



Angus Independent Advocacy



2017/2018 Annual Report

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MISSION AND VALUES STATEMENT

“To provide accessible, independent advocacy within Angus for adults who are at risk of being unable to safeguard their rights, and who have:

- a mental health problem
- a learning disability
- dementia
- an acquired brain injury, or
- are an older person.

1. AIMS

- To respond to requests for independent advocacy support directly from potential advocacy partners, their family, friends, or via referring agencies.
- To promote equality of opportunity and help to safeguard an advocacy partner’s quality of life.
- To support adults with additional support needs and to help ensure that their rights and interests are fully represented.
- To support those who are unable to express their views and wishes.
- To raise awareness of independent advocacy.

2. OBJECTIVES

- To provide independent advocacy according to the Code of Practice and Principles and Standards accepted by the Scottish Government.
- To support citizen and issue-based advocacy partnerships.
- To support advocacy partners in making their views known.
- To ensure that the views of the advocacy partner will be paramount, and direct all actions by the advocate wherever possible.
- To produce and distribute accessible information suitable for advocates, advocacy partners, service providers and others.
- To support people who may have little or no verbal communication.
- To provide suitable preparation and on-going training for all advocates.

3. VALUES

Our values are at the core of our organisation and guide the way we act and work as an organisation.

Non-Judgmental

We will not make judgements about anyone we meet and their circumstances.

Independence

We provide support independently of any service provider, and will maintain this position in all work undertaken.

Inclusion

As an organisation, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to contribute and participate in whatever way they can, in all aspects of their life.

Empowerment

AIA will support individuals to make their voices heard.

Respect

AIA will treat everyone with respect.

Making a Difference

AIA works towards a more equal and inclusive community.

Person-Centred

AIA uses a person-centred approach in all advocacy partnerships.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a core value at AIA. All in the organisation work within our comprehensive Confidentiality Policy, which includes data protection, adult support and protection and child protection.

Commitment

The advocates at AIA work tirelessly to ensure that the individual's voice is heard.

Loyalty to our Advocacy Partners

Our prime loyalty is to the people we support.

Justice

We are a social justice organisation and believe in equal rights and opportunities for everyone in all aspects of society.

Integrity

All at AIA uphold the values of sincerity and honesty.

Teamwork

The AIA staff and Board work as a strong team and make decisions collectively on the development of the organisation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Emma Crouch

Sandy Stuart

Darren Davies

Fiona Arnot

Dennis Cruickshanks

Derek Edwards

Bill Reid

Robin Ross

Derek Stewart

Convenor

Vice Convenor

Treasurer

MONITORING OFFICERS

Sharlaine Walker

Bill Troup

Angus Health & Social Care Partnership

Angus Health & Social Care Partnership

STAFF

Suzanne Swinton

Heather MacMaster

Suzanne Cantwell

Nicola Riach

2017)

Ian Scott

Jackie Frame

Fiona Bridges

Craig Bartholomew

2017)

Christine Landsburgh

Lisa Webster

Loredana Onciul-Blaicean

Student

Student

Executive Director and Company Secretary

Citizen Advocacy Project Manager

Office Manager (until December 2017)

Independent Advocacy Worker (until July

Office Manager (from July 2017)

Mental Health Advocacy Worker

Independent Advocacy Worker

Mental Health Advocacy Worker

Independent Advocacy Worker (from July

Citizen Advocacy Development Worker

Development Worker (from 3rd July 2017)

Cleaner

Tracy Maxwell

Taibah Khan

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY?

Regardless of the barriers people face, we believe that everyone has a right to:

- have their voice heard and taken into account
- be a valued member of their community
- understand and exercise everyday human rights.

Independent advocacy can support people to:

- have stronger and respected voices
- have as much control as possible in their lives
- access information and options so people can make decisions and choices
- have better connections with local communities
- protect their rights, particularly when people cannot do this themselves ([non-instructed advocacy](#)).

Why is the independence of advocacy so important?

Independent advocates are loyal to the people we support (advocacy partners) and take steps to ensure we are not influenced by:

- organisations that provides support to advocacy partners
- family and friends
- others

Independent advocates stand by the views and wishes of advocacy partners.

How Do We Provide Independent Advocacy at AIA?

AIA supports people in one-to-one advocacy 'partnerships' through our direct and citizen advocacy projects. The partnership includes one advocate and one advocacy partner. Our advocacy resource is funded to support people who have:

- a mental ill health
- a learning disability
- dementia
- an acquired brain injury, or
- are an older person.

