

Dumfries and Galloway Independent Advocacy Plan (Adults and Children/Young people)

2024 - 2027

Easy Read



Dumfries &

Galloway

Together is
Better



action on
drugs+alcohol
DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

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Arabic

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Joint Foreword



Andy McFarlane, Chair of Dumfries and Galloway Integration Joint Board

Jim Brown, Chair of the Children's Services Strategic and Planning Partnership (Dumfries and Galloway Council)

Nick Morris, Chair of NHS Dumfries and Galloway

Penny Halliday, Chair Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership

We are the Chairs of the IJB, Education and Children's Services in Dumfries and Galloway Council, the NHS Board and Dumfries and Galloway Alcohol and Drug Partnership. We have supported the development of this joint Independent Advocacy Plan for Dumfries and Galloway with partners from across health and social care.

Being able to access independent advocacy is a legal requirement (the law). The Scottish Government asked all Health and Social Care Partnerships (the Council and NHS Board in this area) to have a joint Independent Advocacy Plan for adults, children and young people by 31 March 2024.

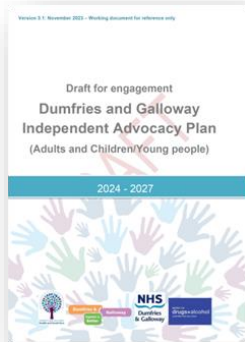
In Dumfries and Galloway, the Integration Joint board (IJB) is responsible for health and social care for adults. The Council is responsible for delivering Social Work functions for children and young people. The NHS is responsible for all health services.

People who are vulnerable, such as people experiencing mental ill health or children who are care experienced, should have as much choice and control as possible over their own lives.

We want to make sure people know about independent advocacy, and that it is available to everyone in Dumfries and Galloway that needs it. Making sure people have the information they need to make decisions about their lives and the support to be able to tell people, is very important.

Words or terms that may be unfamiliar are in **bold** in **blue** are linked to and explained in the **glossary** on pages 15 and 16. Useful links to documents and websites in this plan are in **bold**, black and **underlined**.

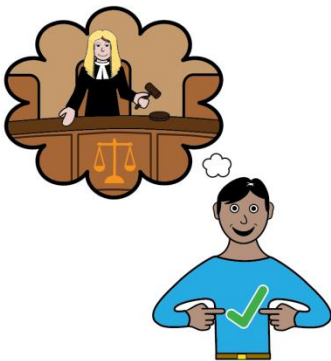
Introduction



This is an Independent Advocacy Plan for Dumfries and Galloway for 2024 -2027.

This plan is about independent advocacy for adults, children and young people in Dumfries and Galloway.

What is independent advocacy?



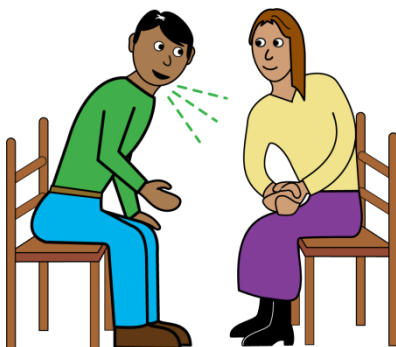
Independent advocacy is where a service speaks up for a person.

It helps them to have as much control as possible over their own lives.

It makes sure that their human rights are respected.

The Scottish Government says independent advocacy makes sure that

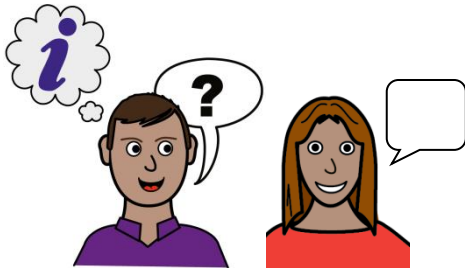
- everyone has the chance to have their views heard
- people have the support they need to speak out and trust that what they want and their experience is taken into account
- people can share their concerns and have support to get them dealt with



Independent advocates only provide advocacy support. If an organisation provides other services, this must be kept separate.



An independent advocate cannot make decisions on behalf of the person (**individual advocacy**), or group (**collective advocacy**)



An independent advocate helps the person or group to get the information they need to make choices and decisions.

An independent advocate supports the person or group to get their views across to others. They may speak on behalf of people who cannot do it themselves.

Reasons we need an Independent Advocacy Plan

Having access to independent advocacy is a legal requirement (the law) in Scotland.

This fits with the **Integration Joint Board (IJB)** Model of Care which includes a human rights based approach. The model is in IJB **Strategic Commissioning Plan**



The partners including the NHS, Council and third sector organisations worked together to create the plan. They will make sure independent advocacy is available for people who need it. There are criteria to qualify for support.



