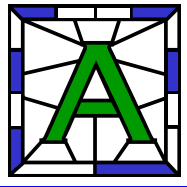


Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service

Annual Report

2016/17





Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service

The Board of Management:

**The following members have served on the
Board of Management during 2016/17:**

Convenor: Vivien Dance

Vice-Convenor: Norman Beaton

Treasurer: John Green

Secretary: Scott Rorison

Robert McKinnon

Dawn Baxter

Elaine Hemmings

Eva MacDonald, MBE

Cathy Robertson

Eileen Livingstone

Tracey Chambers

Brian Robertson

Karen Kerr (Resigned September 2016)

Dawn Clark (Appointed January 2017)

The Annual General Meeting (2016) appointed
French Duncan LLP, Chartered Accountants,
to act as the company's Auditors



A message from The Convenor...

It has been a great privilege to serve as Convenor of this reputable organisation for a second term as we continue in our seventeenth year of helping people to express their views, challenge decisions and uphold their rights. It is reassuring to know that as our staff and volunteers move on to retirement or further career opportunities that we are always able to recruit individuals who share our common ethos, that of a people organisation that delivers services to a range of vulnerable individuals across a large geographical area with empathy, understanding and compassion and in this we are the envy of many other organisations. The Annual Report is a good time to take a moment to reflect on the difference we make because of the calibre of people that work with us to bring about those changes. The strength of any organisation comes from the style and quality of the leadership and the vision and commitment of our Manager, Scott Rorison, must have a special mention in this annual message. We are indeed very fortunate to have Scott at the head of our team and appreciative of the wealth of experience he brings which enriches Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service and the reputation it enjoys across Scotland. He is of course supported by equally committed staff who bring loyalty and passion to the cause of advocacy on a day to day basis. On behalf of the Board and all our clients I would like to record our appreciation for all their valued efforts over the last year.

In a similar vein, I am very grateful for the commitment and insight of all Directors, many of whom are volunteer advocates, who monitor and ensure sound governance of the charity and are always seeking ways to enrich the services that we provide within static budget constraints. We support some of the most vulnerable people in Argyll and Bute and West Dunbartonshire and everyday our volunteers who are rooted in local communities help individuals get the help to which they are entitled from public services and others, bringing about life changing

moments that builds confidence and allows many to continue to enjoy the independence that they seek and deserve. As we consider our case statistics at each Board meeting I am constantly reminded that these are all individuals who often are referred to us when all other routes have failed them and it is humbling to realise that many of our case resolutions are down to skilled volunteers who will go that extra mile for others. An organisation that has consistently developed such skills in its communities over many years can indeed take pride in its work and its people.

It has become increasingly difficult in recent years to access development funding so our successful bid to the Scottish Government for our Long-Term Conditions Advocacy Project was a tremendous boost to our strategic aims, particularly in that it will allow us to advocate for anyone aged 16 or over living in Argyll and Bute who is not able to lead an independent life because of the impact of a long term or progressive condition. The Board was delighted to meet all of the new recruits during their induction session and to hear how highly they rated the quality and depth of the training presented by our staff. We look forward to receiving regular reports on the success of this progressive initiative and are grateful to the Scottish Health and Social Care Alliance for their support and confidence in our ability to deliver this project.



**Vivien Dance,
Convenor of the
Board of Directors.**

“Independent Advocacy is a crucial element in social justice. It is a way to ensure that everyone matters and everyone is heard including people who are at risk of exclusion and people who have particular difficulties making their views known.”

The Scottish Government

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service was commissioned in 2000 by a partnership of health and social work services, our commissioners include:

- **West Dunbartonshire Council**
- **Argyll & Bute Council**
- **NHS Highland**
- **NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde**

The Service operates throughout West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute and is free, independent and confidential. We will agree our strategic objectives with our Commissioners but maintain our independence in all the work we undertake.

Whilst recognising that independent advocacy can benefit a whole range of vulnerable people, including all community care groups and others at risk of exclusion, the Service's current priorities are:

- **Adults (16+) with learning difficulties**
- **Adults (16+) who use mental health services**
- **Older people (65+)**



Independent Advocacy—Raising the Standard...



Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service is committed to quality and keen to hear the views of people who use our service and other stakeholders. To help achieve this we undertake a regular client satisfaction survey. This takes the form of a questionnaire, sent by post with a stamp addressed envelope enclosed, to a random sample of 100 clients who have used the service during the preceding six months. The response rate is currently running at approximately 23%, which we believe is reasonable for a postal survey of this type, particularly given our client group. Over time it provides us with valuable feedback on the experiences of our clients. Between October 2010 and August 2016 we have conducted 12 surveys and have received a total of 275 responses. We are delighted with the positive feedback and high levels of satisfaction we have received. Details of the survey are on our website at: www.laas.org.uk





Moving Forward



The past year has been one of changes, challenges and new opportunities.

During 2016 we saw the departure of two greatly valued colleagues from the organisation - Mary Doonan, our Advocacy Co-ordinator in West Dunbartonshire and Helensburgh & Lomond and Karen Kerr, our Administration & Information Worker in Argyll. Between them Mary and Karen had notched up almost 30 years of service with the organisation and made an immense contribution to its work and development. On behalf of everyone associated with LAAS I would like to wish Mary a happy retirement and Karen every success in her new career. Alison Hay, our Advocacy Worker in Mid-Argyll has also chosen to retire from her paid post but continues to support our work in a voluntary capacity, for which we are grateful.

Demand for independent advocacy continues to grow due to increased awareness of its value, pressure on other services and the impact of the recession. During 2016/17 the service recorded 1074 individual advocacy engagements across our area of operation. We are grateful for the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to help us respond to the growing demand for the help and assistance we provide to some of the most isolated and vulnerable members of our community.

Although LAAS remains in a relatively health financial position, thanks in no small part to the vigilance of our Directors, members noted at our last AGM that we have received no inflationary increases in our core funding for seven consecutive years, which had led to a growing deficit in our recent accounts. Although this remains a concern, we are pleased to report that due to a concerted effort to identify savings and the impact of funding for new projects we have been able to "balance the books" in the last financial year.

I am grateful, as ever, for the support, wisdom and guidance of our board members in ensuring the effective governance of the organisation in these challenging times.

