



Annual Report 2010

Director's Report

I took up the post of Director in January of this year. I must comment on the warm and supportive welcome that I received from everyone.

It's fair to say that I had to 'hit the ground running', due to a number of factors, including the ongoing Edinburgh Advocacy Review. This, and the overall financial climate, has led to a feeling of uncertainty about the future but I would not wish for that to detract from what I view as an overwhelmingly successful year for the organisation.

In this past year, AdvoCard has almost doubled in size – extending its reach to include individual advocacy at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, as well as a hosting arrangement with the Patients' Council.

AdvoCard has always had a reputation as a provider of high quality independent advocacy. This is enhanced by the fact that 749 people have benefited from the service in the last year.

I would also like to note the positive partnership that has been forged between AdvoCard and the Patients' Council to support collective advocacy at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

I hope that the coming year presents more opportunities for AdvoCard to further benefit people through the provision of high quality independent advocacy.

Chris Mackie
Director

Convenor's Report

My first year as Convenor has been a time of great change for AdvoCard.

The merger between the advocacy services based at Leith Walk and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital has resulted in a new, stronger organisation. We believe that AdvoCard is as well placed as any to face up to the challenges of these 'interesting' times.

To further strengthen AdvoCard's position the Management Committee is proposing that the organisation should become a company limited by guarantee. This process of incorporation and its new legal status will mean no change to the service provided but will afford the Committee members the protection of 'limited liability'. Indeed the Committee will, in future, be known as a Board of Directors of the new company. We intend to hold an 'Extraordinary General Meeting' in February which – we hope – will lead to incorporation taking place on 31 March 2011.

Another significant change was the departure of AdvoCard's Director, Bryan Davies after seven years leading the organisation. I would like to pay tribute to his contribution to the organisation. However, we were pleased to welcome Bryan's replacement, Chris Mackie in January of this year. The Management Committee also recruited three new personnel during the year – Sara Hvidsten, Tansy Main and John Stuart.

I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to all staff and volunteers involved with AdvoCard. This really is an organisation with people at its heart.

Nick Gardner
Convenor

Training Function

AdvoCard's training programme this year has provided learning opportunities to all of the organisation's stakeholders including:

- Two 30-hour training programmes inducting new potential volunteer advocacy workers
- 'Follow On' training for experienced volunteers. These included:
 - Two discussion events (more seminar-like in design) that are jointly developed and delivered with a volunteer from our Trainers Group
 - Scotland's Mental Health First Aid which included the Training Worker becoming a trainer on this topic
- Team building sessions to support the merger of the REH team with those at Leith Walk in the form of Project Meetings, Policy Training and a Management Day
- An event, "Is the 'Right to Advocacy' All Right?" for mental health service users. This took the form of a consultation, information provision and some 'fun' activities.

It is intended to review the role of the Training Function. One possibility is to describe it as "Learning and Development", a more accurate description of the work.

Individual Advocacy Service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital

The staff team at the Hospital have had an interesting, if unpredictable first year with AdvoCard.

To be part of an organisation that has people as its focus and at the heart of it cannot be underestimated, in terms of job satisfaction. Whilst enjoying the consistency and continuity that AdvoCard provides as an employer, there have been some periods of very high demand.

This has been set against a background of change within the Hospital, with a substantial review of acute wards ongoing at the time of writing, as well as the proposed re-provisioning of the site as a whole.

In addition to acute wards, advocacy is provided within the Orchard Clinic forensic unit, the Young Persons Unit, Care of Elderly wards, rehabilitation wards as well as the Robert Fergusson Unit for people with an acquired brain injury.

Advocacy across these different settings requires a variety of approaches. The team attempts to be as flexible as possible but the work is often dictated by the statutory proceedings that must be prioritised.

REH Statistics	2009/10
No. of service users	362
No. of MH Tribunals	211
No. of contacts	10887

Summary of Accounts

Extracts from the Financial Statements of AdvoCard for the year ended 31 March 2010 are shown below. Copies of the full audited financial statements are available from AdvoCard.

Income

City of Edinburgh Council	301,400
NHS Lothian	176,663
Donations	177
Interest received	23

Total **478,263**

Expenditure

Paid to Patients' Council*	14,557
Staffing	327,610
Premises	30,213
Running Costs	16,736
Travel	3,422
Accountancy	7,277
Interest and Finance	120
Depreciation	2,695
Governance	6,107

Total **408,737**
Surplus 69,526

*Monies remaining from NHS Lothian funding once staffing and management costs have been paid

Volunteer Delivered Advocacy

Volunteer advocacy has been affected by long-term staff sickness this year. However, two part-time workers have taken on some additional hours. Both Jane Cairns and Gillian Irving have worked an additional nine hours each week. They have both provided much-needed cover in what has been, at times, a demanding year.

Our volunteers have provided advocacy in a wide range of situations regarding many of the issues which affect service user's lives.

We continue to see a substantial number of requests from service users whose children have involvement with the City of Edinburgh Council Social Work Department's Children and Families team. This is particularly challenging work for our volunteers.

We are also seeing increasing numbers of people requesting the support of an advocacy worker in their contact with ATOS Healthcare and through Employment Support Allowance medicals and appeals.

As ever AdvoCard would like to thank all the volunteers for their hard work, for their commitment to the service that they provide and for all the hours of time that they give us and the service users that they work with.

Mental Health Act Advocacy

In terms of numbers, this past year was not radically different from those previous. The majority of the work has arisen from self-referrals from individuals who live at home, and around 50% are currently subject to the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or other legal requirements such as child protection, Guardianship or the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007.

The team also take on long standing cases with some people with complex needs, are available for people who cannot attend volunteer appointments dependably and increasingly have been taking on cases where there is contact with criminal justice services as well as mental health services.

This year we have seen the benefit of the merger with the Royal Edinburgh Hospital Individual Advocacy Service. As well as formal contact at meetings and training events, there has been more joint working on common cases, which has led to a more 'seamless' advocacy provision for service users being discharged from and admitted to hospital.

Information sharing on common issues has also improved with the more regular contact. The Mental Health Act team has also been inducted into the office procedures of the Hospital Individual Advocacy Service, with a view to more flexibility and joint work in the future, depending on the capacity of each of the teams.

Volunteer Statistics	2008/09	2009/10	MHA Statistics	2008/09	2009/10
No. of service users	213	237	No. of service users	160	150
No. of appointments	607	689	No. of MH Tribunals	29	21
Total hours	2050	1466	Contact time	1345	1338



Management Committee

David Atiyah
Nick Gardner
Tansy Main
Dot Twyman

Steven Copeland
Sarah Hvidsten
John Stuart

Staff

Karen Anderson
Jane Cairns
Jean Crombie
Gillian Irving
Peter Le Riche
Jackie McGinty
Gillian Reynolds
Diana Simcock

Ben Baldock
Alex Campbell
Vincent Gill
Katie James
Chris Mackie
Ryan O'Neill
Jane Rubens
Devrim Turkey

AdvoCard is a service user-led, independent advocacy organisation. Our services are primarily for people with experience of mental ill health in Edinburgh. We aim to provide opportunities for people to participate more effectively in decisions that affect all aspects of their lives.

AdvoCard is committed to equality, inclusion and human rights.

Contact AdvoCard

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