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Thank you very much for your interest in becoming a Board member.

This pack contains the following:

1. Information about Partners in Advocacy
2. Information for potential Board members
3. Application form
4. Equal opportunities monitoring form

If you are still interested, please return the application form. We will then arrange an interview with a Board member and myself.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to phone me.

Thank you very much,

Yours sincerely,

Julie Hogg  
Director.

# About Partners in Advocacy



## Who are we?

Partners in Advocacy is the oldest-established advocacy project in Scotland. It started as part of Barnardo's, and it was this background which led to its development as one of the few organisations in Scotland providing independent advocacy to children, and to its geographical spread. We became fully independent in 1998.

Today we provide independent short-term and citizen advocacy and self-advocacy groups to adults with learning disabilities and children and young people with additional support needs in Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, Glasgow, East Renfrewshire and Dundee – though not all forms of advocacy in all areas.

The organisation is a registered charity and limited company. We have established a firm reputation as a leading provider of independent advocacy services, with robust policies and procedures, sound management and financial stability. We pride ourselves on being driven by our belief in the value and equality of all human beings, the right of all people to a decent and fulfilled life, and the principles of inclusion and social justice.



## What is advocacy?

Speaking up for - sticking up for – other people is a natural process. Friends, parents, social workers, nurses and others do it often. Many of us need such an intervention at different times in our lives, when we feel unable to do it for ourselves.

There are certain groups of people in society who because of their relative lack of power, difficulty in understanding situations or communicating clearly, lack of self-esteem, conditioning to accept what others want – and a variety of other reasons – are more in need of someone to support them to speak up for themselves or speak up for them. Such people, because of social isolation and exclusion, may have few other people in their lives to do this – certainly few who have no other interests or agendas. With the best will in the world, family and carers – paid or unpaid – have competing interests, and may think they know what is best for the person regardless of the person's actual wishes. It is often hard for people not to give advice or attempt to influence the person.

Independent advocates are people with no conflict of interest who:

- find ways to communicate with the person and listen to them;
- find out as much as possible from others as to the situation confronting the person;
- help them to understand and explore the options and their possible consequences, providing information where possible, but without influencing;

- help the person to understand their central importance and their rights, and to develop their ability to advocate for themselves;
- support them to express their views, or speak up for them if they request this, or are unable to do so themselves;
- make sure that people listen and take account of their views in any decisions that are taken;
- attend meetings, write letters and make phone calls on the person's behalf where necessary;
- make sure that agreed actions are followed up;
- support the person either to make any changes which happen as a result of the process, or to understand why their desired change is not happening and possibly plan for their next steps.

Sometimes independent advocates support the person against the wishes of social services, carers or even family – they are there to represent the person, not others. More often, there is no conflict of views – but the intervention of the advocate “oils the wheels” where families are also feeling frustrated and powerless, or where bureaucracy, resource constraints, system inflexibility, overburdened or unco-ordinated services, inconsistency of staffing or approach or other factors are obstructing movement towards the desired goal.

Independent advocacy may not only benefit the person, and their families and carers. It may also help to ensure better decision-making processes and changes in systems and procedures, which will benefit others in the long-term.



## What do we try to do?

### **Our mission**

To support people with additional support needs to speak out, make choices, have their rights upheld and be included in their communities.

### **Our overall aim**

To provide independent short-term and citizen advocacy and self-advocacy groups to those children, young people and adults who need it.

[Currently; adults labelled as having a learning disability, and children with any additional support needs.]

### **Our objectives**

To make sure achieve our aim, we need:

1. To make sure we have enough staff and volunteers, from different backgrounds and communities, to carry out the advocacy: **recruitment**

2. To respond to the individual advocacy needs of our target number of people, with a variety of advocacy approaches and to the highest possible standard: **advocacy practice**
3. To reach out to people in the community and those involved in support organisations, to inform them about the rights of people with disabilities and other support needs, and the benefits of advocacy: **outreach**.
4. To make sure that all those involved in our work are properly trained and supported: **training and support**.
5. To make sure that we include people from the community – including those with disabilities and other support needs - in all our activities, and provide opportunities for them to develop their skills: **inclusion**.
6. To make sure we have enough money and other resources for our work, through fundraising: **resources**.
7. To be able to prove that we are doing our work well, and to learn better ways of doing things: **evaluation**.