A report must be sent to the **Mental Welfare Commission (MWC)** every year. It explains how services have provided access to independent advocacy and what the plans are for the future.

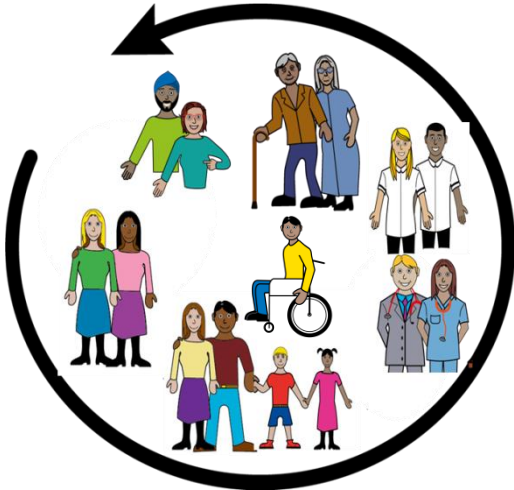


Having an Independent Advocacy Plan is one of **6** recommendations to IJBs, Councils and NHS Boards in the MWC's **'The Right to Advocacy'** report published in April 2023.

Who is this plan for?

The Dumfries and Galloway Independent Advocacy Plan is for

- adults with a learning disability, mental illness or other mental disorder
- adults living in Dumfries and Galloway who need the services of an advocate for individual and collective advocacy and meet the criteria
- children and young people who are **care experienced** and/or who are in placements out of this region
- children who are involved in the child protection process and/or children's hearing system
- children who have emotional well-being and mental health issues under the terms of the **Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003**.
- Carers for adults and/or children/young people in the above categories
- staff and organisations that support people in the above categories that may signpost them to independent advocacy
- staff and organisations that deliver independent advocacy
- anyone else that is interested in independent advocacy



How independent advocacy is delivered in Dumfries and Galloway



The IJB, NHS Dumfries and Galloway and Dumfries and Galloway Council are responsible for making sure independent advocacy is available to everyone who needs it.

There are currently two organisations that provide **independent advocacy** in Dumfries and Galloway.



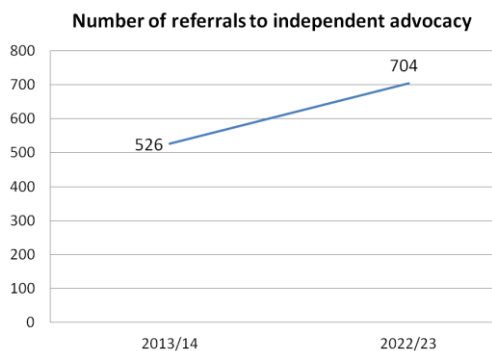
Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service provide individual and collective independent advocacy. This is for adults that need support under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.

They also provide independent advocacy to other adults who require the services of an advocate and meet the service criteria.



Barnardo's Hear 4 U Dumfries and Galloway provide advocacy for children and young people (in the priority groups listed on page 6).

Independent advocacy for adults



Independent advocacy is not employment, legal, debt and benefits advice and support. For these issues, people are told about other services that are available.

More people each year have needed independent advocacy services.

The number of referrals to Dumfries and Galloway Advocacy Service has gone from **526** referrals in 2013/14 to **704** in 2022/23.



The biggest increase in referrals has been for people aged over 76. These referrals have more than doubled in 10 years.



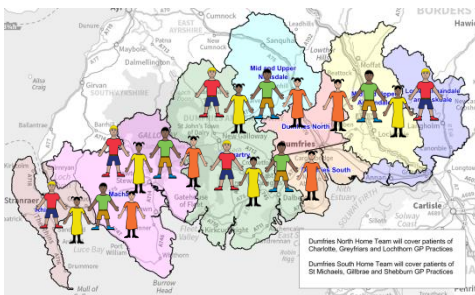
The waiting list for access to independent advocacy for adults can be between 0 and 25 people at any time.

People who have needs under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 are supported first.



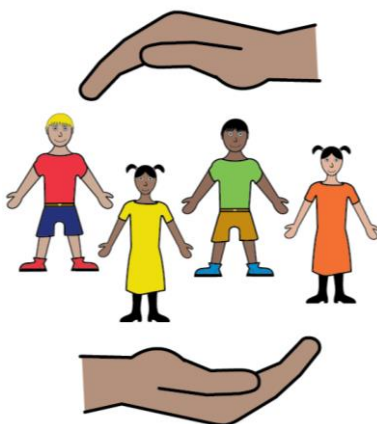
Independent advocacy is provided at Midpark Hospital where advocates deal with enquiries and speak to and support people on the ward.

