

Advocacy Newsletter

Issue No 1 October 2020

HOPE Project Official Launch

We're proud to introduce an exciting new project that's ready to support older people (50+) and carers all over Wales.

The HOPE project (Helping others to participate and engage) was officially launched on 6 October 2020 with the support of Deputy Minister Julie Morgan and Welsh celebrity Roy Noble.

HOPE is a partnership project between Age Cymru, Age Cymru local partners and Age Connects Wales partners throughout Wales. The project is funded by Welsh Government under the Sustainable Social Services Grant until the end of March 2023.

Thirteen of the fifteen project staff are now in post and already working with older people, carers, volunteers and organisations across Wales.

This exciting new project will be supporting people to engage, participate, gain information, have their voices heard, understand their rights, make choices, be involved, share experiences, raise awareness of advocacy, and develop skills and knowledge.

HOPE will deliver advocacy support at a community level through a range of advocacy models by recruiting and then fully training and supporting project volunteers.

We'll not be delivering paid advocacy or any form of statutory advocacy and we won't duplicate existing services, but rather we'll work with and complement the existing advocacy providers across Wales.

HOPE will engage with communities who can guide us to make sure the service we provide is right for the needs of older people and carers in their areas. Forums will be developed to support us to engage with communities or we'll work with established ones where they exist. Through the forums, HOPE will identify and support Advocacy Ambassadors, who will promote awareness of rights and choices, and the importance, benefits and outcomes of advocacy.

HOPE will also establish a programme of training, workshops and events enabling advocates and other professionals across Wales to develop their skills and knowledge.

HOPE will make a huge difference to the lives of many older people who currently don't know how to deal with their concerns or don't have the confidence to speak up about what they really need. This project will help shine a light on their needs and aspirations so they can live a more fulfilling and dignified later life.

Right now, HOPE is recruiting and training community based volunteers all over Wales to provide independent advocacy support to local older people and carers so they can help shape the key decisions affecting their lives and avoid getting into a crisis situation.

For more information on the project, the launch, how to volunteer and how to access the support – contact

advocacy@agecymru.org.uk

or go to

www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy.

Our new team

We anticipate by the time of the distribution of this newsletter the final positions will have been filled and we'll be a full team of fifteen members.

Click on the link below to see all the current Details available for contacting any member of the HOPE project team.

[Contact our Team](#)

A word from one of our new team members: Nick Hughes

My name is Nick Hughes and I've recently joined the Age Cymru family as a Project Officer for Wrexham and Flintshire working on the HOPE (Helping others participate and engage) project.

I'm massively excited to be involved in the HOPE project which will make such a difference in people's lives. The HOPE project aims to provide low level, community based advocacy to older people (50+) and carers to empower them to have their voices heard, understand their rights and be involved.

HOPE is a partnership project so I'm working very closely with Age Connects North East Wales who've been immensely helpful in getting this project off the ground in the region. With the help of Age Connects North East Wales, I've been able to reach out to numerous organisations across Flintshire and Wrexham to spread awareness of the HOPE project and to begin conversations about how to implement the project across the region.

The organisations I've spoken to have all been very receptive of the project and I look forward to working with them all in the future.

I'll continue to have these conversations with organisations and reach out to others to ensure we're reaching all older people that may require the assistance of our volunteer advocates. Volunteer recruitment is also underway and I'll be excited to welcome the volunteer advocates in the next few months.

The HOPE project has had a really positive start with the main focus going forward to spread awareness of the HOPE project around the region and to recruit the amazing volunteers to provide the advocacy support.

nick.hughes@agecymru.org.uk

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The Big Event

The HOPE project are hosting the Advocacy "Big Event" during the week beginning 19 October 2020 and week beginning 2 November 2020.

The theme of the "Big Event" aligns with the findings from the recent survey "Advocacy during COVID-19". This survey was undertaken to understand how people were being impacted as well as how the advocacy sector in Wales were able to respond and support people during the COVID-19 crisis. There'll be a report published shortly from the survey results.

Following discussion at advocacy network events, the HOPE team are planning this year's "Big Event" virtually by holding a series of webinars for adult advocacy providers across Wales. There'll be two to three webinars across both weeks and each will be facilitated and have expert speakers on the following topics:

- Findings on blanket decision making during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- People's/human rights being overridden during the lockdown.
- Mental health impact on staff and clients and their well-being during lockdown.
- Why referrals for advocacy reduced so significantly and the challenges this caused for people.
- Principles for delivering advocacy during COVID-19 and beyond.
- The impact of lockdown on carers and the impact of support services being withdrawn.

The Big Event (cont.)

If you have any enquiries regarding the “Big Event” please don’t hesitate to contact the HOPE project or Kath Hawkins, Training Officer, HOPE project on:

Advocacy@agecymru.org.uk

Katherine.hawkins@agecymru.org.uk

Media and Resources

One of the first tasks of the project was to produce an interim message of what the HOPE project was all about followed by a frequently asked questions document.