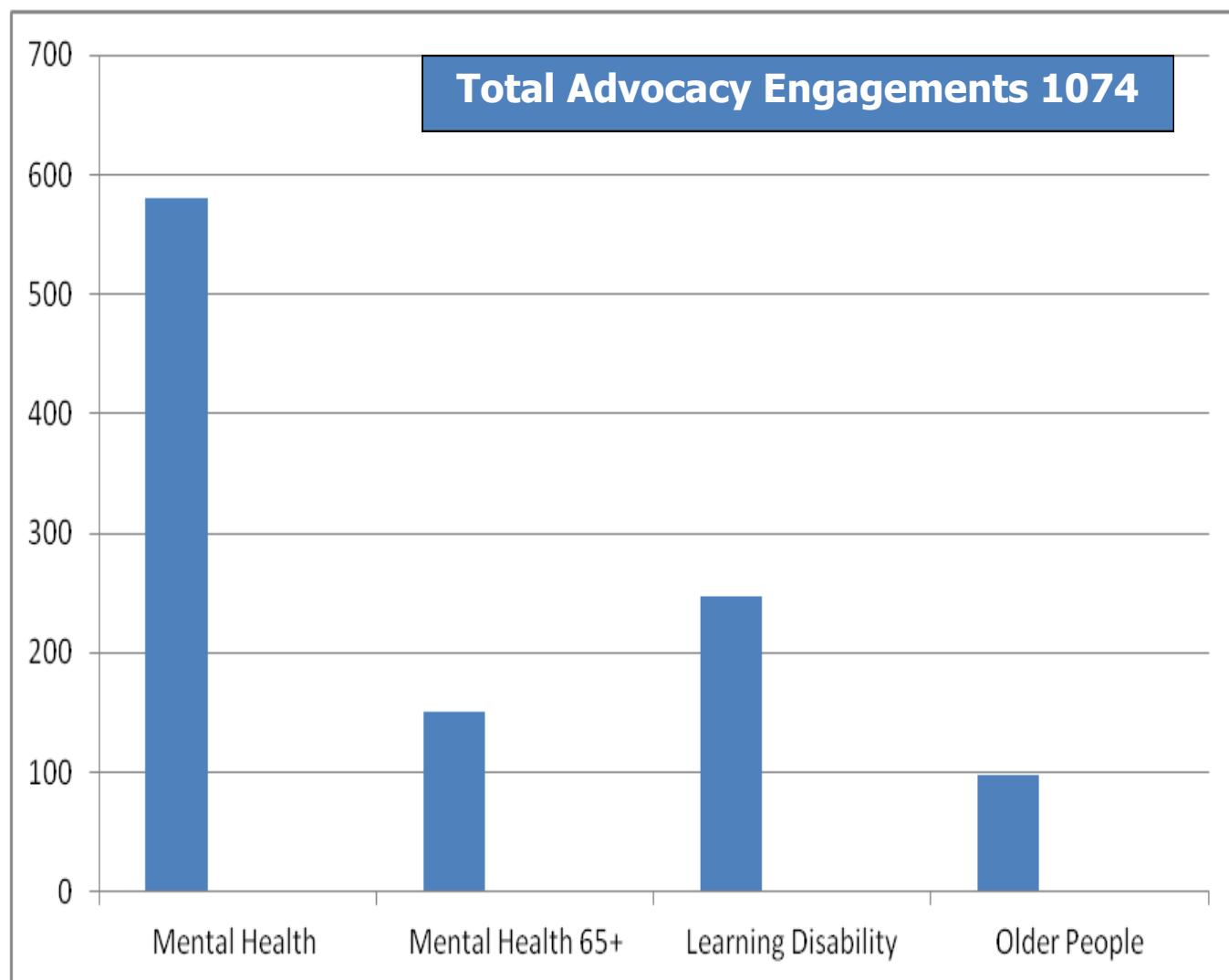
Undoubtedly, the highlight of the past year has been the launch of our new project, supported by the Scottish Government via the Health and Social Care Alliance, to develop access to independent advocacy for people across Argyll & Bute with one or more long-term conditions, which impact on their ability to lead and independent life. This fills a long recognised gap in advocacy provision and, with the support of our newly recruited team, will help us to ensure that more people than ever before will be able to access the help they need to lead longer, healthier and more independent lives.



**Scott Rorison,
Advocacy Manager.**

Making sure your voice is heard...

Number of individual advocacy engagements by client group—2016-17



Across Scotland, demand for independent advocacy services is at record levels as a result of increasing awareness of the value of independent advocacy; changes in legislation and policy; increased pressure on other services; changes in service delivery and the impact of the recession.

This trend has been reflected across West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute during the past year. During 2016/7, Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service recorded a record 1074 individual advocacy engagements, supporting people to play as full a part as possible in discussions and decisions which shape their lives, express their views, challenge decisions and uphold their rights. The number of advocacy engagements recorded in 2016/17 is up on the previous year (974) there is also growing anecdotal evidence of an increase in the complexity of case work and the number of issues arising from each engagement.

Developing Independent Advocacy

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service are delighted to have secured funding of £280,000 from the Scottish Government via the Scottish Health & Social Care Alliance to extend its work to meet the needs of anyone aged 16 or over living in Argyll & Bute with one or more long-term conditions which are progressive or degenerative, or which impact on their ability to lead an independent life.

The new project is being supported through the "Transforming Self-Management in Scotland Fund" and will introduce a new dimension to the development of self-management skills for people with long-term health conditions.

Announcing fifteen newly funded projects in October, Minister for Public Health & Sport, Aileen Campbell, MSP welcomed efforts to address some of the major challenges facing health and social care, head on, adding:

"It's vitally important that we continue to recognise how lives can be transformed when people are supported to live well, on their own terms, with whatever long-term conditions they have."