Independent advocacy for children and young people



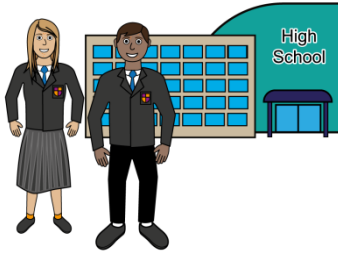
Barnardo's Hear 4 U Advocacy Service provide independent advocacy for children and young people across Dumfries and Galloway.

The number of referrals to the service has increased from **46** in 2018 to **111** in 2022/2023. **702** children and young people have received support from Hear 4 U since 2018.



Priority is given to children and young people who

- are involved in the child protection process and/or children's hearing system.
- have experienced residential, foster or kinship care
- have emotional well-being or mental health issues under the terms of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003.



The Hear 4 U service has bases at North West Community Campus and Lockerbie School Cluster.

The need for independent advocacy services in the next 10 - 20 years



People are living longer, but they are often living with more than one health condition. This means there may be more people in need of help from advocates.

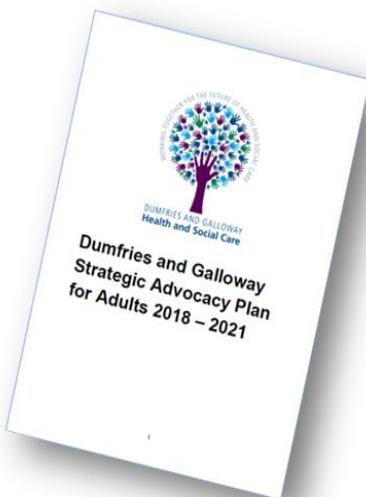
As the population of Dumfries and Galloway gets older, the number of people with dementia is likely to increase.



People with dementia are entitled to access independent advocacy and can be referred on a **non-instructed** basis to protect their human rights.

There could be around **3,550** people with the condition in Dumfries and Galloway by 2040.

What have we achieved so far?



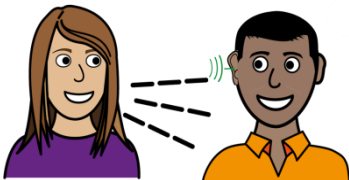
The previous Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Advocacy Plan (Adults) 2018 – 2021 wanted to make sure that the independent advocacy supported people to

- have more choice and personal control
- be involved in the decision-making processes
- challenge decisions
- achieve their personal outcomes
- feel listened to by the professionals/ service providers
- make their own decisions



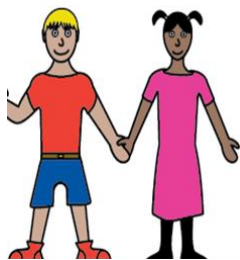
- appeal, complain or raise concerns
- access information to help them make decisions
- be more independent
- have increased personal dignity and respect
- reduce dependency on services
- increase their confidence

What people have told us about independent advocacy



People that provide independent advocacy and people who have accessed it have told us what is working and how we can improve services.

Here are some comments that people have made about current services



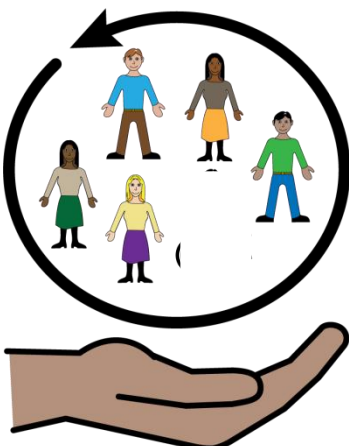
[my advocate] helped me with a wide range of things, [from] school transitions to family problems

[an] adult to speak to about your life

Proper targets and monitoring of performance will be required

There is no experience with disability

a person whose job it is to speak up on your behalf (or support you to speak up)



Planning for the future

Mental Welfare Commission's recommendations



Easy Read versions of the MWCs Recommendations (what the Scottish Government would like us to do) have been used in this section.

For the full wording please look at **The Right to Advocacy report (2023)**



The recommendations are for all Health and Social Care Partnerships (in Dumfries and Galloway that's the IJB), health boards (NHS) and local authorities (Council) in Scotland.

These partners along with the Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) are responsible for this plan.

Recommendation 1: Partners should work together to create a strategic advocacy plan for 2024 – 2027 by 31 March 2024.



People getting/needing independent advocacy and people delivering independent advocacy and should be involved in the plan's development.

What we have done

Partners in Dumfries and Galloway have worked together to involve all **stakeholders** to develop this Independent Advocacy Plan.

