helped me to get the support and care I need”*

*“Advocacy helped me to find out about my rights”*

# What advocacy is....

- about standing alongside people
- ensuring that people know and understand their rights
- about standing up for and sticking with a person or group
- about social justice
- listening and taking their side
- finding out what is important to them
- understanding the system and structural barriers
- supporting them to ensure they are listened to and taken seriously
- 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 necessary.



# 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 do so themselves
- filling all the gaps in someone's life
- agreeing with everything a person says and doing anything a person asks you to do



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[www.siaa.org.uk](http://www.siaa.org.uk)