

Annual Report 2014



Independent
advocacy for
mental health
service users
in Edinburgh

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.

Achievements and Performance

The Board of Directors would like to thank all staff and volunteers involved with AdvoCard for their dedication and commitment throughout the year.

Individual Advocacy

The organisation supported 976 individuals during the year to 31 March 2014. 452 people accessed the community advocacy service, with 526 using the service at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. In that period, 64 people used advocacy in Edinburgh Prison. Note that some people will use AdvoCard in multiple settings.

Welfare Reform

September saw the commencement of the welfare reform advocacy provision, based at 332 Leith Walk. Arlene Astley joined the staff team there and worked with 107 individuals in her first year in post, as well as providing input to collective advocacy. This piece of work is funded by NHS Lothian.

Prison Advocacy

Following receipt of funding from NHS Lothian, AdvoCard's advocacy service within HMP Edinburgh commenced on 1 November 2013, and at 31 August 2014, has supported 140 individuals.

Community Collective Advocacy

Development of collective advocacy across Edinburgh continued during the year but was impaired by the departure of full-time Development Worker, Laetitia Jan on 28 March 2014. Following a review, two part-time workers, Patricia Rodger and Becky Leach, came into post in July 2014.

Partnership Working

AdvoCard's Board of Directors are pleased to report continued successful partnership work with Edinburgh Carers Council and the Royal Edinburgh Hospital Patients Council. This ensures that the distinct and independent advocacy service for carers, as well as that for inpatient collective advocacy is maintained. The Board would like to record their appreciation for all those involved with these valued partner organisations.

Plans for the Future

Contract with City of Edinburgh Council

The Board are pleased to report that this has been extended for a further two years, to 30 November 2016. As this contract provides the majority of the funding for the organisation, this gives a stable platform for independent mental health advocacy in Edinburgh for that period. With the Contract extended, the organisation will work with NHS Lothian to consider the future of the Welfare

Reform and Prison Advocacy provision. Currently, these are 'proof of concept' projects which, as implemented, represent examples of best practice in advocacy development.

During 2015, AdvoCard will request clarity regarding the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian's future intentions for advocacy across the City. This will enable the organisation to be well prepared for a potential re-tendering exercise, should this be required.

AdvoCard in HMP Edinburgh

AdvoCard has now been successfully providing its independent advocacy service in HMP Edinburgh for a year. We provide advocacy to all four halls within the prison - Glenesk, Hermiston, Ratho, Ingliston and the SRU (Separation and Reintegration Unit). Two of our experienced advocacy workers, Devrim and Peter, work with prisoners, to assist them in getting their views and feelings heard. Our aim is to enable those who are more vulnerable and marginalised, to communicate effectively with the services involved with them.

The prison has been very effective in supporting our ability to deliver the advocacy to individuals and we are keen to see how our role develops further over time. This service is funded by NHS Lothian and we have one year of an initial two year period remaining.

Volunteer Delivered Advocacy

Our support and development groups this year have included a session with Arlene, our Welfare Reform Advocacy worker, and a meeting with LCIL workers in order to update us about Self Directed Support. We also had a session from Police Scotland who came to talk to us about what mental health service users can expect from the police whether they be the victims or perpetrators of a crime, or if they have contact with the police when they are unwell. In addition, a group of volunteers visited the Crisis Centre so that they can see the facilities there and learn more about the support that the Crisis Centre offers. We ran our usual two training programmes this year and as a result have a good group of enthusiastic and skilled Volunteer Advocacy Workers working with us this year.

The biggest change for the volunteer delivered service this year has been the departure of Jane Cairns, our Volunteer Co-ordinator. Jane moved on to take up a post with The Befriending Network in September. Jane worked with AdvoCard for nearly ten years, and the excellent reputation and popularity of our training for Volunteer Advocacy Workers is largely down to her skills as a trainer and her passion and enthusiasm for the work that we do here. She believes very strongly in the obvious benefits of advocacy in relation to our service users and she also had a huge commitment to the personal development of our volunteers and to the added value that volunteering brings to AdvoCard. She was a tremendous asset to our organisation and we all wish her the very best in her new role with the Befriending Network.

And finally, thanks again to our wonderful volunteers for all their hard work over the year. Their commitment, compassion and the many hours of time that they put in are invaluable to the success of what we do at AdvoCard.

MHA Advocacy

We continue to prioritise people being treated under the Act in the Community including providing a service to outlying institutions for people detained in general hospitals such as Royal Infirmary Edinburgh and the Western General. We continue to liaise with colleagues at the REH and share contributing to Mental Health Tribunal Scotland Professional Reference Group meetings. We have continued to help raise awareness with presentations about Advocacy and our service to Health and Social Care Community Care Providers. We have developed and delivered an Advance Statement Presentation/Quiz format for groups such as Bipolar Scotland and Community Voices. We made contribution to the Mental Health Act Review and Consultation on Scottish Government's Draft Proposals for a Mental Health (Scotland) Bill 2014 through feedback to SIAA and MHTS Professional Reference Group.

