

Independent Advocacy

Principles, Standards & Code of Best Practice

2019



Scottish
**Independent
Advocacy**
Alliance

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA)

SIAA is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC033576

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 independent advocacy. SIAA is funded by the Scottish Government Planning & Quality Division. More information about the work of the SIAA is available on **www.siaa.org.uk**.

“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, ADVOCACY 2000 (2002)



Independent advocacy
is an agent of change

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
Independent Advocacy
Principles, Standards & Code of Best Practice

The SIAA Vision Statement

We believe that everyone who needs independent advocacy should have access to it. Independent advocacy must be of the highest possible standard.

“There is no such thing as a single issue struggle, because we do not live single issue lives.”

AUDRE LORDE

Who this document is for and how it can be used

This document is for:

- ▶ people who could benefit from independent advocacy so that they have a clear idea about what to expect from an independent advocacy organisation; and
- ▶ independent advocacy organisations to support them in their working practice and to offer a means by which to evaluate their practice;
- ▶ those who commission, fund and regulate independent advocacy to ensure they have a clear understanding of what independent advocacy is, and how independent advocacy organisations should operate.

This document recognises that all independent advocacy organisations share the same principles. It has been developed to be used across Scotland, to ensure that independent advocacy is being delivered consistently and is of the highest possible standard. In this respect it has a safeguarding role, ensuring that people who access independent advocacy can have confidence in the help and support they receive.

This document also aims to safeguard independent advocacy itself by setting standards and promoting best practice, thereby helping to ensure that independent advocacy is understood, valued and effectively resourced.

These Principles, Standards and Code of Best Practice provide important foundational statements on practice. It remains the responsibility of independent advocacy organisations, commissioners and funders to put measures in place to ensure that the Principles, Standards and Code of Best Practice are adhered to. Independent advocacy organisations should have their own organisational policies and procedures that reflect this document.

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

MARTIN LUTHER KING

Definitions

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY: independent advocacy is about speaking up for, and standing alongside individuals or groups, and not being influenced by the views of others. Fundamentally it is about everyone having the right to a voice, addressing barriers and imbalances of power, ensuring that an individual's rights are recognised, respected and secured.

Independent advocacy supports people to navigate systems and acts as a catalyst for change in a situation. Independent advocacy can have a preventative role and stop situations from escalating, and it can help individuals and groups being supported to develop the skills, confidence and understanding to advocate for themselves.

Independent advocacy is especially important when individuals or groups are not heard, are vulnerable or are discriminated against. This can happen where support networks are limited or if there are barriers to communication. Independent advocacy also enables people to stay engaged with services that are struggling to meet their needs.

ADVOCACY PARTNER: a person who accesses independent advocacy.

It is the preferred term because it emphasises the independent advocate and the person they are supporting working as equal partners. Some independent advocacy organisations also use client or service user.

ACTIVIST: A person who campaigns to bring about political or social change.

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY ORGANISATION: only provides independent advocacy and all the activities it undertakes are about providing, promoting, supporting and defending independent advocacy. Independence means that it does not provide any other services and is structurally, financially and psychologically separate from other organisations and interests.

Independent advocacy happens in two distinct ways, Collective and Individual. These are explained in more detail in Appendix 1.



Independent advocacy
is about addressing an
imbalance of power

The need for independent advocacy

People can find it difficult at times for their voice to be heard when actions or decisions are being taken that affect their lives. Some people in society are much more likely than others to be treated badly, either because of structural barriers, inequality, discrimination and prejudice or because of their own vulnerability, or a combination of factors.

The characteristics which may mean that people are at risk include the protected characteristics as identified by the Equality Act (2010). These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Other factors that will also have an impact on a person include socio economic background, personal capacity, adverse childhood experiences, reputation, dislocation, abuse, family breakdown and social isolation. Some people have to rely on powerful service systems for help with all aspects of their life including housing, personal assistance, decision-making, income, occupation, mobility. Institutions and support services can affect every aspect of someone's life, (potentially with long term consequences) particularly when people have been immersed in the service system since childhood, and when they have no strong allies outside. For some people, their family can be part of the problem. Independent advocacy is about broadening horizons and widening the options that people have. It is about speaking up if you notice that something is wrong. Sometimes people tolerate things in their lives because they don't know they can be changed. Independent advocacy can help them address this.