## What do we offer?

### *Short-term professional advocacy*

Short-term advocacy is undertaken by paid staff, with some use of freelance advocates, to support people to resolve specific problems or issues. The time scale can range from a few hours to several months, depending on the complexity of the issue and the response of other people. Issues may be housing, health or social care, mental health tribunals, child custody, harassment from neighbours and so on. The advocate assists the person to understand and explore options available and their consequences, supports them to express their views and make sure that they are listened to and that their wishes are taken into account and acted upon. The advocate may ascertain that the quality of care is inadequate or that the person's rights are not being upheld, and act on behalf of the person to have these matters addressed if they are not able to do this for themselves.

We provide short-term advocacy to adults with learning disabilities in Edinburgh, Midlothian and East Lothian, and children and young people with additional support needs in Edinburgh, East Renfrewshire and Glasgow. (This includes children and young people with mental health problems in Glasgow.)

### *Citizen advocacy*

Citizen advocates are volunteers – ordinary members of the community – who are matched on a long-term one-to-one basis with a person who is vulnerable to social exclusion and neglect. Citizen advocacy partners frequently have profound and

complex disabilities and may have few or no people in their lives other than those who are paid to be there. Citizen advocates undertake many of the same tasks as short-term advocates; in addition, they aim to ensure that the person is more included in their community and has a wider social network. Because of the length of the relationship they get to know the person's likes and dislikes, hopes, dreams and concerns, and become a key ally in their life – they are therefore able to have a role in decision-making on an on-going basis and also act in a safeguarding capacity, preventing problems from arising or being there when they do. Citizen advocates are recruited, trained and supported by citizen advocate co-ordinators.

We have citizen advocates for children and adults with learning disabilities in Dundee, and children and young people with additional support needs and mental health problems in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

### *Self-advocacy groups*

Self-advocacy groups involve people coming together to explore issues of common concern, support one another, develop self-advocacy skills, self-esteem and confidence, and make plans for action. They provide a valuable complement to individual advocacy, providing mutual support and a wider social network.

We have self-advocacy groups for young people and adults in Edinburgh and inclusive young people's self-advocacy groups in Dundee which include those with and without learning disabilities.

### *Inclusion*

As well as the direct advocacy, we have a remit to promote inclusion and an awareness of the rights and needs of people with disabilities within the communities in which we are located. We have a Local Action Group in each area; people in these groups, some of whom have learning disabilities, are supported to develop a variety of skills to enable them to participate in the organisation. They also participate in our awareness-raising activities in the community such as presentations to local groups and professionals, training for advocates, stalls and other events, and fundraising activities. We believe that this helps to develop capacity, and is an excellent complement to citizen advocacy, which is essentially about involving community members in promoting an inclusive society.



## **Who are the people at Partners in Advocacy?**

Partners in Advocacy is governed by a Board of Trustees.

Chair: Jimmy McIntosh MBE, who is a disability adviser.

Vice-chair: Pauline Crombie – retired community education officer with many, many years in the learning disability field

Treasurer: Eileen Low, who formerly managed a medical practice, is an advocate and member of the Glasgow Local Action Group and also the mother of a young person with a learning disability.

Emma Castle – young person working in the commercial sector, trainee advocate  
Alison Frondigoun – human resources officer

Patricia Ferguson – member of the Edinburgh Local Action Group and office volunteer, who works part-time as a play worker

John Loudon – volunteer centre worker for Capability Scotland

Edward Low – retired school teacher, advocate and member of the Dundee Local Action Group

Edward Stanton – disability activist and member of the Glasgow Local Action Group

We are currently recruiting three further members.

Operational management is the responsibility of the Director, Julienne Dickey, who has been with Partners in Advocacy since 2002, and who has twenty years of managing voluntary sector organisations, and is a Board member and Treasurer of the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance.

All staff have been recruited for their expertise in advocacy or administration, and background in relevant fields.