People's views have been added to make sure the plan meets peoples' identified needs.





Recommendation 2: An **Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)** must be carried out when developing strategies and plans. This needs to be approved by all partners.

What we have done

An EQIA has been carried out with partners and stakeholders

The EQIA will be published on the Council and NHS websites.



Recommendation 3: Partners should make sure that independent advocates and independent advocacy organisations provide support that meets **Scottish Government Guidance**.

What we have done

Contract monitoring teams carry out checks to make sure guidance is followed and standards are being met. They feed this back to the MWC



Recommendation 4: Partners should make sure people know about independent advocacy and where they can access it.

Training/awareness sessions and information about independent advocacy should be available to people across Dumfries and Galloway.

Training/raising awareness should include health and social care staff, third sector organisations, independent sector services (like care homes), Carers and people accessing services.



What we have done

Partners are working together to make sure that everyone more aware of independent advocacy and how to access it.

Partners are working on improving access to information including through their websites, staff training and resources.

Recommendation 5: Children’s integrated service plans should include information about independent advocacy by 31 March 2024.



What we have done

A link to the new Independent Advocacy Plan will be put in the **Children’s Service Plan for Dumfries and Galloway**

Recommendation 6: Make sure services that deliver independent advocacy have longer term funding in place. This will make sure organisations can continue to provide independent advocacy, plan for the future and retain staff.

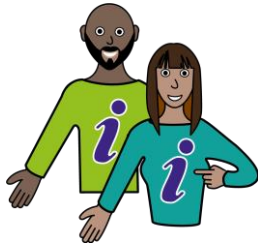
What we have done

A contract to deliver adult independent advocacy has been agreed for the next 3 years.

Children and Young People’s advocacy is currently being reviewed (March 2024).



Other things we plan to do



Make it easier to access to independent advocacy

Make sure independent advocacy supports people in the right way

Share information about independent advocacy with people and organisations

Make sure organisations understand and can support independent advocacy

Providing training to make sure health and social care staff know how to support people to access independent advocacy

Monitoring



The Independent Advocacy Plan 2024 – 2027 will be checked every year, to make sure we are meeting people’s needs.

Independent advocacy services will provide information about what they have done. This is part of their contract with the NHS or Council.

This information is given to the Integration Joint Board and the MWC and is part of the monitoring process.

The MWC looks at the feedback and let the IJB know if there are any issues. So they can make sure things are working well.

Glossary

Care experienced means children or young people who are cared for in residential, foster or kinship or supported accommodation, rather than in their own home. This includes when that care provided by the Council outwith Dumfries and Galloway.

Contract monitoring is when the NHS and Council check that the services they pay for are good and safe. They visit the services and talk to the people who use them. They do this to make sure that the money is well spent and that the people get the best care.

Equality impact assessments (EQIA) are a form that is completed when a plan or strategy is being developed.

Equality impact assessments (EQIA) help us to check that the piece of work does not discriminate against anyone.

An EQIA highlights issues where people can be disadvantaged or treated unfairly because of a disability, their gender, where they live and a range of other things called 'protected characteristics'. It can help to "reduce inequalities" and makes sure people in protected characteristic groups, needs are considered.

Group or Collective Advocacy enables group of people, as well as a wider community with shared interests, to represent their views, preferences and experiences. Being part of a collective advocacy group can help to reduce an individual's sense of isolation when raising a difficult issue. Groups can benefit from the support of resources and skilled help from an advocacy organisation.

Individual Advocacy includes professional or issue based advocacy. It can be provided by both paid and unpaid advocates. An advocate supports people to share their views if they are unable to do this for themselves. They provide support on specific issues and provide information but not advice. This support can be short or long term.

Integrated Joint Board (IJB) is made up of people from the NHS, Dumfries and Galloway Council as well as Third Sector and Independent Sector organisations.

The IJB are responsible for planning and delivering a lot of the health and social care that people across Dumfries and Galloway access.

Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland are commissioned by the Scottish Government to monitor the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the welfare parts of the **Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act (2000)**.

The MWC “protect and promote the human rights of people with mental illness, learning disabilities, dementia and related conditions”.

Non-instructed advocacy is when a person needing independent advocacy cannot tell the advocate what they want or need because they have complex communication needs, a long term illness or disability that prevents them from clearly stating their wishes/desires.

The advocate will take time to get to know the person and relatives/friends and look for different ways of communicating to help the person to express their views and wishes. This makes sure their rights are upheld. The advocate can challenge service providers to make sure they offer a person centred approach.

Stakeholders are all the people that are or could be affected by the plan or strategy. This includes Carers, family members and people working across social care as well as the people accessing or delivering independent advocacy or who are interested in it.