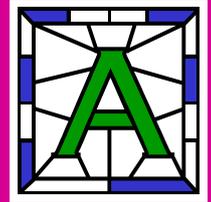


# The Advocate



NEWS FROM LOMOND & ARGYLL ADVOCACY SERVICE

SUMMER 2017

## MY LIFE! MY CHOICE!

### New Advocacy project aims to transform self-management of healthcare

It's "full speed ahead" for a new independent advocacy initiative which aims to put people with long-term conditions in control when it comes to managing their own health and social care needs. A new team of Independent Advocacy Workers have been recruited and are already receiving referrals from people across Argyll & Bute.

The new project is funded by the Scottish Government via the Health & Social Care Alliance Scotland and will match adults (16+) with one or more long-term conditions, which significantly impact on their ability to lead an independent life with an independent advocate, who can help ensure that they have the support they need to challenge



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

decisions, uphold their rights and play as full a part as possible in the discussions and decisions which shape their lives. The new project is already assisting clients with a range of long-term conditions, including physical disabilities, MS, fibromyalgia and Huntington's disease, who were previously unable to access independent advocacy.

## LISTENING TO THE "VOICE OF EXPERIENCE"

Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service is committed to partnership working and keen to involve people who use our services, and those who support them, at every level in our organisation. We firmly believe that people with lived experience of a long-term condition are likely to know best what works for them. To help us promote and develop our new project for people with long-term conditions in Argyll & Bute we will be hosting local events to help us learn from "the voice of experience". These will be open to people with a long-term condition, unpaid carers and professionals from partner organisations. The events will take place in localities across Argyll & Bute and support with transport/travelling expenses will be available. If you would like to lend a hand in our efforts to ensure people with long-term conditions have the support they need to take control of their own lives we would like to hear from you! For more information about the up and coming events please contact: Ailsa McCrae (Team Leader) on (01546)606056 or email: [ailsa.mccrae@laas.org.uk](mailto:ailsa.mccrae@laas.org.uk)



Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service gratefully acknowledges the support of :



# What is Independent Advocacy?

**Independent Advocacy is about giving people a stronger voice. It helps people to speak up for themselves and take control of their own lives.**

If you are living with a long-term condition, Independent Advocacy can help you to:

- **Defend your interests**
- **Uphold your rights**
- **Ensure your voice is heard**
- **Build your confidence and improve your wellbeing**
- **Understand all the options open to you**
- **Make your views and wishes known**

You can make a referral to the Long-Term Conditions Self Management Advocacy Worker if there are times when.....

- **You struggle to speak up for yourself**
- **You feel confused and alone when dealing healthcare professionals**
- **You wish you knew more about your options and choices in managing your health condition**
- **You have difficulty getting your views heard and understood**
- **You wish you had someone who would support you to ask the questions you would like answers to**
- **You are finding it difficult to cope with your health condition or are worried about what will happen in the future**

Your Advocate is on your side and is completely independent of any health and social care services you receive. Their only loyalty is to you.

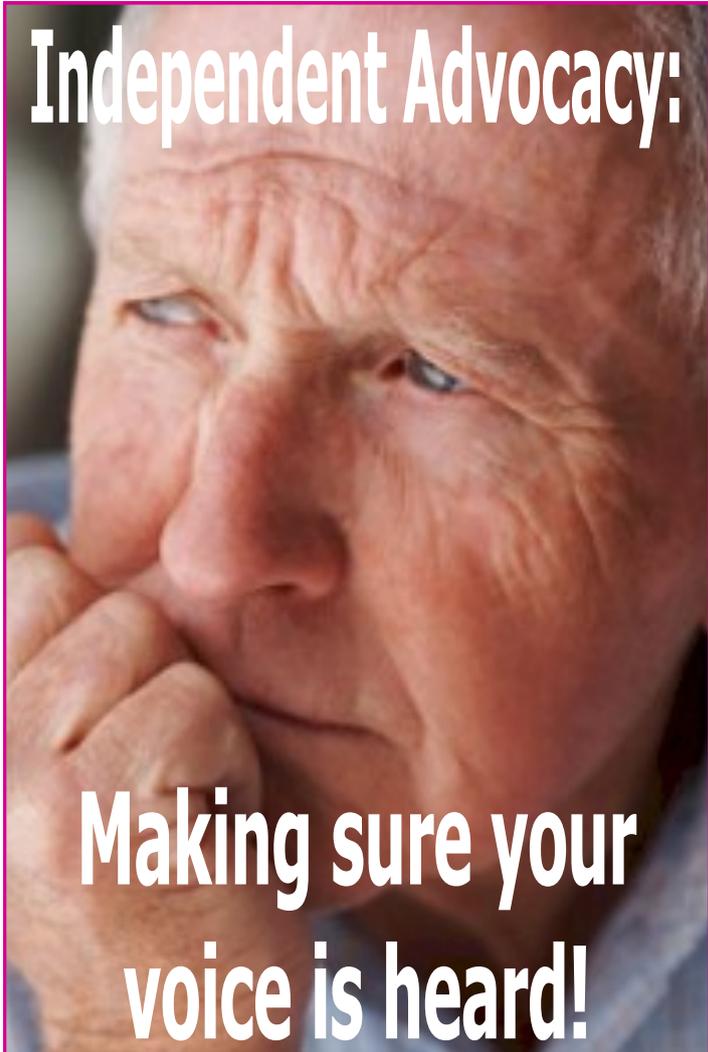
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Services operates an open referrals policy. This means that we accept referrals from all sources, including self referrals and referrals from health and social work professionals, carers and others. We are only able to act with the consent of the person being referred.

