

Advocacy Newsletter

October 2018 Issue No 11

Advocacy Counts 6

Through the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP), Age Cymru has recently completed Advocacy Counts 6, the 6th report on advocacy provision for adults in Wales with a particular emphasis on older people.

Over the last 12 years Age Cymru has been reviewing availability of services, issues around funding and sustainability, quality of service, training of advocates, advocacy and its role in safeguarding, accessibility in terms of language, and knowledge and understanding of legislative changes in advocacy.

Advocacy Counts 6 presents the findings from our most recent survey. It explores the findings in light of the period of transition we are in, from the completion of the large scale grant funding Projects, to the start of the newly commissioned Independent Professional Advocacy services implemented under the new advocacy requirement within the Act. Advocacy Counts 6 provides a snapshot of the current situation in Wales.

Summary of findings since Advocacy Counts 5 in 2016

- There has been a 32% drop in the number of advocacy services (from 19 to 13) specifically for older people.
- There has been a small decrease in services providing advocacy to a wider client group. The reduction is from 44 to 41 services.
- There are 54 full time paid advocates working across Wales with 10 of those delivering advocacy specifically to older people. Both these figures have halved.
- There are 63 part-time paid advocates with 12 of those delivering advocacy specifically to older people.
- There are 51 volunteer advocates working in a variety of advocacy services across Wales.
- There are 21 fewer paid advocates and 15 fewer volunteer advocates specifically supporting older people than reported in Advocacy Counts 5.
- The total number of older people supported across all services over the last 12 months was 5466, a decrease of over 900 from Advocacy Counts 5.
- 2345 fewer older people were supported by advocacy services funded specifically for older people than in 2016.
- Looking ahead, the number of services who believe that their funding will remain the same or increase has risen to 65% compared to 53% in Advocacy Counts 5.
- Services specifically funded for older people are in only 15 of the 22 local authority areas in Wales, down from 17 in Advocacy Counts 5. Services for a wider client group do however continue to cover all local authorities.

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Number of respondents and services

	Advocacy Counts 4 2013	Advocacy Counts 5 2016	Advocacy Counts 6 2018
Total number of respondents	22	22	21
Number of services funded specifically for older people	23	19	13
Number of organisations providing these services	15	13	7

Number of other funded advocacy services where older people are part of the client group	26	44	41
Number of organisations providing these services	12	15	18
(Please note that these services will include other statutory services such as IMCA and IMHA)			

	Advocacy Counts 4 2013		Advocacy Counts 5 2016		Advocacy Counts 6 2018	
	Older people services	All service types	Older people services	All service types	Older people services	All service types
Full Time	34	33	20	87	10	44
Part Time	46	25	23	43	12	51
Volunteer	53	1	30	36	15	38

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The findings suggest a more challenging environment for advocacy services in 2018 with a reduction in both overall numbers of advocates and number of citizens supported by those services. Whilst the number of organisations responding has remained largely the same, the geographical area covered by advocacy services for older people has continued to shrink. This leads to gaps in provision for citizens and a "postcode lottery" of services. Age Cymru is particularly concerned that while the number of organisations providing support to older people as part of a wider client group has increased and are supporting a greater number of older people, there are significantly fewer specialist services for older people across areas of Wales. This has resulted in an overall reduction in support for older people at a time when the need is increasing, with 900 fewer older people supported than in 2016.

Funding and sustainability

- Over 40% of providers responded that funding for their current services had less than a year to run; whilst 20% did not know what their long-term future funding arrangements would be.
- Over 50% had secured funding for an advocacy service for 3 years or more

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 10% are working towards it. Of the remaining providers, 40% stated that they did not have it and were not working towards it.
- 80% of all advocates (paid and volunteer) have the City & Guilds Advocacy qualification, with many working towards the full diploma

Language

The survey found that 50% of providers had Welsh speaking advocates, which is a reduction on the number reported in 2016 (70%). The uptake of advocate support through the medium of Welsh continues to be very low, with 80% of services continuing to report that 10% or less of their support is provided in Welsh, with many reporting no uptake at all. 50% of providers continue to state that they have provided advocacy support in many other languages such as Chinese, Polish, German and Arabic.