Service systems are not and will never be perfect. Individuals who rely on these systems often have limited personal power and resources to argue their case. This is especially true for people who do not use words to communicate, for children and young people, for people who cannot read or write in the language of the system, for people who have been labelled with a negative reputation, for people who are disabled or with capacity issues.

If people do not have well-motivated and capable family and friends to speak up for them, they are at risk of poor treatment and of not getting what they need. They may not have their views, wishes and feelings taken into account properly, as is their right. They are also the least likely to exercise their right to make a complaint. Even family and friends are often ignored.

People who are articulate and know the system might be ignored because other people's prejudice and dismissive attitude extends to them because of an imbalance of power.

This also applies to groups of people who are marginalised, discriminated against and disempowered. Even though there are many references in legislation and government policy that refer to an expectation that people are involved in decision making at all levels, these groups often find it challenging to have a collective voice, organise themselves and engage with the system. When they are included, they are sometimes patronised or side-lined, only able to respond to the agendas set by others. It is important groups are resourced and supported appropriately to explore and set their own agenda and influence decisions, policy, legislation and services that shape and effect their lives.

Even where people have rights in law, for example to an assessment or to a second opinion, they are often unaware of these rights. While policies may be in place, for example about medication being regularly reviewed, or about people being given information, these are not always followed.

Collective independent advocacy provides opportunities for people to have a meaningful voice in legislative processes, policy making and strategic planning, combating discrimination, inequality and enabling people to take part as active citizens.

*“Power can be taken,
but not given. The
process of the taking is
empowerment in itself.”*

GLORIA STEINEM

Commissioning independent advocacy should be in addition to, not instead of, improving services. Independent advocacy is not a sticking plaster to compensate for poor service quality. Statutory agencies have a duty to listen and respond to all the people they serve and to work to high standards. There is a huge disparity between the size and power of the service system and the powerlessness of the people and groups. Small neglects and mistakes by service systems can have a huge impact on individuals, the system and society.

The importance of independence in advocacy

Nurses, social workers, care staff, doctors, teachers and other professionals look out for and speak up for the people they serve. It's their job, it is part of their professional code of conduct, but they aren't and can't be independent. Independent advocates, whether paid or unpaid, are clear that their primary loyalty and accountability is to the people who need them. To be on someone's side, advocates have to be structurally, financially and psychologically independent of the service system, agencies providing services and local or national government. Independent advocates stand in a different place and see things from a different perspective.

Independent advocates do not have the same conflicts of interest as other professional workers who are expected to make judgements about who is in need, deserving or most eligible for a service. Because independent advocates do not have this sort of power over people and do not control access to resources, they are in a better position to see things from the person's point of view. From the outset of the advocacy relationship they are more likely to have the trust of the people they are working with.

They can focus on representing the interests and wishes of the people who need an independent advocate and be clear that this is their only role. Other professionals who advocate strongly on behalf of a particular individual or group may be seen as acting unprofessionally or as being critical of their employer. This entails personal risks, and can also put the professional worker in a situation where their views on this and other issues are discounted.

There are three components of independence; financial, structural and psychological. For an advocacy organisation to be robust and effective it needs to be alert to all three.

► **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.

► **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.

Psychological independence, independence of mind, is equally important as structural or financial independence. Some independent agencies are funded in part or wholly by statutory agencies and therefore have a responsibility to account to their funders for how they are spending the money. But independent-minded advocates do not ask the funders for permission to disagree with them. Instead, they challenge agency policy and practice where these are compromising the rights and wellbeing of the people they represent. They do not expect to be popular with everyone, but they do seek to ensure they are respected for the quality and integrity of their work. Effective independent advocacy organisations do not seek confrontation but they maintain the principle of primary accountability to the people they serve. Effective commissioners welcome this spirit of independence, even if it makes their life harder.

It is important to remember that independent advocacy highlights opportunities, supports people to be more aware of opportunities, choices and their rights, enabling them to make more informed decisions and to become more influential as agents of change. Through broadening horizons and widening understanding of options, independent advocacy enables people to educate themselves and be more active citizens.

In the context of individual advocacy people appear to have supportive networks but they might still need independent advocacy because it is separate from all others and only follows the person's agenda.

