

Annual Report 2005

**The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance promotes, supports and defends the principles and practice of independent advocacy across
Scotland.**

Chair's Report

This report marks another year in the life of the advocacy movement in Scotland. The movement continues to develop in ways that were unimaginable even five years ago. The forthcoming implementation of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 is an event that is significant for many reasons. Not only is the Act a massive step forward for mental health legislation, it is also a huge advance for independent advocacy in Scotland. At the same time it also represents the most significant challenge that advocacy has faced in its short history. The advocacy movement is clear about the positive impact the independent advocacy brings to the lives of the people it supports, therefore we must also be clear in our response to the Act in the early days of its implementation.

The SIAA will play a key part in helping advocates define their role through training, information sharing and facilitating discussion. Having accessed independent advocacy, as is the new right of people affected by mental disorder, clients and partners will require an advocate's support to attend tribunals, prepare advance statements and nominate named persons.

I must thank Shaben and Mandy as the staff of the SIAA, and to note the work they have done to cement the role of the organisation at the heart of advocacy in Scotland. Board members and the respective member organisations that volunteer their time should also be acknowledged as a key part of the SIAA and its democratic foundation.

With your support we will continue to advance the cause of independent advocacy for those who need it most.

Chris Mackie

Director's Report

The last year has been an exciting time for the advocacy movement in Scotland not least of all because there have been many developments in preparation for the implementation of the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003. For example independent advocates will have a clearly defined role to play in ensuring that individuals are listened to and their rights are safeguarded at the Mental Health Tribunals.

At the same time we have been working alongside the Advocacy Safeguards Agency to review the current "Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy Organisations and Groups". This has been a difficult task because we have been mindful of the differences in the ways that the different types of advocacy work but also because the world has changed dramatically since the original document was written. Therefore this new document will reflect changes in legislation, policy and the recognition of independent advocacy in a wider context. Also we endeavour to make the new Principles and Standards specific, clear, transparent and achievable.

The future for independent advocacy will need to involve a great deal of expansion and growth as the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 potentially covers so many more people than the numbers that are currently supported by advocacy organisations throughout Scotland. This will mean that established organisations will need to expand by being appropriately and realistically funded but also that there will need to be more advocacy organisations set up in order to meet the increased demand. Experience has shown that this needs to be done carefully to ensure that high quality advocacy is available quickly but also that the organisation itself is strong, efficient and secure enough to effectively meet its aims and objectives.

Shaben Begum

Review of the Year

The past year has been a period of considerable growth and development for the SIAA and has seen us become more stable as an organisation as well as achieving many more of our goals. Below are some of the activities that we have been involved in:

- Held "advocacy awareness" training for service providers, both in the statutory and voluntary sectors.
- Produced and distributed the "Directory of Advocacy Organisations in Scotland" to commissioners, service providers, other voluntary sector organisations, and the SIAA membership.
- Recruited individual members of the advocacy movement to join our Pool of Trainers. Twenty-two people participated in the two day "Training for Trainers" course delivered in October 2004.
- Developed our website which provides comprehensive information on all aspects of Independent Advocacy and related legislation. The website hosts a discussion forum, which is an arena to discuss dilemmas and to start discussions on advocacy in Scotland.
- Undertaken substantial pieces of consultancy work to help advocacy organisations which have been facing difficulties. Also carried out extensive pieces of work with other advocacy organisations to develop training packs for staff and volunteers, and to develop action plans for "moving towards independence."
- Have been working with ASA over the last year to review the current Principles and Standards for Advocacy Organisations.
- Have been working with the Mental Health Division and other organisations to produce booklets on different aspects of the MHA through membership of the Communication Group and the Editorial Board.
- Contributed towards SAY Advocacy Sub Group report on advocacy provision which is currently being produced.
- Been involved in the Elder Abuse Reference Group set up by Age Concern Scotland, which was instrumental in the Comic Relief Campaign on Elder Abuse. This group has now become the Vulnerable Adults Alliance Scotland.

The Year Ahead

The SIAA will prioritise the areas mentioned below in the coming year:

1. The delivery of training on the Mental Health Act and continued work on the reference materials.
2. Help more advocacy organisations become and remain independent.
3. Ensure independent advocacy is represented at a national level.

Mission Statement

The Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance promotes, supports and defends the principles and practice of independent advocacy across Scotland.

It does this by:

- Providing a strong national voice for independent advocacy organisations.
- Supporting the growth of existing independent advocacy organisations.
- Promoting the development of new independent advocacy organisations.
- Encouraging existing advocacy organisations towards independence.

The SIAA would like to thank :

Scottish Executive Health Department – for our core funding.

Scottish Executive Mental Health Division— for additional funding relating to the Mental Health (Care and treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

Lloyds TSB – for an additional grant.

Board Members 2004/2005

Louise Adam—Patients Advocacy Service
Linda Bailey—Angus Independent Advocacy
Julienne Dickey—Partners in Advocacy
Angela Forbes—Advocacy Service Aberdeen
Billy Forbes—Scottish Advocacy
Monica Hunter—People First Scotland
Karen Irvine—Hartwoodhill Patients Council
Chris Mackie—The Advocacy Project
Will Mallinson—EARS
Andrew Miller—Equal Say
Tina Morrow—The Princess Royal Trust Highland Carers Project
Ruth Owen—Forth Valley Advocacy
Anne Suckling—Borders Independent Advocacy Service
Paul Thomas—The People's Advocacy Service
Thanks extended to all Board members for their work this year.

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