Minister for Public Health, Aileen Campbell, MSP



Annie Timmins (Oban & Lorn), Sarah McFadyen (Kintyre), Simon Richardson (Cowal & Bute), Arlyn Bolton (Helensburgh & Lomond) and Ailsa McCrae, Team Leader (Mid-Argyll)

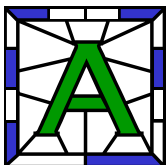
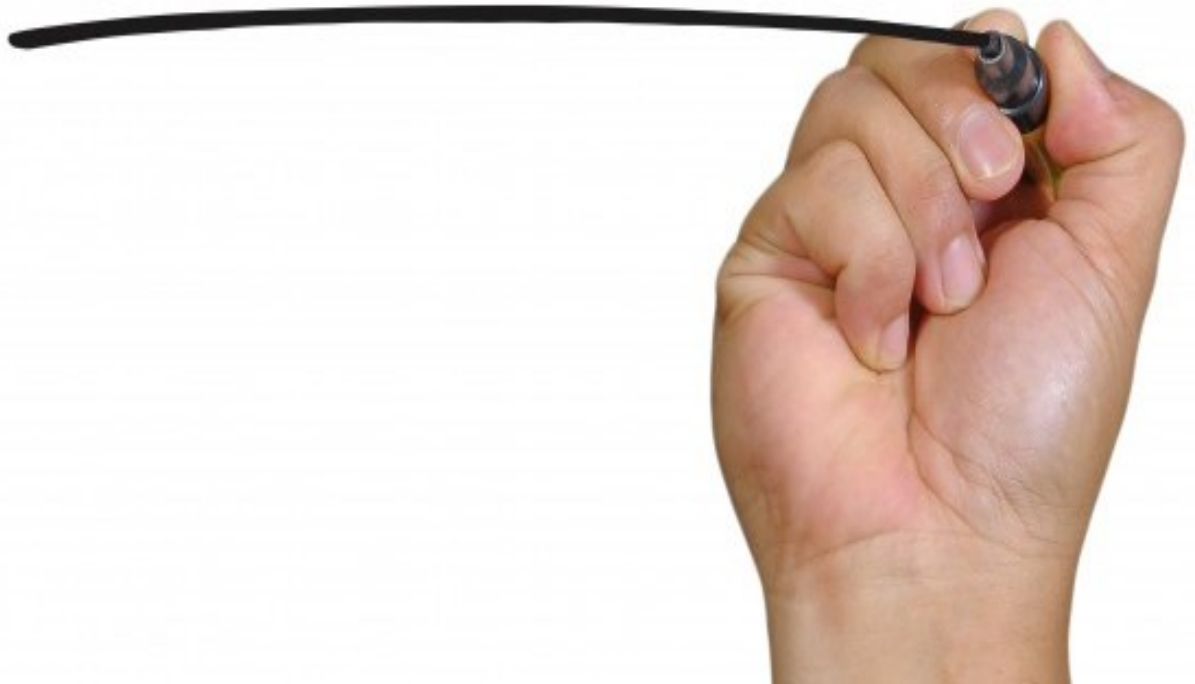
Advocacy Manager, Scott Rorison, said "We hope to shift the focus away from the current norm or reactive interventions at times of crisis towards a more preventative approach to healthcare, with independent advocacy being offered as an essential early intervention, helping individuals to plan their own care and be fully involved in the discussions and decisions which shape their lives.

"We know from advocating for people with long-term conditions who met our existing criteria because of age or mental health issues, that we can make a significant difference to how they feel and to the support they are able to access. People tell us of the positive impact independent advocacy can have in achieving positive outcomes, promoting well-being and empowering them to lead longer, healthier, more independent lives."

A new team of Independent Advocacy Workers have been recruited and are already receiving referrals from people across Argyll & Bute. The new project will initially run until March 2019.

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service

Delivering Independent
Advocacy across
Argyll & Bute and
West Dunbartonshire!



Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, and a recognised Scottish Charity. Registered Office:
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Company No: 230947

Charity No: SCO33157