Safeguarding

75% of services report having a designated manager with responsibility for safeguarding. Four respondents don't have a designated Safeguarding manager, compared to only one in 2016. Whilst nearly all services ensured their staff had adult protection training, less than half (47%) reported that their volunteers received it. This contrasts with the position in 2016 where 75% of volunteers received adult protection training.

85% of respondents had supported someone who had been abused in the last 12 months. In 2016 this response was 100%.

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Conclusions

Advocacy Counts 6 provides 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, people supported, and the number of services funded to deliver advocacy across Wales have all decreased since the last survey was undertaken in 2016.

Of particular concern for Age Cymru is the continued fall in the number of specialist advocacy providers and advocates for older people. The loss of this specialist focus and expertise for supporting older people is unlikely to be replicated to the same extent in a service supporting adults of all ages.

The loss of specialist providers may be an indication of commissioning changes to providers who deliver to all ages across a larger geographical area and the end of funding for the Big Lottery Advantage funded projects.

Approaches to commissioning advocacy across Wales continue to be varied and at different stages of development. At the time of writing this report, six Local Authorities have commissioned the IPA provision required of them by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, however most are in the process of developing their future strategies. Both providers and commissioners remain uncertain about the implications of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act (2016).

In light of the new requirements placed upon Local Authorities it is anticipated 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 is similar to that reported in 2016, with the only significant variation being the decrease in the number of organisations funded by charitable trusts.

It would appear that the potential impacts of the new requirements anticipated in Advocacy Counts 5 have yet to come to fruition as those Local Authorities who have yet to fully comply with the requirements continue to use existing contracts to ensure advocacy support is available.

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

Marc Forster, Partnerships Officer, Age Cymru

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Advocacy Networks

Over recent months a range of regional advocacy provider networks have been developed to complement the existing regional networks and the national network as part of the work of the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP).

The networks are an opportunity for services who currently provide advocacy, and those who would like to in the future, to get a better understanding of the current situation in the region, potential future commissioning opportunities and to have space to network and share information and ideas.

The aims of the network are reflected in the agreed terms of reference and include the following:

- Share local and regional concerns, issues, evidence based research and good practice among organisations which provide advocacy services.
- Identify and create opportunities for sharing knowledge, resources and expertise.
- Promote partnership working within the advocacy sector in the region.
- Identify needs and gaps in advocacy.
- Link with the National Advocacy Network to ensure the voice of the region's advocacy organisations are heard and updates are received.
- Build the capacity of the region's advocacy organisations ensuring they are up to date with legislative and policy changes.
- Bring together advocacy organisations to have a strong, collective, regional voice.
- Promote communication between the voluntary, statutory and other sectors about advocacy in the region.
- Influence health and social care policy to bring about change and improve advocacy.

In addition to bringing together a wide range of providers together to share knowledge and understanding, improve working relationships and receive updates on legislation/sector developments, below are some of the positive outputs/outcomes achieved by the networks:

- Brought advocacy providers together to organise and influence co-production events in several commissioning areas.
- Collectively responded to area commissioners to influence and shape the advocacy strategy and service specification.
- Jointly responded to consultations on Welsh Government legislation.
- Enabled consortia of providers to come together in several areas to form collaboratives that are tender ready for commissioning opportunities
- Helped to shape and improve GTAP resources and materials such as the maturity matrix, awareness raising materials and outcomes document.
- Constructively challenged a range of presenters to improve the quality of services and products available.
- Refining the advocacy specific information available on the Dewis Cymru website.

National advocacy network

The National Network for Adults Advocacy in Wales has been supported and facilitated by Age Cymru for years, latterly through GTAP. The network meets quarterly at Maesmawr Hall Hotel near Newtown and brings together advocacy service managers and practitioners from all over Wales. The agenda focusses on delivering and discussing national topics such as Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 and Safeguarding.

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The network meetings regularly receive presentations from guest speakers on matters such as the Quality Performance Mark and also receives regular updates on the progress of GTAP and is actively involved in the development of GTAP resources and materials. Increasingly, the network receives updates from the range of regional networks established across Wales. Issues arising out of the discussion at the network meetings are escalated up to the Policy team at Age Cymru for them to raise with Welsh Government.

The GTAP Manager is chair of the National Network and as such is a member of the Advocacy Action Alliance, bringing together representatives from advocacy organisations across England and Wales.