CONVENOR'S REPORT

This year has been a year of growth and development for AIA, with new opportunities enabling the organisation to flourish and grow. With opportunity and growth comes hard work, the staff at AIA have worked tirelessly to provide an outstanding service to the people of Angus.

As in previous years, demand has continued to grow for the service. The staff have worked tirelessly to respond to these referrals. AIA is exceptionally fortunate to have such a skilled team of people working for us who are committed and driven to do their job. As Convenor I have been delighted to see these individuals gain additional skills and develop over the past year and bring their passion and determination to their roles every day.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the staff for their hard work. Suzanne Cantwell, who left AIA in December, for her commitment to AIA during the past eight years. Heather MacMaster, Nicola Riach, Fiona Bridges, Jackie Frame, Craig Bartholomew, Lisa Webster and Christine Landsburgh, you all work exceptionally hard to provide an excellent service to all those who access AIA. To all staff, past and present, your dedication and passion is very much appreciated and valued by the organisation.

I would also like to thank the Board of Directors, who have strived to guide the organisation through the development and growth we have had over the last year. The commitment and drive that the board possesses is what will enable the organisation to continue to develop over the coming years. Thank you for your support, skills and knowledge that you all bring to the organisation.

I would also like to thank our Executive Director Suzanne Swinton, whose drive and determination is what has got AIA to where it is today. Her hard work and vision has been paramount to AIA's development.

I must also mention our funders who provide us with financial support: Angus Council, NHS Tayside and The Big Lottery Fund, and to the individual staff members within these organisations who provide us with encouragement and advice. And a thank you to the organisations who have supported us in kind over the past year with particular thanks to Voluntary Action Angus.

Last but not least, I wish to thank our volunteers for their time, effort and commitment. You make a huge difference to local people's lives. I am

looking forward to working with you all over the next year and continuing to see AIA go from strength to strength.

Emma Crouch

Convenor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' REPORT

This year we have been collecting in-depth feedback from advocacy partners about their advocacy journey. AIA have been part of SIAA's 'measuring impact' working group alongside other advocacy colleagues throughout Scotland. The group have identified the changes that can happen for people when they have independent advocacy support.

Outcomes of Independent Advocacy			
Confidence Advocacy helps people grow in confidence	Understanding Advocacy increases peoples understanding	Information Advocacy supports people to access information	Control Advocacy helps people gain control
Influence Advocacy supports people to have influence	Participation Advocacy encourages and supports participation	Involvement Advocacy encourages and supports involvement	Presence Advocacy supports people to have a presence

Collecting feedback based on the above outcomes is showing us the real difference advocacy makes to the people we support in having *their own* voices heard.

Snapshot of Outcomes Feedback



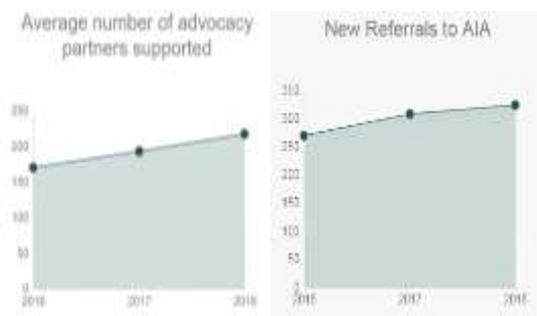
'I find it hard to explain things and say how I feel, and I feel my advocate helped me to do that without putting words in my mouth'. *Advocacy Partner*

“The support and encouragement to talk but also knowing it was okay if I made a mistake as support was there and information was provided in a form that I understood and I didn't have to worry about large forms that I didn't understand, I felt more secure with an advocate and had the help I needed.” *Advocacy Partner*

Advocacy has supported me to	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
be more confident	4.9%	%	7.3%	56.1%	31.7%
understand what was happening	%	%	12.8%	46.2%	41.0%
have access to information	%	%	2.4%	51.2%	46.3%
feel more in control of my situation	%	2.6%	12.8%	43.6%	41.0%
have influence on others	%	2.4%	22.0%	46.3%	29.3%
take part in meetings	%	5.4%	8.1%	51.4%	35.1%
be involved in decisions about my life	%	2.7%	13.5%	51.4%	32.4%
have increased support	%	5.7%	8.6%	51.4%	34.3%
have more people in my life	%	5.7%	37.1%	42.9%	14.3%

AIA Project Statistics

Last year we reported that we were supporting 192 people in advocacy partnerships at any one given time. This year that has increased to supporting on average 216 people per month. This is a 13% increase in the number of people supported at any one time. Our new referrals into the project have remained static with a 5% increase compared to the last reporting year. However, AIA are receiving increasingly complex referrals that require advocacy support for longer.