In independent collective advocacy, space is created for people to come together to educate and support each other and influence the agendas and decisions that shape their lives. Groups and individuals are supported to challenge issues such as discrimination, poverty or human rights violations and marginalised groups can gain opportunities for learning.

- ▶ **Independent advocacy is delivered by organisations that only provide independent advocacy.**
- ▶ **Organisations cannot define themselves as an independent advocacy provider simply by employing experienced independent advocates.**
- ▶ **Individuals cannot set themselves up as independent advocacy providers outwith an independent advocacy organisation.**

Best interests

Sometimes, people think that independent advocacy is about working in the best interests of individuals. In fact, sometimes independent advocacy is about supporting people to explore, understand and express something that is not in their own best interests but is what they want. Often professionals and organisations make decisions that are in the best interests of an individual because they have a duty to do so. Independent advocacy does not have such a legal duty.

An effective independent 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.

Independent collective advocacy and campaigning

Independent collective advocacy should campaign against and challenge discriminatory legislation, policy and practice and campaign for positive change for example for the removal of barriers. Indeed, independent collective advocacy has been responsible for significant changes in legislation, policy and practice. The right to access independent advocacy is one such key achievement.

Conflicts of interest

Sometimes there can be conflicts of interest for those supporting an individual or group, for instance where there are assumptions about 'what is best' for them.

Independent advocacy is as free as possible from conflicts of interest, being completely separate from service providers and funders and with the organisation involved providing no services other than advocacy. It is structurally, financially and psychologically free from interests such as being a provider of services, a gatekeeper of services, a funder of services, a statutory body or family and friends.

See Appendix 3 for more information about what independent advocacy is not about.

Independent advocacy and Supported Decision Making

Supported Decision Making has no formal definition and different people use the term differently. It is used in this document to refer to any process in which an individual is provided with as much support as they need in order for them to be able to:

- a) make a decision for themselves and/or
- b) express their will and preferences within the context of substitute decision making (for example guardianship or compulsory treatment for mental disorder).

In both cases, the purpose of supported decision making is to ensure that the individual's will and preferences are central to and fully respected in decisions that concern them. (*Mental Welfare Commission; Good Practice Guide Supported Decision Making, 2016*)

Independent advocacy provides a mechanism for enabling individuals and groups to make decisions for themselves. The independent advocacy relationship does not have the conflicts of interest inherent in other relationships with family, friends, service providers and professionals. People accessing independent advocacy are protected from undue pressure, advice or others' agendas.

Non-instructed Advocacy

Non-instructed advocacy happens when there are issues with a person's capacity perhaps due to dementia, limited communication due to a physical disability or a learning disability. In such situations a non-instructed advocate seeks to uphold their advocacy partner's rights and ensure that decisions are taken with full consideration of their unique preferences, rights and perspectives.

"Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. Such as the places where every man, woman and child seeks equal justice, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world."

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Independent advocacy and human rights

Everyone, everywhere, has basic rights and freedoms which are needed to live together with dignity based on a common humanity. These human rights are secured in law. The law applies to everyone equally and provides an important means of protection for the most vulnerable in our communities, including those who use independent advocacy services. It sets out the duties owed by those responsible for upholding human rights and the outcomes people are entitled to expect as a matter of right.

Independent advocacy plays an integral role in helping to ensure that an individual's human rights are respected by offering access to justice on an equal and non-discriminatory basis with others. It does this by addressing issues of autonomy and choice, and by supporting an individual's voice and opinions to be meaningfully heard. The Principles, Standards and Code of Best Practice for independent advocacy are based on an approach that promotes and defends human rights and it facilitates statutory services to practise a human rights based approach.

The internationally recognised, PANEL Principles are of fundamental importance in applying a human rights based approach in the practice of independent advocacy. They are a practical tool for describing what a human rights based approach looks like in practice.

The five PANEL principles are:

Participation

Accountability

Non-discrimination and equality

Empowerment

Legality

More detail on these is provided in Appendix 2.

Independent advocates are human rights defenders. Independent advocacy is built on enabling people to know and claim their rights and on increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights. Within the context of independent advocacy a human rights based approach is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into procedures and processes, as well as embedded into the day to day running of organisations.