Regional networks

Prior to GTAP, there have been regional networks established in Powys, which is chaired and facilitated by PAVO, the local County Voluntary Council and also a network to cover Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, which is chaired and facilitated on an annual basis by one of the member organisations. During 2018, both networks have delivered co-production events with commissioners to develop advocacy strategies for the areas.

As the GTAP Partnership Officer has developed working relationships with advocacy providers and discussed the support options that could help them, one of the needs that has been identified is for the creation of regional advocacy networks in areas where they don't already exist. The need for these provider networks has also been acknowledged and agreed by the commissioning bodies across Wales.

Regional networks have been established to cover the following areas of Wales:

- Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan

- Cwm Taf

- Gwent

- North Wales

- Torfaen (which now exists as a virtual/on-line forum since the instigation of the Gwent network)

The only area of Wales not currently covered by a network is the Western Bay area of Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea and that will soon be initiated.

With a view to the long term sustainability of the networks post GTAP, most are chaired by either a representative from a member organisation or a County Voluntary Council. The venues are provided by member organisations and rotate across the region in most instances.

For more information on any of the advocacy networks, please contact Marc Forster on 07932 989656 or marc.forster@agecymru.org.uk

Marc Forster, Partnerships Officer, Age Cymru

National Social Care Conference

The Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP) attended this year's National Social Care Conference which took place on the 12th and 13th of September at the Royal Welsh College of Music and drama in Cardiff.

As a programme, we were delighted to be given the opportunity to present, in collaboration with Bridgend County Borough Council a Learning Zone workshop entitled "Developing a Local model for delivering Independent Professional Advocacy." This was a fantastic opportunity for us to show case the exciting co-productive commissioning that led to the piloted hub and spoke model for providing Independent Professional Advocacy within the county.

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The session focused on the journey that commissioners and leadership within Bridgend County Borough Council took in collaboration with the GTAP team, working together to understand the need for advocacy in the County as well as exploring, with providers what solutions could be employed to meet the projected demand. Following the discussion of the route which took commissioners to procure the individual hub as well as the spoke elements of the service. We shared with attendees some of the principle findings from the pilot programme as well as the changes that have been made to the ongoing development of the service that have now been recommissioned.

One of the principle findings we shared was:

“The Hub model has provided the opportunity for a streamlined service, with the Hub sign posting service users to appropriate non-statutory services where there is no eligibility for statutory services (where previously those service users would have been contacting statutory services). The Hub has provided the resource to explore and inform non statutory service users of support organisations and options available to them which may not have been time possible for statutory service staff.” (taken from the evaluation report written by GTAP on the BCBC pilot project)

We also shared some of the reported outcomes from this project:

Outcomes for service users have included:

- Increase in self-confidence and positivity.
- Greater ability to self-advocate.
- Individuals receiving the practical and emotional support that they need to improve their lives. (Individuals with support, being able to clearly identify and understand their care and support needs and to be able to identify options and services that are available to meet those needs.)
- Improvement in the general wellbeing of individuals that are receiving the support and services that they need.
- Individuals having options and choice and greater control over their lives.
- Individual’s voices being heard and them being fully involved with decisions about their care and support. Individuals have said that the advocacy support makes them feel that their opinions matter and are valued.
- Some people have said that the support has enabled them to become more in control of their lives and decisions.
- Individuals being empowered.

The learning zone session was well attended and provided an excellent opportunity for the GTAP programme to share its observations and experiences. We would like to thank Richard Thomas, Strategic Commissioning Officer for the invaluable support he provided in putting the workshop together as well as his co-facilitation support on the day.



Huw Davies (L) and Paul Swann (R) On their Information Stall at the National Social Care Conference which took place on the 12th/13th September 2018 held at the Royal College of Music and Drama in Cardiff.

Huw Davies, Programme Development Officer for Commissioning, Age Cymru

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BSL users are Deaf people who use British Sign Language (BSL) as their first or preferred language. The capital 'D' distinguishes between BSL users and people who have hearing loss. The British Deaf Association¹ (BDA) is the UK's leading membership organisation run by BSL users for BSL users. BDA delivers a range of services across the UK aiming to empower Deaf people to overcome the difficulties they face daily.

One such service is Access and Inclusion Advocacy, which involves:

working with individuals or groups to enable and empower them to have their views heard and listened to, ensuring service providers are aware of Deaf equality/rights, ensuring that BSL users have access to clear and full information to help them achieve better life outcomes.