Royal Edinburgh Hospital Individual Advocacy

The demand for our advocacy service has continued at a pace this year, with a large percentage of the requests coming from the acute wards. That said, the requests from the inpatient Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), have also grown more recently and we have found ourselves working with a number of very young individuals where the advocacy input needs to be especially pure and clear. Our aim is to maintain this provision as the CAMHS service prepares for its' move to the new Sick Kids in late 2016.

The team has experienced a lengthy period of staffing ill health, which has affected our ability to effectively profile and revisit with individuals in the way we would wish to. The issue of the availability of alarms and the health and safety of all workers is also of paramount concern to us, when working in a setting that can be both unpredictable and challenging.

The multiple needs of individuals' and the issue of legal highs for the environment, adds another dimension in the ability for individuals to transition quickly back into the community, especially at a time when the availability of resources also appears to be under constant strain. This can lead to people feeling stuck and being identified as delayed discharge.

We are hopeful that with a new hospital building under way, that we will start to see the development of greater opportunities for individuals to be proactively involved in the planning and delivery of their future mental health journey.

Community Collective Advocacy

In March this year, Laetitia Jan moved on to take up a post at See Me. After a short spell without anyone in post, at the end of July, Patricia Rodger and Becky Leach joined AdvoCard as Community Collective Advocacy Development Workers, each working 18 hours across Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday although there is some flexibility with this, should the need arise.

The user-led campaigning group *Community Voices* has continued to meet twice a month to explore issues of collective concern and to campaign for services to be improved and developed to meet the needs of people living in the community. Members of this group have represented the service user voice at a number of recent consultation events. The Group also continues to discuss a range of issues including improving the support for self-carers, the side effects of medication and potential changes to legislation around Advance Statements.

Although low attendance has led to both Mental Health Community Action and the ECT Peer Support Group being inactive at present, we hope to relocate and/or redevelop those groups in the future. The Post Natal Depression Peer Support group is now up and running, in partnership with Action on Depression, supported by two wonderful volunteers, at Valley Park Community Centre. In addition, we are currently supporting the development of a group at the Redhall Walled Garden site. Fifty trainees use the service and we hope to engage with them all through a variety of means.

We continue to support the members of SEASONS to have a say in the running, delivery and direction of the service, through the Community Meetings. Facilitating the SEASONS Community Meetings enables us to work with service users who would not normally participate in collective advocacy outside the group

AdvoCard's community collective advocacy work continues to support service users and to represent their views on the Crisis Centre Partnership Group, the Service Improvement Group, a group focused on the art / green space aspects of the re-provisioning of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and two Wayfinder groups.

Ongoing information about collective advocacy can be found on the AdvoCard website and Facebook page, as well as the regular newsletter.

Finances

Extracts from the Financial Statements of AdvoCard for the year ended 31 March 2014 are shown below. Copies of the full audited financial statements are available from AdvoCard.

Directors

Tansy Main
Dianna Manson
John Stuart
Dot Twyman
Alison Wagstaff
Paul Wright

Staff

Karen Anderson
Arlene Astley
Ben Baldock
Alex Campbell
Jean Crombie
Elaine Dobbie
Barbara Filipowicz
Vincent Gill
Katie James
Peter Le Riche
Becky Leach
Chris Mackie
Jenny Pope
Patricia Rodger
Shelley Romein
Devrim Türkyay

Incoming Resources	2014	2013
City of Edinburgh Council/NHS Lothian	576816	576814
NHS Lothian Welfare Reform Advocacy	19,215	-
NHS Lothian Prison Advocacy	16470	-
Choose Life (Edinburgh Carers Council)	-	6778
NHS Lothian Collective Advocacy Projects	2147	857
NHS Lothian Carers' Transitions Project	14065	7035
Investment Income	425	-
Other income	6070	-
Total Income	635208	591484
Resources Expended	2014	2013
Paid to Patients Council/Carers Council *	4743	5351
Staff Costs	526031	501586
Premises Costs	36423	35175
Running Costs	24499	19070
Legal and Professional Fees	-	27
Audit and Accountancy Fees	9465	9219
Interest and Finance Charges	116	200
Depreciation	403	-
Governance Costs	8728	7970
Total Expenditure	610408	578598
Net Incoming Resources	24800	12886
Total Funds Brought Forward	133728	120842
Total Funds Carried Forward	158528	133728

* Running costs transferred after staffing and management costs have been paid

Contact AdvoCard

Community

332 Leith Walk
Edinburgh
EH6 5BR

0131 554 5307

advocacy@advocard.org.uk

REH

c/o Andrew Duncan Clinic
Royal Edinburgh Hospital
Tipperlinn Road
Edinburgh
EH10 5HF

0131 537 6004

hospital.advocacy@advocard.org.uk

Prison

332 Leith Walk
Edinburgh
EH6 5BR

0131 447 4559

prison.advocacy@advocard.org.uk

www.advocard.org.uk
twitter.com/advocard1
facebook.com/advocard