Statement of Principles and underpinning standards

PRINCIPLES:

- ▶ **Independent advocacy is loyal to the people it supports and stands by their views and wishes.**
- ▶ **Independent advocacy ensures peoples' voices are listened to and their views taken into account.**
- ▶ **Independent advocacy stands up to injustice, discrimination and disempowerment.**

► Independent advocacy is loyal to the people it supports and stands by their views and wishes.

STANDARDS:

- Independent advocacy follows the agenda of the people supported regardless of the views, interests and agendas of others.
- Independent advocacy must be able to evidence and demonstrate its structural, financial and psychological independence from others.
- Independent advocacy provides no other services, has no other interests, ties or links other than the delivery, promotion, support and defence of independent advocacy.

► Independent advocacy ensures peoples' voices are listened to and their views are taken into account.

STANDARDS:

- Independent advocacy recognises and safeguards everyone's right to be heard.
- Independent advocacy reduces the barriers people face in having their voice heard because of communication, or capacity, or the political, social, economic and personal interests of others.

► Independent advocacy stands up to injustice, discrimination and disempowerment.

STANDARDS:

- Independent advocacy recognises power imbalances or barriers people face and takes steps to address these.
- Independent advocacy enables people to have more agency, greater control and influence.
- Independent advocacy challenges discrimination and promotes equality and human rights.

Code of Best Practice

The indicators listed below are separated for advocates and advocacy organisations and apply to both individual and collective advocacy. All independent advocacy organisations are committed to the principles but advocacy practice might be slightly different depending on the different types of advocacy being delivered.

As an advocate you must:

1. Enable your advocacy partner or advocacy group to understand their rights, and ensure that they are recognised by others.
2. Ensure your work promotes equality and challenges discrimination.
3. Reflect on your practice and be aware of your own opinions, prejudices and discriminatory views and values and not let them affect your practice.
4. Identify and challenge any attitudinal, structural or environmental barriers to accessing, using or taking part in independent advocacy.
5. Address any power imbalance between yourself and your advocacy partner or the advocacy group, or within the group.
6. Not withhold information from your advocacy partner.
7. Look out for, declare and minimise conflicts of interest in line with the organisation's conflict of interest policy.
8. Uphold the confidentiality of your advocacy partner in line with the organisation's confidentiality policy including being honest when the policy should be breached.
9. Act on the issues agreed by your advocacy partner or advocacy group at the appropriate pace.
10. Enable your advocacy partner or advocacy group to outline, record and review their expectations.

“Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much”

HELEN KELLER

11. When advocating in a non-instructed context, make significant efforts to determine the rights, will and preferences of your advocacy partner, and where this is not genuinely practicable then make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences, rights and perspectives.
12. Support your advocacy partner or advocacy group to gain information, understand options and explore possible outcomes.
13. Practice and promote effective communication with your advocacy partner or advocacy group, especially when they may face barriers.
14. Not take the side of anyone other than your advocacy partner or advocacy group or try to influence them on behalf of others.
15. Ask decision makers to explain why an action is taken where required.
16. Ensure that you seek and are guided by feedback from your advocacy partner or advocacy group members.
17. Support your advocacy partners or advocacy group members to gain more control and influence in the decisions and circumstances that affect their lives.
18. Make every effort to enable your advocacy partner or advocacy group members to have the opportunity to develop skills and confidence to advocate for themselves.

In addition the following indicators apply only to collective advocacy:

19. Make every effort to support an advocacy group to debate and reflect on the views and experiences of the group members as well as agreeing issues to take forward.
20. Enable advocacy group members to be open and regularly review the way the group works.
21. Support the advocacy group to define and agree the internal and external boundaries of confidentiality.

An effective independent advocacy organisation must have clear policies and procedures that reflect the Principles, Standards and Code of Practice, it must:

- 1.** Identify and challenge any attitudinal, structural or environmental barriers to accessing, using or taking part in independent advocacy.
- 2.** Ensure that although independent advocacy is accountable under the law, it must support challenges against discriminatory legislation, policies and practices or the way it is applied and where it infringes rights.
- 3.** Make every effort to understand, monitor and overcome barriers faced by diverse, minority or marginalised groups to accessing, using or taking part in independent advocacy.
- 4.** Be clear that advocacy is free to the people that use it.
- 5.** Ensure that advocacy provision is accessible, including premises.
- 6.** Promote the independence of the organisation.
- 7.** Have accessible information about the organisation and independent advocacy which is made available to all parts of the community covered by the organisation.
- 8.** Ensure that income streams don't compromise the independence of the organisation.
- 9.** Place a responsibility on everyone in the organisation to identify and declare any conflicts of interests and take appropriate steps where any conflict does exist. The organisation should keep and regularly review a register of these interests, including how they are managed.
- 10.** Make every effort to ensure that Board of Directors or Trustees do not have a conflict of interest. If a conflict of interest does arise ensure they do not vote on the matter where that conflict exists.
- 11.** Be embedded in the community or community of interest it serves.
- 12.** Have a clear way of handling referrals and prioritising requests for advocacy and, where possible offer a choice of advocate.