This work focuses on three main areas:

1. Ensuring information is delivered in a language at the right level for BSL users to comprehend

Being unable to hear everyday conversations, the TV, radio or other forms of spoken language, many BSL users struggle with the written and spoken word. This hinders BSL users from learning English at the same levels as non-Deaf people. Because of this, information provided in English may not meet the needs of all BSL users.

Providing a staff member who has learned BSL at Level 1 or 2 does not take into account the need to fully understand the nuances, idioms and other cultural aspects present in BSL. Offering an interpreter may not be acceptable as this assumes that a straight translation will be adequate when the interpreter may not match the individual's needs.

Case Study

Client was referred by sister over concern with her mental health. Client had been diagnosed with aggressive MS. Client became depressed, moody, agitated, and refused to speak/sign to anyone about her condition. The GP offered counselling via an interpreter. Client was unhappy with this as she preferred a counsellor using BSL, enabling her to be more open and express her emotions to someone who uses BSL and can empathise fully. Health Board initially refused her request but after intervention by Advocacy services, agreed.

2. Ensuring that all written documentation is made comprehensible for BSL users so that they can respond appropriately

Many public documents fall into this category eg registering with a local GP, hospital forms, applying for a social care service, benefit claims, appointment confirmations etc. The BDA's Advocacy services in Northern Ireland, England and Wales all report that 100% of their clients require translation services.

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Case Study

Client confirmed a letter from her hospital after six months wait. On arrival, no interpreter was in attendance. Client was told consultant was ill and that reception staff had phoned (!) her earlier that morning to inform her. An alternative consultant continued with the appointment by trying to communicate with her using pen and paper. Client continued to struggle with the English but when the consultant attempted to examine her, she walked out in distress. She then referred to Advocacy services who supported her to make a complaint resulting in a satisfactory outcome.

3. Ensuring that there is appropriate access

For many BSL users this is likely to require fully qualified and registered BSL/English interpreters. Despite Equality Act 2010 requirements for reasonable adjustments, many mainstream services are effectively closed to BSL users by failing to budget for this, and by not informing staff of how to book interpreters. The BDA supports BSL users who complain that frequently they do not have access to health services despite the service offered by the three Welsh Interpreting services.

Case Study

Client's flat was broken into with the client inside. With the support of the advocate, client was able to make a statement using an interpreter to the police. Client was then re-housed due to being a victim of hate crime and being on the POVA register.

South Wales Advocacy service

At present BDA are able to offer an Access & Inclusion Advocacy Service covering South Wales, funded by the Big Lottery. To contact the service email Michelle Fowler-Powe cao.wales@bda.org.uk or SMS/Facetime: 07766 600597 or Skype/ooVoo: Michelle Fowler BDA.

Links 1. <https://bda.org.uk> 2. <https://www.wits.wales>

Paul Redfern & Michelle Fowler-Powe, British Deaf Association

BDA Advocacy Wales Launch at The Pierhead, Welsh Assembly - [INVITATION](#)

Other Useful information

Advocacy QPM News page

Latest link to the [news page](#) kindly supplied by Gail Petty.



Dewis Centre for Independent Living

Supplied by Nicola Benny of Dewis CIL. We are happy to attach the link to their [DVD's](#) which work around the topic of how Advocacy works and has improved the lives of people who have used the DVD's.



General Medical Council Consultation

Link to the [General Medical Council consultation on review of consent](#)

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Age Cymru's Free Advice Line

Age Cymru's advice line can provide free, impartial advice to your constituents on a range of subjects.

Perhaps they may want advice about how much they should be paying for a loved one's care? Or perhaps they may want to know if they are eligible for Pension Credit and want help with claiming it?

Age Cymru can help with all these issues, and more – call us today on: **08000 223 444**

Contact us...

- To subscribe to the newsletter
- If you have any comments or questions about the articles
- If there's anything you would like to see in the next newsletter

Email: sue.vaarkamp@agecymru.org.uk

Telephone Golden Thread Programme 01352 706228

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Age Cymru,
Ground Floor,
Mariners House,
Trident Court,
East Moors Road,
Cardiff, CF24 5TD

t: 029 2043 1555

e: enquiries@agecymru.org.uk

www.agecymru.org.uk

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