# How can an Advocate help?

**Your Advocate can spend time with you, getting to know you and your needs so they are in a good position to help you express your views and, if necessary, speak up on your behalf.**

**Your Advocate can also help by gathering information for you, thereby giving you the opportunity to make an informed choice from all the options available to you. An Advocate won't make judgements or try to impose their own views.**

**Whatever you discuss with your Advocate will remain confidential. We will not breach your confidentiality unless you or someone else's safety is at risk. Your Advocate will only act with your agreement.**



**Independent Advocacy:**

**Making sure your voice is heard!**

# Life can be better with self-management

Being told you have a condition for which there may be no cure can be devastating. Individuals respond in individual ways. It can often have a profound impact on a person's well-being and self-esteem.

People try to cope as best they can with the support they have. But frequently they do not have the information or skills to manage their condition well. It is often difficult to make well informed decisions about their life; let alone make plans for the future.

Together with independent advocacy, health professionals and others who provide support, self management can help people to make decisions that are right for their life.

## How can it help?

If you live with a long term condition, self management can put you in the driving seat. It means accessing the knowledge and skills you need to decide what's right for managing your condition and, most importantly, your life.

Self management can mean you being:

- better informed about the condition,
- better prepared for everyday challenges,
- better supported when you need it.

## How can I do it? What do I need to do?

For you and the people who support you, self management involves making decisions together about:

- the support that's best for you,
- how often you need support,
- what can be done together, and
- what you can do for yourself.

In practice, self management can mean different things to different people. For everyone, it means using information, tools, techniques and practical support from other people to get on with their lives.



Debra Nelson and Ailsa McCrae from the Mid-Argyll Advocacy Team

# 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 our 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 results can be found on our website at: [www.laas.org.uk](http://www.laas.org.uk)

## What matters to you?

Advocacy staff in Mid-Argyll recently hosted a **"What matters to you?"** event at the Argyll & Bute Hospital. Discussion at the event, attended by patients and staff, focussed on the subject of loneliness and isolation and how they can be combated. Those attending also talked about the **"52 Weeks of Kindness" Campaign** and came up with suggestions for promoting it within the hospital.



# How to find out more:



**LIKE US ON  
FACEBOOK!**

**Find out what's happening at  
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy  
Service by visiting our  
Facebook page, where you  
can keep up to date with  
events and opportunities to  
get involved!**

**Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service is committed to partnership working and is keen to ensure that our services are accessible and firmly rooted in the communities we serve. If you are a health or social care professional or are involved with a voluntary or community group which comes into contact with people with long-term conditions, our staff would be pleased to hear from you. We are happy to provide information about our work and arrange visits and short presentations for professionals or community groups across Argyll & Bute. If you would like to find out more please get in touch!**

## How to contact us:

### **Argyll & Bute & Mid Argyll Office**

Blarbuie Road, Lochgilphead  
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Tel: 01546 606056

### **Cowal & Bute Office**

Riverbank Surgery, Kilmun,  
PA23 7QL.  
Tel: 01369 840250

### **Oban & Lorn Office**

15 Lochside Street, Oban,  
PA34 4HP.  
Tel: 01546 606056

### **Kintyre Office**

2nd Floor,  
Hazelburn Business Park,  
Campbeltown,  
PA28 6HA.  
Tel: 01586 553428

### **Helensburgh/Lomond**

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**[www.laas.org.uk](http://www.laas.org.uk)**

