

Advocacy Counts 5

Executive summary

A review of advocacy services for older people in Wales

Independent advocacy is a vital service for individuals to ensure that the person (and their well-being outcomes) is placed at the centre of the work of support services. Independent advocacy gives citizens voice, choice and control over achieving their well-being outcomes.

There have been significant developments in the field of independent advocacy in the period between Advocacy Counts 4 and this report, Advocacy Counts 5. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 defines advocacy as a right for all individuals in Wales in certain circumstances including (but not exclusively) assessment, care planning, review and safeguarding.

This report looks at all types of advocacy provision which supports adults in Wales to provide a broad snapshot of the advocacy landscape.

The Code of Practice (Part 10, Advocacy) states that:

Advocacy helps people to understand how they can be involved, how they can contribute and take part and whenever possible, lead or direct the process.¹ To have voice and control, an individual must be able to feel that they are a genuinely equal partner in their interactions with professionals.² Advocacy should be considered as an inherent element of the Act to focus social care around people and their well-being.³



¹ Part 10 Code of Practice page 8 para 22

² Part 10 Code of Practice page 7 para 16

³ Part 10 Code of Practice page 8 para 22

Findings since Advocacy Counts 4

- **There has been a 17% drop in the number of advocacy services (from 23 to 19) specifically for older people since Advocacy Counts 4.**
- **There has been a 69% increase in services providing advocacy to a wider client group. The rise is from 26 to 44 services.**
- **There are 107 full time paid advocates working across Wales with 20 of those delivering advocacy specifically to older people.**
- **There are 66 part time paid advocates with 23 of those delivering advocacy specifically to older people.**
- **There are 66 volunteer advocates working in a variety of advocacy services across Wales. This is an increase of 22%.**
- **There are 37 fewer paid advocates and 23 fewer volunteer advocates specifically supporting older people than reported in Advocacy Counts 4.**
- **The total number of older people supported by the respondents over the last 12 months was 6412, an increase of over 900 from Advocacy Counts 4.**
- **Looking ahead, the number of services who believe that their funding will remain the same or increase has dropped to 53% compared to 63% in Advocacy Counts 4.**
- **Services specifically funded for older people are in only 17 of the 22 local authority areas in Wales, down from 21 in Advocacy Counts 4. Services for a wider client group do however cover all local authorities.**



Number of respondents and services

	Advocacy Counts 4 2013	Advocacy Counts 5 2016
Total number of respondents	22	22
Number of services funded specifically for older people	23	19
Number of organisations providing these services	15	13
Number of other funded advocacy services where older people are part of the client group	26	44
Number of organisations providing these services	12	15
<small>(Please note that these services will include other statutory services such as IMCA and IMHA)</small>		

(Please note that one provider may have more than 1 advocacy service and some will have services specifically for older people as well as services for a wider client group)

Advocacy staff and volunteers

	Advocacy Counts 4 2013		Advocacy Counts 5 2016	
	Older people services	All service types	Older people services	All service types
Full Time	34	33	20	87
Part Time	46	25	23	43
Volunteer	53	1	30	36

The findings initially suggest a flourishing picture with a rise in both overall numbers of advocates and number of citizens supported by those services. However, the number of organisations responding has remained the same and the geographical area covered by advocacy services for older people has shrunk. This leads to gaps in provision for citizens and a “postcode lottery” of services. Age Cymru

is particularly concerned as Wales has an older population that is continuing to grow; many older citizens are experiencing complex health and social care needs, and have more and more reasons for needing an advocate. It appears to be the case that while there are potentially increasing numbers of older people requiring advocacy services there is less specialist availability across areas of Wales.

Funding and sustainability

- **Over 60% of providers responded that funding for their current services had less than a year to run; another 30% did not know what their future funding arrangements would be.**

- **Only 10% had secured funding for an advocacy service for 3 years or more**

The results of our survey paint a mixed picture. On the one hand the total overall number of advocates has increased. However, the number of advocates (volunteer and paid) working specifically with older people has declined from 133 to 73. A 45% reduction in advocates is concerning when considered in light of demographic trends in Wales.⁴ Furthermore, this should be considered alongside 88.5% of services expecting their funding to remain the same or decrease (41% stay the same, 47% decrease, come to an end or unknown) during the next 12 months. Comments from respondents around this issue include “this year we are operating on a 10% reduction of funding” and “awaiting commitment from LA [Local Authority]” which clearly demonstrates the perilous nature of funding and the strain it puts on services and citizens alike.

