

Meeting of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on:	12th June 2024	
Agenda Item:	7	
Title:	Independent Advocacy Plan 2024 - 2029	
Summary:		
<p>The purpose of this report is to provide seek approval of the new Independent Advocacy Plan covering the period 2024-29.</p>		
Author:	Hanna Dearie – Planning and Performance Officer	
It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board:		
<p>i. Consider and approve the Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29.</p>		
Route to meeting:		
<p>The Strategic Advocacy Plan had initially started with wider agreement in 2018 and progressed alongside national Advocacy Developments. Progress appears to have been intermittent from 2020 and stalled in 2022, prior to being reexplored towards the end of 2023.</p> <p>A discussion meeting with a range of stakeholders was undertaken on the 22nd November 2023. The support generated for the plan and continued development from this meeting formed the basis of attending the DMT on 18th of December 2023. Following submission and approval from the DMT, approval was given from SPAG in February to progress with the Plan.</p>		
Directions:		Implications:
1. No Directions Required <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Financial <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Directions to NHS Ayrshire & Arran <input type="checkbox"/>		HR <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Directions to South Ayrshire Council <input type="checkbox"/>		Legal <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Directions to both SAC & NHS <input type="checkbox"/>		Equalities <input type="checkbox"/>
		Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/>
		Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		ICT <input type="checkbox"/>

SOUTH AYRSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Strategic Planning and Advisory Group:

i. Note the progress made in the drafting of the SA Strategic Advocacy Plan.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is committed to ensuring people have their voice heard, can express their needs, make informed decisions, and have their rights and interests protected. Advocacy and having access to advocacy is a key component of this commitment, as are both the commissioned and non-commissioned services tasked with ensuring this.

3.2 The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 imposed a duty on local authorities and health boards to collaborate to ensure the availability of independent advocacy services in their area. The Act gave everyone with mental illness, learning disability, dementia, and related conditions the right to access independent advocacy support. The Mental Health (Scotland) Act 2015 built on the right to independent advocacy support, by requiring health boards and local authorities to tell the Mental Welfare Commission how they have ensured access to services up to now, and how they plan to do so in the future.

3.3 The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 informs that the HSCP must “have regard to the importance of the provision” of independent advocacy for adults at risk from harm.

3.4 The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that children under the age of 18 are entitled to have an advocate or other representative present at a Children’s Hearing. In addition, the Children’s Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011 informs that the chairing person of a hearing must make the child/young person aware of available advocacy services.

3.5 The Scottish Government’s expectation, set out in Independent Advocacy: Guide for Commissioners (published in December 2013), is that local strategic advocacy plans should be developed.

3.6 In 2018 The Mental Welfare Commission (MWC) produced their report ‘The Right to Advocacy’ which informed the national direction of travel for the development of advocacy policies.

3.7 Within this report the MWC made the following recommendations:

- *Ensure that there is clarity about which organisation will be responsible for coordinating the preparation of strategic advocacy plans for their area.*
- *Ensure that Strategic advocacy plans are in place by the end of December 2018.*
- *Ensure that strategic plans are developed based on local needs assessment and information about unmet demand and gaps in local provision. They should be developed in partnership with people who use or may use services, and with service providers. Barrier's people may be experiencing accessing advocacy support, including barriers created by prioritisation and people being placed out with their home areas, should be addressed in plans.*
- *Ensure that advocacy planners carry out equality impact assessments and develop approaches to monitoring and enabling access to advocacy which cover all the protected characteristics.*
- *Ensure there is clarity about where the responsibility lies for planning and commissioning independent advocacy services which are accessible for all children and young people under 18 with a mental disorder. This includes children and young people receiving care and treatment on an informal basis, or in placements in their home area.*
- *Ensure that arrangements for planning the provision of independent advocacy services for children and young people include processes for assessing the projected need for these supports.*

3.8 South Ayrshire HSCP commenced the first stages of development of an advocacy strategy in 2018/19 and was delayed due to pressures from the Covid 19 Pandemic. The strategy was revisited again in 2022 but was not concluded due to capacity with the Planning and Performance team.

4. REPORT

4.1 The report below outlines our engagement on the Independent Advocacy Plan, summarises the content and outlines some proposed next steps. The appendices to the report are listed below:

- Appendix 1 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29
- Appendix 2 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29 Engagement Report
- Appendix 3 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29 Appendices
- Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5 – Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

- 4.2 The Plan details the different types of advocacies and how independent advocacy in South Ayrshire enables people to have their voice heard. It includes the scope of current advocacy provision in South Ayrshire from Circles Advocacy, Barnardos Hear4U and Who Cares? Scotland with case studies of how advocacy has helped individuals make positive changes whilst having their voice heard.

Engagement and development of the Plan

- 4.3 To develop the plan an oversight group was established and met regularly throughout the development of the plan. The oversight group included of a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the plan was robust and included all relevant views.
- 4.4 In preparing the plan an engagement exercise was carried out with people who use advocacy, families and carers, staff, partners, and the communities we serve. Engagement took place from the 19th of March until the 1st of May 2024. This engagement took place through a variety of methods such as an online survey, focus groups, one to one interviews and information sessions as well as linking in with the Supper Club and Champions Boards. A total of 147 people engaged throughout the process.
- 4.5 The key themes that emerged from the engagement exercise were:
- Staff training and knowledge;
 - Public awareness, and
 - Information sharing/communication.
- 4.6 The findings from the engagement exercise informed the oversight group in developing the delivery plan. A South Ayrshire Advocacy Planning Group will be established to monitor and review the progress of the delivery plan as well as continually engage with communities to review outcomes.

Proposed Next Steps

- 4.7 With this report, the IJB are invited to agree the Independent Advocacy Plan. Once approved, the following steps will be undertaken:
- the Strategy will be launched by the HSCP;
 - other formats of the strategy will be developed such as easy read after appropriate training staff training has taken place;
 - establish the South Ayrshire Advocacy Planning Group to progress the delivery plan;
 - review the plan following the advocacy tender results; and
 - six-monthly reports will be presented to the Performance and Audit Committee.
- 4.8 Due to the timing of commissioned advocacy services in South Ayrshire going to tender in Autumn 2024, the plan will be reviewed in Spring 2025 to ensure the plan reflects the advocacy landscape in South Ayrshire. Any changes made following the tender process will be brought to IJB.

5 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

5.1 The IJB Strategic Plan outlines seven key objectives, and the development of the Independent Advocacy Plan will align clearly with these:

- *We focus on prevention and tackling inequality*
- *We nurture and are part of communities that care for each other*
- *We work together to give you the right care in the right place*
- *We are transparent and listen to you*
- *We make a positive impact beyond the services we deliver*

6 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

6.1.1 There are no financial implications to agreeing this report

6.2 Human Resource Implications

6.2.1 There are no HR implications to agreeing this report.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 There are no legal implications to agreeing this report.

6.4 Equalities implications

6.4.1 A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the completed draft plan.

6.5 Sustainability implications

6.5.1 There are no sustainability implications to agreeing this report.

6.6 Clinical/professional assessment

6.6.1 The views of professional groups will be taken into close consideration as the plan is developed.

7 CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

7.1 This report was prepared in consultation with appropriate HSCP Officers. Details on consultation and partnership approach are set out above.

8 RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 There is no risk associated with agreeing this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29

Appendix 2 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29 Engagement Report

Appendix 3 – DRAFT Independent Advocacy Plan 2024-29 Appendices

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment - Strategic Advocacy Plan

Appendix 5 – Childrens Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

Hanna Dearie – Planning and Performance Officer (Policy)
hanna.dearie@south-ayrshire.gov.uk