

Advocacy Counts 6

Executive summary

November 2018

A review of advocacy services for adults in Wales with a particular focus on older people

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 5 (2016) and Advocacy Counts 6 (2018). The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places a requirement on local authorities to make advocacy available for all individuals in Wales in certain circumstances including (but not exclusively) assessment, care planning, review and safeguarding. Nearly all Local Authorities have either commissioned services to comply with these requirements or are in the process of doing so.

Draft regulations have been developed by Welsh Government that relate initially to commissioned children's advocacy services, but will almost certainly be extended to commissioned adult advocacy services at some stage and may have implications for wider services.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has undertaken a review of the extent to which older people in Wales are getting access to independent advocacy. The report highlights areas of concern and makes recommendations

to address the barriers. In response, the Welsh Government announced a programme of work that includes key elements relating to advocacy.

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

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

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 5

- 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.



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)			

(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		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

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.**

The results of our survey paint a mixed picture. Compared to Advocacy Counts 5, a greater percentage of organisations are reporting that funding is secured for three years or more and 65% are confident that their funding is going to increase or remain the same in the next 12 months compared to 42% in 2016. Likewise, the number of organisations reporting that they had no knowledge of what was going to happen with their funding has almost halved.

The number of advocates (volunteer and paid) has dropped sharply over the past two years. The number of paid and volunteer advocates working specifically with older people has dropped from 73 in 2016 to 37 in 2018, which is a decrease of 49%. The overall picture is little better, whilst there has been a small increase in the number of part-time and volunteer advocates since 2016, the number of full-time advocates has dropped significantly. These figures have almost halved from 87 to 44.



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.**

The full implications of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Act) 2016 on commissioned Independent Professional Advocacy (IPA) services remain unclear and are a concern for some advocacy providers. However, this survey shows that the vast majority of respondents are aware that certain services will be subject to regulation. Many services continue to improve the quality of service provision through already holding a quality performance mark, meeting the code of practice and supporting advocates to become qualified (76 advocates are reported as attaining the recognized qualification compared with 55 in Advocacy Counts 5).

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 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

When reviewing the responses to questions on safeguarding it is reassuring to see that safeguarding remains a high priority for advocacy services, however, the picture is less extensive than in 2016.

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%.



Conclusion

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.

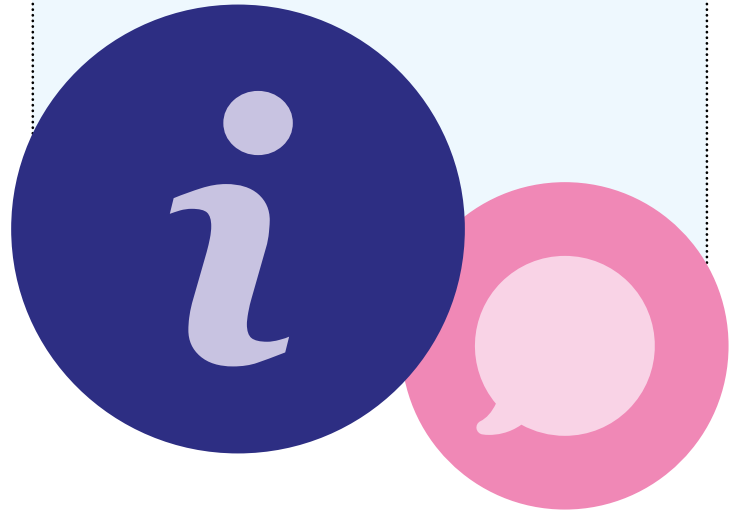
Safeguarding remains a fundamental part of the advocacy services provided by the respondents to this survey. Safeguarding is a key area in which there is a requirement for Local Authorities to provide IPA in certain circumstances. Nearly all respondents to the survey reported supporting clients who had been abused in the last 12 months. The respondents have reported a rise in the number of financial abuse cases which they have supported clients to deal with, with financial abuse replacing physical abuse and emotional/psychological as the more prevalent issue reported.

The significant reduction in the number of services providing their volunteers with adult protection training is a concern and will need monitoring in future. Age Cymru supports the right of individuals to live in a safe environment, free from harm and mistreatment. Access to advocacy for those who have been abused will enable them to have their views, wishes and feelings expressed and be at the center 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 well-being 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.

Further information

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. Responses are based on whether they provide funded advocacy services that are specifically for or include older people as part of their client group. While we endeavour to collect data from all providers, completion of the survey is not mandatory.

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 in the full report on our website.



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