13. Regularly seek feedback from advocacy partners and advocacy group members to help shape and direct its work.
14. Have a comprehensive Complaints Policy, including arrangements to support individuals who may continue to need advocacy.
15. Have quality assurance systems that use evidence based practice to measure the impact of independent advocacy.
16. Provide regular peer support opportunities for staff, volunteers, advocates and activists to discuss good practice, areas for improvement and advocacy dilemmas.
17. Provide continuous development and learning opportunities, guidance and information to all staff, volunteers, activists and Board of Directors or Trustees on the Principles, Standards and Code of Best Practice for Independent Advocacy.
18. Ensure that everyone in the organisation has training or preparation on equal opportunities, equalities duties, respect and dignity, discrimination and human rights.
19. Ensure that people who have accessed or are allies of independent advocacy have the opportunity to be involved at any level of the organisation, subject to the Articles or Constitution.
20. Ensure the Board of Directors or Trustees know and understand their governance, legal and financial responsibilities including funding agreements for the organisation.
21. Have Articles or a Constitution, Mission Statement, relevant policies and procedures, annual reports and accounts that are clear and accessible as possible.
22. Make every effort that the organisation is independently evaluated at least once every 3 years, in line with the SIAA Evaluation Framework.
23. Make significant effort to influence local strategic planning, including the Strategic Independent Advocacy Plan.

“There’s no such thing as the ‘voiceless’. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard.”

ARUNDHATI ROY

Appendix 1

Different Types of Independent Advocacy

There are two types of independent advocacy – individual and collective

ONE TO ONE OR INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

This includes professional or issue-based advocacy. It can be provided by both paid and unpaid advocates. An advocate supports an individual to represent his/her own interests or represents the views of an individual if the person is unable to do so. Advocates provide support on specific issues and provide information, but not advice. This support can be short or long term.

Another model of one to one advocacy is **Citizen Advocacy**. Citizen advocacy occurs when an ordinary citizen is encouraged to become involved with a person who might need support in the community. The citizen advocate is not paid. The relationship between the citizen advocate and the advocacy partner is on a one-to-one, long term basis. It is based on trust between the partner and the citizen advocate and is supported, but not influenced, by the advocacy organisation. The citizen advocate supports the advocacy partner through natural skills and talents rather than being trained in the role.

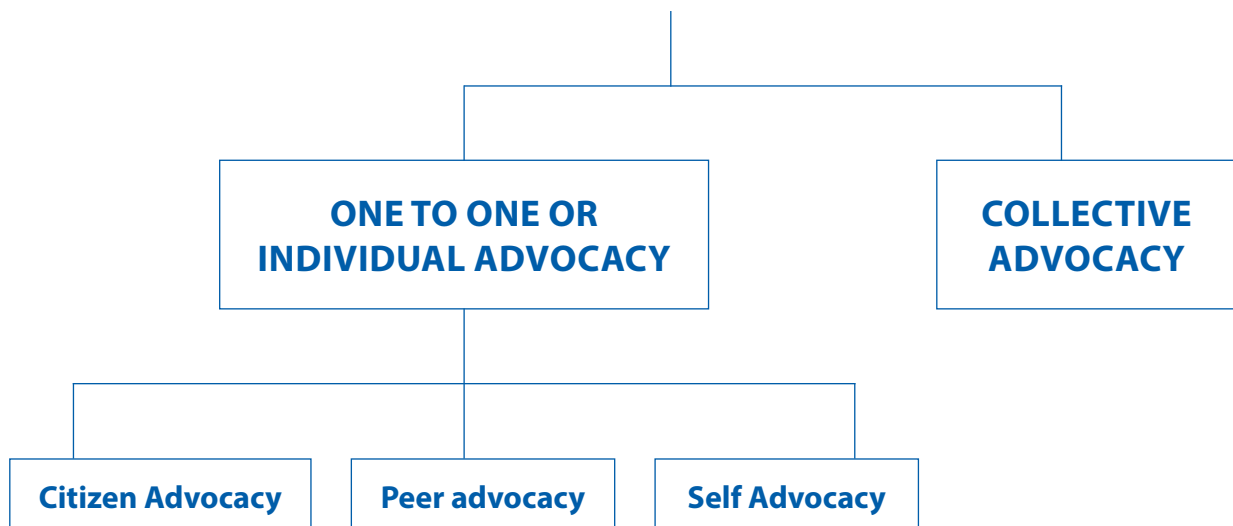
Individual Advocacy can also include **Peer advocacy**. A peer advocate has life experiences they share with their advocacy partner. The peer advocate and their advocacy partner may share age, gender, ethnicity, diagnosis or issues. Peer advocates use their own experiences to understand and have empathy with their advocacy partners. 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 peer advocate and their advocacy partner.