Others involved in the organisation include:

- volunteer citizen advocates: Citizen advocates are ordinary members of the community, who come from a variety of backgrounds and occupations, and who make a long-term commitment to act as allies of people with learning disabilities.
- members of the Local Action Groups: Also ordinary members of the public, including some people with learning disabilities and family members of people with learning disabilities, and others who have an interest in creating a more just and inclusive society. They support Partners in Advocacy in its work by acting as local advisory groups and helping out with organisational activities; the project for which we are applying aims to develop and strengthen this area of our work as a valuable complement to citizen advocacy.



## Where does the money come from?

We receive funding from the following sources:

Scottish Executive – two core grants (one specifically for children)

Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian and Dundee Councils (all adults)

Greater Glasgow Health Board for the project for young people with mental health problems

Lottery Community Fund for children and young people's advocacy in Edinburgh

BBC Children in Need – additional support needs in Glasgow

Lloyds TSB – supporting people with learning disabilities to be involved in the organisation (Edinburgh)

Big Lottery Fund Young People's Fund – new grant for young people's self-advocacy groups in Dundee

Barings Foundation – employing a consultant to develop evaluation systems

Other small one-off grants

Fundraising through events, training and membership fees.



## What have we done well so far?

Six years ago, having become independent from Barnardo's and with the transitional money from that organisation running out and little other secured income, Partners in Advocacy was facing a difficult struggle. A grant from the Community Fund ensured organisational survival. At that time we provided only citizen advocacy, in Edinburgh, West Lothian, Dundee and Glasgow, with a small amount of self-advocacy in West Lothian and Edinburgh. There were four co-ordinators, four administrators and the project manager (replaced by a director in 2002).

Since that time we have grown and developed considerably, and placed the organisation on a very solid footing. Specific achievements:

- substantially strengthened our strategic planning process, involving all Board, staff, volunteers and Local Action Groups;
- secured funding to develop services in Midlothian and East Lothian, as well as the mental health service in Glasgow
- widened our remit to include short-term advocacy, to provide a more flexible and responsive service
- considerably increased our provision of advocacy to children and young people, and extended from those with learning disabilities to all additional support needs – and become recognised as a leading provider in Scotland; we hosted the first (and only) national conference on children's advocacy in 2005
- moved the focus in Glasgow exclusively to children and young people, recognising that other advocacy organisations catered for adults
- secured the contract to provide advocacy for children and young people with mental health problems in Glasgow, despite this being a completely new area for us, because of the strength of our reputation as a children's advocacy provider
- were the only independent advocacy organisation – and one of only five organisations in Scotland – to be awarded pilot funding by the Scottish Executive for educational advocacy after the enactment of the Additional Support for Learning Act – and have developed considerable expertise in educational issues as a result

- have been awarded (February 2006) a Big Lottery Young People's Fund grant for inclusive self-advocacy groups in Dundee – a gratifying result given the competition for limited resources
- closed down the West Lothian office which was under-performing and where another organisation was better placed to provide advocacy – and transferred resources to Dundee where the need was greatest
- substantially increased our inclusion of people with learning disabilities in the organisation
- expanded the staff team to fourteen and increased our number of volunteers
- very significantly strengthened our policies and procedures, monitoring and evaluation, and staff and volunteer training programmes
- participated in local and national strategic development and other initiatives (such as The Same as You? review, the revising of the Principles and Standards for Independent Advocacy, and local disability forums)
- became recognised by Investors in People
- are one of only 22 “outstandingly good” organisations in the whole of the UK to be awarded a grant by The Barings Foundation in their Strengthening the Voluntary Sector programme
- ensured that the organisation is on a sound financial basis, with adequate reserves.



## What are our plans for the future?

Partners in Advocacy's long-term vision for the future is to be able to deliver the full range of citizen advocacy, short-term advocacy and self-advocacy groups for adults with all disabilities and children and young people with all additional support needs in Glasgow, Dundee and the Lothians.

