



ORGANISATIONAL SUMMARY

HISTORY

Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service (formerly known as The People's Advocacy Service until June 2012) was founded as an independent charitable company in October 2004, and continued the advocacy service previously provided by PASS Direct (1998-2004) and the Patients Advocacy & Support Service (PASS)(1993-98). Full independence enabled advocacy in Dumfries and Galloway to meet the legal requirements of new legislation, notably the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, and develop the social capital created by PASS and PASS Direct's delivery of service to NHS and Social Work service users under the management of D&G Local Health Council, which was abolished in 2005.

We have expanded our remit considerably since the development of independence. We are a full member of the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) and have been a significant contributor to national Principles and Standards, to which we subscribe.

STRUCTURE

The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees with varied backgrounds, and the day to day running is overseen by a Chief Executive. Advocacy services are delivered by paid staff and a team of volunteers drawn from many backgrounds and with many years' experience. One to one and group support is regularly provided, and ongoing training and workshop services supplement the foundation advocacy training which is mandatory for all who work at Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service.

ADVOCACY

Independent Advocacy is about empowering people who are involved in using or receiving services to express their own wishes and feelings. An advocate works on a one to one basis with a client to ensure that he/she has access to information, can understand their options and rights, and give expression, as far as possible, to their wishes.

We are an issue based service, and as such, once the clients' issue is finished we will contact them and/or their referrer about closing the case and if they have any further issues in the future they can come back to us at any time.

Advocates provide a person centred service, working with the client to find solutions to their issues, and strive at all times to stand by the client and minimise conflict of interest. Independent Advocacy is often most relevant where a conflict of interest has arisen in the management of a person's affairs, and the advocate can ensure that the client's voice is expressed without compromise.

Our volunteer advocates provide a very valuable resource, emphasising the independence of our work. Our referrals have increased over recent years because of the higher legal requirements and rights to advocacy granted under mental health and adult protection legislation and we have around 750 new referrals each year.

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