Self Advocacy is when a person advocates for themselves.

COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY

Collective advocacy creates spaces for people to get together, support each other to explore shared issues and find common ground. It supports people to speak up about their experiences, values and expectations. It enables people to find a stronger voice, to campaign and influence the agendas and decisions that shape and affect their lives. Collective advocacy can help planners, commissioners, service providers and researchers to know what is working well, where gaps are in services and how best to target resources. It helps legislators and policy makers to create opportunities for people to challenge discrimination and inequality and helps people learn to become more active citizens. Collective advocacy groups benefit from skilled help from an independent advocacy organisation and with the support of resources.

Different Types of Independent Advocacy



Appendix 2

The PANEL principles:

PARTICIPATION: Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect their human rights. Participation must be active, free, meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and a language which can be understood.

The provision of independent advocacy is fundamentally about enabling people who may require help in speaking for themselves to participate in decisions that affect them, whether they be about healthcare, social activities or legal processes.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Accountability requires effective monitoring of human rights standards as well as effective remedies for human rights breaches. For accountability to be effective there must be appropriate laws, policies, institutions, administrative procedures and mechanisms of redress in order to secure human rights.

Independent advocacy helps people to access a wide range of accountability mechanisms such as complaints processes, courts and tribunals.

NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EQUALITY: A human rights based approach means that all forms of discrimination in the realisation of rights must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. It also requires the prioritisation of those in the most marginalised situations who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights.

There are times when those in need of independent advocacy can be amongst some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our society – a human rights based approach means we must pay particular attention to the protection and realisation of their rights. Sometimes, because of their support needs, people are discriminated against in access to services or in opportunities to express their views. People also have different identities based on their gender, ethnicity, religion and many other grounds. Each of these identities should be respected when receiving any services, including independent advocacy.

E**MPowerment of Rights Holders:** A human rights based approach means that individuals and communities should know their rights. It also means that they should be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices which affect their lives and to claim rights where necessary.

Independent advocacy plays an essential role in helping people to know and understand their rights, participate in legal processes and hold decision makers to account.

L**egality of Rights:** A human rights based approach requires the recognition of rights as legally enforceable entitlements and is linked in with national and international human rights law.

All public bodies in Scotland must be sure that their practices and procedures are grounded in human rights thinking. Under the law they must not breach the human rights of anyone. The situations which independent advocacy supports people are grounded in legally enforceable human rights, such as the right to private and family life, the right to liberty and the right to a fair trial. They are also grounded in non-legally enforceable, but internationally agreed human rights such as the right to health, the right to education and the right to an adequate standard of living. Making the explicit connection to human rights helps back up representations made on behalf of people.

Appendix 3

Myth Busting – Advocacy is not...

- ▶ making decisions for an advocacy partner or group
- ▶ giving advice or telling an advocacy partner or group what to do
- ▶ providing mediation
- ▶ providing counselling
- ▶ providing befriending
- ▶ providing care and support
- ▶ solving all someone's problems for them
- ▶ providing therapy
- ▶ creating a dependency
- ▶ acting in the interests or wishes other than those of an advocacy partner or group
- ▶ agreeing with everything a person says and doing anything a person asks

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