Total number of people supported in the last year was 523 – of which 323 were new enquiries

This year we have had a waiting list in place. We continue to prioritise people affected by mental health detentions. This means that some people have had to wait additional time for advocacy support. We have reviewed our referral procedures to ensure advocacy support is reaching the right people as quickly as possible.

Understanding other services and organisations has been crucial for us; signposting people to the right organisations that could provide support. This year all staff have reported it is harder to support people to access local services. We are seeing a reduction in support and services for some of the people we support.

Strategic Planning

Our strategic aims for the next five years are:

1. Our core purpose is to provide and promote quality Independent Advocacy using a human rights based approach.
2. Inclusion is at the heart of our organisation and informs all our actions and direction.
3. A key development area is to address barriers to participation within AIA by identifying, challenging and changing;

- attitude barriers
- structural barriers
- cultural barriers
- financial barriers and environmental barriers

Learning & Conferences

I have completed the following training in my role as Executive Director:

- Open University Module in Equality, Participation & Inclusion (Distinction)
- Data Protection (SCVO)
- Data Protection in relation to HR (EVH)
- Impact Measurement (Animate)
- In house Communication Training (Susan Munroe)
- Advocacy and Human Rights (SIAA AGM)

Within Tayside, we work closely with Perth Independent Advocacy Support, share good practice and deliver joint training sessions for our staff teams.

AIA are also nationally involved with other independent advocacy projects across Scotland through the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance. AIA have collaborated in working groups on the Principles and Standards of Independent Advocacy and Measuring Impact.

Thanks

I would like to thank the following organisations and trusts for their funding and support in kind this year,

- NHS Tayside
- Angus Council
- Angus Health and Social Care Partnership
- The Big Lottery Fund
- Henry Duncan (Lloyds TSB)

Without continued funding, we would not be able to support the people in our community who face daily barriers in accessing support, understanding their rights and having their voices heard.

This year we said goodbye to our Office Manager Suzanne Cantwell. Suzanne has worked with AIA since 2010 and has been a constant and steady anchor. Thank you Suzanne for your hard work, caring nature and attention to detail! We all wish Suzanne every blessing in her exciting future

endeavours! Nicola Riach has taken up the post of Office Manager – Nicola's deep understanding of Independent Advocacy and the processes and procedures of AIA has enabled a smooth transition. We have also welcomed Craig Bartholomew as Advocacy Worker and Lisa Webster as Development Worker to the AIA team.

I would also like to thank AIA's great staff team, students, Board of Directors and Citizen Advocates who truly believe in inclusion and diversity for all in our community. The difference I see you make in each other's lives and the reciprocal relationships built up shows me communities can be supportive to one other.

Suzanne Swinton

MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY WORKERS' REPORT

This year has been as busy as ever within the mental health advocacy team. We continue to support partners both in Carseview Hospital (general adult psychiatry) and, Stracathro Hospital (older people psychiatry). We are supporting partners for longer with more complex issues.

The move of the Mulberry Unit from Stracathro to Carseview has seen a continuation in detentions under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. Advocacy Workers provide advocacy support to people detained within the hospital. Many Advocacy Partners are describing to us feeling the strain of this permanent move. Advocacy Partners are not yet seeing an increase in community based psychiatric services.

Our community based partnerships continue to bring new challenges with the complexity and range of issues with which they face, from accessing benefits, the appeals process, housing issues, to child protection and adult support & protection. As ever it remains very rewarding to see the personal growth and rights realised in the individuals that we support.

We have had staff changes within the team, welcoming Craig Bartholomew in July. With more staff on board, we have had time to hold awareness-raising sessions within the Mulberry Unit at Carseview, supporting patients increase their knowledge about advocacy and their rights to make an advance statement. This has enabled the team to pursue preventive work within their busy schedules.

Fiona Bridges

Mental Health Advocacy Worker

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY WORKERS' REPORT

It has been yet another challenging and busy year for Advocacy Workers supporting local people with issues including housing, benefits, Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection and Guardianship. Within this reporting period we continued to see an increase in the number of people being supported. Many of the issues people have are more complex and time consuming. In particular, access to services appears to be problematic due to the reduced external services. This has resulted in a few of our advocacy partners falling through the gaps of service provision.

During this reporting period we also experienced staff changes within our small team of 2. In July Nicola moved to her new post as office manager and Craig joined the team enabling us to continue supporting our advocacy partners. We saw the arrival and departure of two student placements, namely Tracy and Taibah who both valued the experience of an independent advocacy placement.