Quality and standards

- **All providers responded that they meet the advocacy code of practice and set of standards.**

- **40% of respondents have gained the Quality Performance Mark and 30% are working towards it. The remaining 30% stated that they did not have it and were not working towards it.**

- **Almost 70% of all advocates (paid and volunteer) have the City & Guilds Advocacy qualification, with many working towards the full diploma.**

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Act) 2016 and its associated codes are being consulted upon and drafted. However, it is anticipated that commissioned IPA services

will become regulated services and as such clear directives around what constitutes a regulated IPA service will come into force by 2018. The survey demonstrates that many services already hold a quality performance mark and meet the code of practice. This indicates an intent and commitment by the advocacy sector to improve the quality of service provision.



Language

In providing advocacy services to ensure citizen’s voices are heard and their wishes respected, it is necessary to offer support in the medium with which they are most comfortable whether that is English or Welsh.

The survey found that 70% of providers had Welsh speaking advocates. Despite this, only 2 providers reported that support provided in Welsh was above 10%, with many stating that the support had never been requested in the Welsh language. As Local Authorities follow recommendations from the Welsh Government regarding the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011) it is expected that the requirement for advocacy providers to provide services bilingually will become stronger.

Over 50% of providers state that they have provided advocacy support in many other languages such as Mandarin, Chinese, Polish and Punjabi.

⁴ <http://bit.ly/2fBTlJy>



Conclusion

Advocacy Counts 5 has provided an updated snapshot of advocacy provision in Wales for adults with a particular emphasis on older people. It suggests that the overall number of advocates has continued to rise but indicates cause for concern in some areas including a decline in specialist providers and gaps in geographical availability.

Of particular concern for Age Cymru is the fall in the number of specialist advocacy providers and advocates for older people.

Approaches to commissioning advocacy across Wales are currently varied and at different stages of development. What appears to have happened in some areas is that contracts are being awarded to organisations who can deliver to all adults instead of individual specialist providers which could explain the data we are presenting.

Whilst the number of citizens who have experienced advocacy support has continued to rise, the number of providers has fallen to levels lower than in 2011 as reported upon in Advocacy Counts 3. This could indicate a move away from specialist advocacy providers being commissioned to a provider who delivers to all ages across a larger geographical area. The end of funding for the Big Lottery Advantage funded projects which were recorded in Advocacy Counts 4 could also be a reason for this lower number of providers in this report.

In light of the new duties placed upon Local Authorities it is possible to anticipate that demand for advocacy services will grow and therefore the availability and sustainability of services is a priority for all involved. The mixture of funding sources, statutory and grant funders has remained approximately the same since 2013. Future reports will consider whether the new duties have an impact on the number of commissioned and grant funded services.

Safeguarding remains a fundamental part of the advocacy services provided by the respondents to this survey. Safeguarding is a key area in which citizens have a right to IPA services (in certain circumstances) and all respondents to the survey reported supporting clients who had been abused in the last 12 months. The respondents have reported a rise in the number of physical abuse cases which they have supported clients to deal with, with financial abuse and emotional/psychological abuse being the second most prevalent. Age Cymru supports the right for individuals to live in a safe environment, free from harm and mistreatment. The right to advocacy for those who have been abused will enable them to have their views, wishes and feelings expressed and be at the centre of the safeguarding process, ensuring they are fully involved and supported to be free from future harm.

Age Cymru is committed to supporting the development of the independent advocacy sector in Wales and views it as a vital tool to secure the wellbeing of all citizens, not just that of older people. Age Cymru's Golden Thread Advocacy Programme has been funded by Welsh Government to support the implementation of Part 10 (advocacy) of "The Act" in a strategic and unified way, seeking to develop consistent, sustainable services across the whole of Wales.

For further information, please contact the Golden Thread Advocacy Team by emailing goldenthreadadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk



Please note:

The Advocacy Counts survey respondents are self selecting. Responding is based on whether they provide funded advocacy services that are specifically for or include older people as part of their client group. Despite all efforts we cannot guarantee we have data from 100% of providers. This may also explain why some areas appear not to have any advocacy provision at all.

The data which we collected was longitudinal, and therefore mirrored the other surveys in our series but we have extracted data to paint the fullest picture of advocacy services in Wales, making the data useful to commissioners, providers and citizens alike. Full data sets are available on our website.



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