

# THE SPEAKER

the newsletter of



**Independent Advocacy**  
Perth & Kinross

Issue 5 - May 2008

## Welcome from the Home Team

Having been in post as Manager for four months now, I have begun to find my feet; I can now find most things in the office, and have met most of our volunteers, and I'm hoping to meet the remaining few of you soon.

For those of you who don't already know, I thought I would tell you a bit about my background. I have been working in the social care field for about 20 years, starting in my younger years working in a residential home for adults with a learning disability. I then worked for Buckinghamshire Social Services for over 10 years supporting adults with learning disabilities or mental health problems to move into and live independently within the community; and went on to manage a resource centre there.

At this point I moved to the South West of England and began working for Rethink (known in Scotland as The National Schizophrenia Fellowship). I worked as an Area Manager responsible for mental health services in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas. These services were for people with severe and enduring mental illness and included several; housing services, day/resource services, carer's services, and Black and other minority ethnic services. I was also involved in setting up several of these services. All this has now lead me to Perth & Kinross and Independent Advocacy, where I am very pleased to be.

It has been a busy time since the last Speaker, with two more new staff, Adrienne Ruddock, our Volunteer Co ordinator, and Angela Wright, Mental Health Advocacy Worker, job sharing with Norrie.

With Adrienne now in post, we are aiming to give more time and focused attention to the support we offer to you, and to review the various means of contact to ensure that we provide the best quality of support we can. This is great news as Independent Advocacy has sought to provide this for sometime, and plans for funding for a Volunteer Co ordinator have been in motion for almost the past year.

Our other exciting news is that we have just secured funding for a Carers Advocacy Worker. Carers often become immersed in looking after the cared for, and do not receive support to express their own needs and views. There is no current advocacy provision in Perth & Kinross for carers – until now. We are about to start the recruitment of a full time carers worker, and will

hopefully have some further news for you in the next Speaker.



Finally, I would like to thank you all for the warm welcome I have received, and for all your help to settle into the job.

*Clare Gallagher*  
Manager

## Volunteer Co-ordinator

I am delighted to take up this new post of Volunteer Co-ordinator with Independent Advocacy. I have been here almost 3 months now and I have probably met almost all of you. Thank you to all of you for being so supportive and helping me to settle in easily.

Here is a flavour of my background. I moved to Perth in October 2006 with my husband prior to which we managed a residential conference centre in Pitlochry. Over the years, I have worked almost exclusively in the voluntary sector and with volunteers in a variety of settings. I started my career at a Family Centre in Bedford, providing preventative care and support for children and families. From there I moved to Suffolk and set up and managed a Volunteer Centre. After I was made redundant from here I ran a Supervised Contact Centre in Norwich, providing a neutral venue for children and parents who were separated where the contact needed to be supervised and more recently I worked with Families Outside in Edinburgh, an organisation which works exclusively for families of prisoners.

My work here at Advocacy will focus on recruiting and training volunteers, especially in the rural areas, and supporting new and current volunteers. At the moment, I am currently updating systems and procedures and reviewing the training which we offer to all volunteers. I am looking forward to getting to know you all better and am excited about the development of volunteering at Advocacy. As you know, I will seek to be in regular touch with you all, (especially about those dreaded activity sheets!) but do remember that you can phone the office and speak to a member of staff about anything if you need to. May I take this opportunity to say a big thank you for all your dedication, hard work and commitment to Advocacy. Without you all we couldn't provide the service we do.



*Adrienne Ruddock*

## Mental Health Support Worker

I have recently relocated from Chester to Blairgowrie. Whilst in Chester I worked as a Primary Care Counsellor with Cheshire & Wirral NHS Trust for eight years. I was attached to two General Practices where I worked with a wide range of people who experienced mental health problems and life adjustment issues. For a period of six months I worked with stroke patients in a day hospital. I also ran a number of bereavement groups for people living on the Wirral. In addition, I had a small private counselling practice, again working with many different issues including work stress and traumatic bereavement. Prior to this I worked for many years as a Teacher in Primary and Special Education, focussing particularly on children with mild to moderate learning disabilities. I undertook counselling training and voluntary practice placements over a number of years whilst working as a teacher.