The future plans of advocacy support includes a generic advocacy approach which will enable all referrals for advocacy support to be distributed evenly amongst the team to allow us to meet the increase in demand.

Introduction to Craig Bartholomew

I joined the AIA team in July 2017 on a 35 hour post, providing direct advocacy support to people throughout Angus. It's been a bit of a rollercoaster! It wasn't a surprise...but I was still pleased to find a welcoming and supportive team here and I feel very much settled in now.

As an Advocacy Worker, I've been learning lots of new skills and knowledge and with the support of my colleagues and feedback from our partners, I've been finding my way to develop the disciplines needed for advocacy.

Each day brings different challenges; whether it's involvement with hospital detentions, adult protection matters, supporting parents in social work settings or helping people to access information so they understand their rights and options in regard to housing or benefit issues. It is great to put advocacy into practice and see people participate, gain control and influence the decisions that affect them.

Some highlights in 2017/18 have included; attending the Scottish Parliament (re: Social Security Bill) the AIA Ceilidh in Forfar and the SIAA annual conference and also working alongside our social work student placements.

For me, a most rewarding part of the role is seeing people reaching the outcomes that they have wanted. When those outcomes aren't achievable

(for whatever reason), being there to support people through the situation and processes that they find themselves in is also a privilege – and often where you see the difference that our advocacy resource makes in people's lives and in our communities.

One partner who has been supported this year has given permission to share their story. Names have been changed to protect their identity:

Harry's Story

Harry is a single parent with mental health issues and lives at home with his 6-year-old daughter Maisie. The Social Work Department were involved a few years ago when Harry's relationship with his partner broke down and were again recently involved due to concerns raised by Maisie's school. Harry was experiencing difficulties communicating effectively with the social workers and requested advocacy support. He told his advocacy worker that due to anxiety and stress caused by previous experiences with professionals he didn't feel able to express himself without getting distressed. This resulted in him making the decision to stop communicating with professionals. He told his advocacy worker that the relationship between himself and the social workers had broken down and a referral to the Children's Reporter was being prepared due to his lack of participation.

Harry and his advocacy worker worked together for several months and with her support he began communicating with the social workers again. Before the next arranged meeting with the social work department, Harry and his advocate discussed what he wanted to say and what he wanted to happen. Whilst discussing his options, Harry said that he would rather meet regularly with his daughters' school and discuss any concerns they had as opposed to meeting with the social workers. With his advocates support Harry felt empowered to express his views and wishes clearly and calmly at the meeting. This resulted in the social workers agreeing that social work involvement was no longer required. Harry now meets with his daughter's school every month. This commitment continued to the point whereby Maisie's teacher and head teacher complimented him on his willingness to participate and the positive impact his actions were having on Maisie's wellbeing, to which he replied, "It's all down to my advocate, if it wasn't for her I would have lost my bairn for sure".

Harry continues to meet with the school when it is required and he no longer requires advocacy support.

Positive feedback goes a long way in making the advocacy role worthwhile. It also acts as a reminder during times of adversities, of the difference advocacy can make in someone's life and why we look forward to the next reporting year and the challenges new and old which will no doubt ensue.

Jackie Frame and Craig Bartholomew

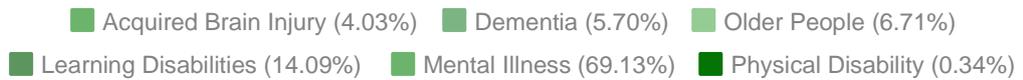
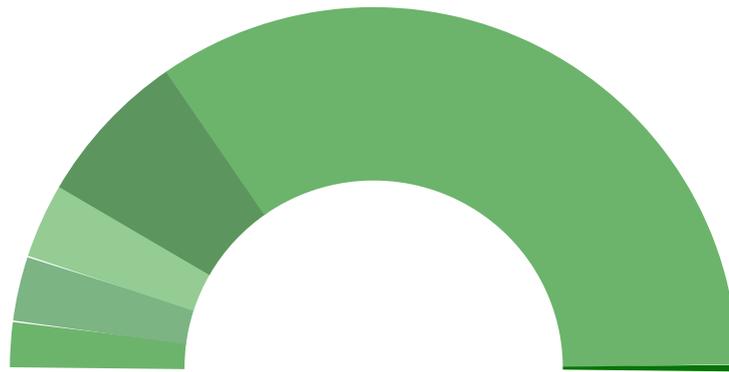
STATISTICS 2017-18

This year we have received request for advocacy support from **523**

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(323 new referrals + 200 existing advocacy partnerships)

Referrals to AIA



Area Partner Lived On Referral