Please follow the links below to access these documents and we feel it’ll give everyone a flavour of what the HOPE project stands for.

[HOPE project interim messaging](#)

[HOPE project frequently asked questions](#)

Dementia Advocacy

Age Cymru has been working with the Alzheimer’s Society to ensure that the advocacy service can still continue. To this end, a grant had been obtained for a period of eighteen months to run until March 2022.

We’re delighted that Dementia advocacy can still keep running across Wales. More information to follow in due course.

dementiaadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk

Age Cymru Website

The Age Cymru webpage has now been fully updated to accommodate the new

[HOPE project page](#).

Golden Thread Advocacy Programme

The Golden Thread Advocacy Programme may have closed on 31 March 2020 but everyone will still be able to access all of the useful and valuable resources that were produced during the four years the programme was in operation. Link below to the page.

Advocacy principles for coronavirus and beyond

These operating principles seek to make sure that people who use social care and health services during and beyond the Covid-19 (coronavirus) pandemic are heard and listened to. It will be of most use to advocates and advocacy organisations, to people who use advocacy services and their family members, to Disabled People’s Organisations, to social care and health professionals, and to those who commission advocacy services.

This important document is being promoted by The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi). Please read from the link below, and if you wish, join in with other organisations and endorse the principles of the document via the Instructions on the final page.

[Advocacy principles for coronavirus and beyond](#).

Changes to qualifications for independent advocates in Wales

This information from Karen Wakelin of Social Care Wales:

Qualifications for independent advocates in Wales are changing; the City and Guilds level three Certificate/Diploma for Independent Advocacy has been replaced from the 1 September 2020 with a new City and Guilds level four qualification: Professional Practice in Independent Advocacy.

From time to time, independent advocates move into different roles in the advocacy sector e.g. from IMHA to IMCA. The old level three Certificate/Diploma had provision for learners to undertake stand-alone top up units; the new level four qualification is assessed in a different way and top up units are no longer available.

There’s an expectation that all employer’s support workers who move into a new role to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to undertake the functions of their role – this applies equally to independent advocates.

Social Care Wales has worked with the advocacy sector to develop a [competency framework](#) using the content of the pathway units from the new level four independent advocacy qualification. It's applicable to all independent advocates who move roles regardless of whether they hold the old level three qualification or the new level four qualification.

It's a tool that employers can use alongside their own induction and probation processes; the competency framework progress log and completion slip can be used as evidence to show the advocate has been supported to develop the appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills for their role. The competency framework replaces 'top up' qualification units.

The full list of recommended qualifications for independent advocates can be found on the [Qualification Framework for social care and regulated childcare](#).

From the 1 September 2020 the City and Guilds level three Certificate/Diploma in Independent Advocacy will become a predecessor or legacy qualification listed under the 'other qualifications' tab. It'll continue to be accepted for practice and there is **no expectation** that those who hold the level three Certificate/Diploma qualification will need to complete the new level four qualification. If you've any queries about the new arrangements, please contact:

Karen.Wakelin@socialcare.wales

Advocacy Awareness Week 26 to 30 October 2020

The week gives us time and space to explore and communicate some of the pressing issues facing the advocacy sector and the people we support and represent. This year some of these issues have been highlighted and exacerbated. The Coronavirus pandemic has been significant for all of us, changing the ways we all work, live, socialise and connect. It's also changed the ways in which we get support to be healthy and well and to live the lives we want. Access to independent advocacy has possibly never been as important.

The role of advocacy in supporting people to have their voices heard, in addressing inequalities and in upholding rights has in many instances been vital.

#AAW20 is a fantastic opportunity to share our stories of success and highlight what needs to change. The HOPE project have secured an interview with Beti George from BBC Radio Cymru which will be available to view on the Age Cymru website shortly.

NDTi will be involved for the third year with the Advocacy Awareness Week. The link below gives you all the information needed to get involved with this venture and make your own contributions.

[Advocacy Awareness Week 2020](#)

Advocacy Networks

A range of regional advocacy provider networks have been developed across Wales to complement the work of the National network for adults advocacy in Wales. 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.

Below are the details of the next round of advocacy network meetings which will take place via Zoom or Teams:

North Wales 24 November 2020 2pm - 4pm

National Network for Adult Advocacy
25 November 2020 2pm - 4pm

Powys 7 December 2020 10am - 12.30pm

Cwm Taf Morgannwg 8 December 2020
2pm - 3.30pm

Gwent - To be confirmed

Cardiff & Vale - To be confirmed

For more information contact:

Marc Forster 07932 989656 or

marc.forster@agecymru.org.uk

Age Cymru Advice

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

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

Age Cymru Advice can help with all these issues, and more – call us today

0300 303 44 98

Contact us...

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

Email: sue.vaarkamp@agecymru.org.uk

T: 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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