I am delighted to join the Home Team at Independent Advocacy as a Mental Health Support Worker, and I look forward to meeting with volunteers in the near future.

*Angela Wright*

## Diary Dates



- 12th June** – Next Volunteer Training Course: 6pm - 9pm
- 21st June** – Volunteer Fair, King Edward Street 10am – 4pm
- 24th June** – IAPK Open Day 11am - 2pm
- 16th August** - Walled Garden Open Day 11.30am - 4pm

## Advocacy in Training

As I settle into week one I realise I have just begun the start of  
A training course like a journey for future partners to join –  
United together like the two sides of a coin.

I met once again faces familiar to me  
Norrie, Shona and Sandra I again did see  
These three dedicated of staff have travelled with me  
On many cobbled pathways  
To feel empowered at meetings as words are minuted and written down  
I was unaware advocacy existed in my own home town

The training course did hold my attention I feel I must say  
Six weeks I attended stimulated all the way  
There were a handful of us  
Who sat each week attentive and keen  
Sandra talked of white van drivers that she had seen

The garden party was excellent  
I am sure we all did find  
As we moved around the premises  
Labelled from behind

I was definitely the youngest in this group I couldn't help but see  
Then I think it was Sheina sitting next to me  
I could mention each individual in this verse  
But I simply don't have the time  
Oh please excuse me this is not a crime.

I enjoyed the varied selection of biscuits  
Each time we did meet  
I always was rather greedy  
Having five jaffa cakes to eat

I was sad for the training to end  
As I said my farewells as I cycled home on my bike  
This training course was very informative  
That I did like

I hope as advocates we can all make a difference  
In the lives of people in Perth & Kinross  
If we don't we will be summoned  
To the office to see Clare the boss

*Deborah Nidorro*

*(Debbie has both received advocacy support and completed the training course)*

## Volunteers needed

- To help man stalls at the Volunteer Fair, or the Walled Garden Open Day
- We are also looking for donations for the Tombola. This helps raise funds for us.
- Anyone who knows of anyone who may be interested in the June training course

If you can help with any of these please let us know!

## Training

We are planning a future training session on Disability Living Allowance, which will focus on how to fill in the form. Please note that the training dates for May, July, September and November have been cancelled.



## Activity Sheets & Expenses - Monthly claims

Now that Adrienne is in post we have to be more rigorous about logging the number of volunteer hours which are carried out and keeping tabs on what volunteers are doing. This information is required by the funding bodies. Whilst we appreciate that filling in activity sheets can be a bit of a pain please appreciate that we need this information on a regular basis! If you could let us have your activity sheets at the end of each month that would be great.

We also appreciate that a lot of you don't claim your expenses. Again, it would be useful for us to know how much it's costing you to see your partners – so even if you're not claiming could you let us know this information. We will be revising the activity sheet so you can add this information to it.

## Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross

90 Tay Street, Perth, PH2 8NP Telephone: 01738 587887 - Email: enquiry@iapk.org.uk

### Mission Statement:

To enable those people in Perth and Kinross experiencing mental health problems, learning and physical disabilities, dementia, frailty, or age related problems to have their voices heard by providing Independent Advocacy so that they are involved in decisions which affect their lives. We work together with volunteers to create a stronger community where people are valued.

### The Home Team:

**Clare Gallagher** (Manager)

**Sandra Young** (Mental Health Support)

**Shona MacKay** (Children & YP MH Support)

**Amanda Moore** (Administration)

**Norrie Stewart** (Mental Health Support)

**Sheina Bell** (Strathmartine Advocacy Support )

**Angela Wright** (Mental Health Support Worker)

**Adrienne Ruddock** (Volunteer Co-ordinator)

### The Board:

**Christine McLeod**

**Jenny Rice**

**Marion McFadzean**

**Peter Fleming**

**Frank Parnell**

**Jim Dow**