

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 9 APRIL 2002

INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY PLAN FOR AYRSHIRE AND ARRAN 2001-2004

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval of the Independent Advocacy Plan 2001-2004, which sets out how independent advocacy will be developed on a partnership basis in Ayrshire and Arran.

2. DEFINITION OF ADVOCACY

- 2.1 Advocacy is part of every day life, and has two main themes:-
- safeguarding individuals who are in situations where they are vulnerable
 - speaking up for and with people who are not being heard, helping them to express their own views and make their own decisions
- 2.2 Independent advocacy is the term used to describe advocacy carried out by organisations which are funded and managed independently of statutory and provider agencies. Independent advocacy has a sole focus on advocacy and is accountable to the people being advocated for/with.
- 2.3 The East Ayrshire Advocacy Services is an example of independent advocacy. This service is based at 2a Seaford Street, Kilmarnock and can be accessed directly by contacting staff. It provides a service across East Ayrshire, providing outreach worker advocacy in more rural areas. The service currently provides advocacy for people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and people with brain injury. It has recently started to provide advocacy services to older people, with plans for extension following a positive evaluation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 1997, the Scottish Executive published "Advocacy: A Guide to Good Practice, and this was complemented by the development of "Independent Advocacy" A Guide for Commissions in 2001. Both documents provide guidance on developing quality independent advocacy services.

- 3.2 The East Ayrshire Joint Community Care Plan 2001-04 highlights the importance of advocacy for people using community care services, many of whom will have difficulty in expressing their own views, for example, people with learning disabilities. The East Ayrshire Childrens Service Plan 2001-2004 also highlights the role of advocacy in supporting vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.3 The Scottish Health Plan "Our National Health : A plan for action, a plan for change" outlines that all NHS Boards are to work in partnership with local authorities to ensure that integrated independent advocacy services are available to those who most need them. They were required to produce a local advocacy plan for their area by December 2001.
- 3.4 To progress the development of an advocacy plan for Ayrshire, the Joint Development and Resources Group (Ayrshire joint agency strategic planning group) formed a working group in January 2001 with representation from health, the three local authorities in Ayrshire and local advocacy services.
- 3.5. The working group has developed a draft Independent Advocacy Plan, which has been submitted to the Scottish Executive. The plan seeks to improve and develop independent advocacy services in Ayrshire. It outlines current provision, gaps in provision, awareness raising / training needs, future plans and quality indicators. Initial comments have been received on the draft from the Scottish Executive, and are currently being considered.
- 3.5 The implementation of the plan will take place on a local basis within each local authority area.

4. PROGRESS

- 4.1 In implementing the Independent Advocacy Plan in Ayrshire and Arran, progress will be achieved by:-
- extending the availability of independent advocacy to people, for example, older people
 - improving access to independent advocacy by developing service provision in local areas
 - increasing understanding and knowledge of the public and professionals about independent advocacy
 - increasing the opportunities for people who use services to be involved in service improvement and development activities

- targeting advocacy services to people in the most vulnerable circumstances

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The cost of the East Ayrshire Advocacy Service is £97,823 and is met on a joint funding basis between East Ayrshire Council (£45,261) and Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board (£52,562) within current budgets.

5.2 A range of developments are set out in the plan, which span across childrens services, older peoples services and adult services. The costs of developments will be met through a range of funding sources, including health, the Change fund, East Ayrshire Social Inclusion Partnership and European Social Funding.

5.3 Examples of specific developments within East Ayrshire include the:

- development of an advocacy service for older people at a cost of £12,000 in 2001/2002, increasing to £30,000 in 2004/05 through older people development funding.
- continuation of a post which will ensure that people with learning disabilities living in long stay hospital settings have access to independent advocacy. The funding of this arrangement is currently being negotiated with health.

6. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The recommendations contained within the Independent Advocacy Plan 2001-2004 for Ayrshire and Arran are consistent with national and local policy objectives.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 East Ayrshire Advocacy Services are provided by an independent provider, with responsibility for managing and providing the service, including the employment of staff. The service is subject to a contract with the Council, is monitored on a regular basis.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Social Work Committee endorses the Independent Advocacy Plan 2001-2004 for Ayrshire and Arran.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services
18 March 2002
Enc (1)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Advocacy : A Guide to Good Practice (Scottish Executive, 1997)
2. Independent Advocacy : A Guide for Commissioners (Scottish Executive, 2001)

FOR INFORMATION

A copy of the Independent Advocacy Plan 2001-2004 for Ayrshire and Arran is attached and a further copy will be available at the members Information Point.

For further information please contact:
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IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER : JACKIE DONNELLY

AGENDA