We are currently devising our detailed action plan for the coming period. The major immediate priorities which have been identified are:

- expansion of all children's advocacy projects to meet need, including short-term advocacy
- increased capacity to respond to overwhelming demand in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian (adults)
- increased responsiveness to and referrals from ethnic minority communities
- further developing the involvement of young people in all areas
- development of robust monitoring and evaluation systems and an external evaluation of the whole organisation
- diversification of funding sources to reduce reliance on statutory and Lottery – develop strategic plan to include corporate sponsorship and community fundraising

If funding can be found, the next priorities are:

- development of children's advocacy services in Midlothian and East Lothian
- widening of existing adult advocacy services to include adults with physical and sensory disabilities, acquired brain injury and autism

- development of citizen advocacy for adults in the Lothians
- development of self-advocacy groups as appropriate

Other targets which will be included in the action plan (in addition to work already being undertaken):

- review our volunteer recruitment strategy, develop a volunteer policy (to include employing young volunteers) and establish a pilot for the Volunteer Impact Assessment Toolkit in Dundee.
- launch a new leaflet range and new website, using our new design and ensuring maximum accessibility
- launch a Scotland-wide network for organisations undertaking advocacy for children
- develop quality standards for the organisation, and review our implementation of the new Principles and Standards of Independent Advocacy
- implement our new programme of staff, volunteer and Board training
- recruit three new Board members and increase accessibility of information
- continue with our programme towards our Investors in People review in December 2007
- undertake any actions identified by the external evaluation

# PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY – INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBERS

## 1. WHO ARE BOARD MEMBERS?

These are the people who are on the board which manages a charity. If the charity is a company (which Partners in Advocacy is) they are also called **company directors**.

Board members have to be elected. They can be elected by all the members of the organisation at the AGM – or they can be co-opted between AGMs by the Board.

Staff members are not members of the Board. The Director is the link between the Board and the staff.

Our Constitution says that Board members have to be members of Partners in Advocacy – so if you join the Board you also have to fill in a membership form for Partners in Advocacy (but it is free for Board members).

At the moment we have nine members. Some of these members have disabilities. We particularly welcome new members who live or work in Edinburgh, Glasgow, East Renfrewshire, Dundee, Midlothian and East Lothian.

## 2. WHO CAN'T BE A BOARD MEMBER?

Some people are not allowed to be a Board member. These are the reasons:

1. They have been convicted of dishonesty or deception.
2. They are an undischarged bankrupt (that means they have become bankrupt and are still bankrupt).
3. They are not allowed to be a company director under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 because they have been convicted of criminal offences relating to running a company.
4. They have been removed from being a trustee of a charity before because of misconduct or mismanagement.
5. They are under 18.

We need to make sure that we are completely independent of organisations which provide services to the same people as we provide advocacy to. This means that Board members cannot work for service providers to people with learning disabilities in Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, Glasgow or Dundee, or to young people with mental health problems in Glasgow.

### **3. BOARD MEETINGS**

Partners in Advocacy has 8 Board meetings a year. They happen about every 6 weeks. They are always on a Wednesday evening, from 5.30 to 8 p.m. Mostly they are in Edinburgh but once a year they happen in Dundee and once a year in Glasgow.

There is an agenda for each meeting (a list of what we are going to talk about). The Director writes the agenda (after talking to the Co-chairs) and sends it out to all Board members about 2 weeks before the meeting. There are often other papers with the agenda – these explain what the things on the agenda are about. It is important that Board members read the papers before they come to the meeting – it is important that they have thought about things so that they can contribute to the discussion.

We try to make the work of the Board as easy to understand as possible. Most of the papers and the minutes have an easy-read version, and we try to put things on tape.

### **4. WHAT IS THE JOB OF A BOARD MEMBER?**

Board members should do the following things:

1. Decide on the mission (aim) and the values of Partners in Advocacy, and its strategic plan.
2. Decide on all the policies of Partners in Advocacy. This could be for example the equal opportunities policy, or staff employment policies, or policies for getting new Board members. All policies must agree with all the legislation (laws) about these things.
3. Make sure that the activities of Partners in Advocacy are in line with the mission, values, strategic plan and policies the Board has

decided on. This can be done by setting targets and making sure the targets are achieved.

4. Make sure that there is enough money to run Partners in Advocacy, and make sure that its money and property are managed properly – in line with Partners in Advocacy’s financial policies and with the law.
5. Choose new Board members and help them to understand what they need to know. Take part in any training for the Board.
6. Choose and support the Director, and make sure that she or he is performing well.
7. Make sure that all the staff are managed properly – in line with Partners in Advocacy’s employment policies and with the law.
8. Understand the different roles of the Board and of the staff – make sure that the staff are doing what they should be doing, but don’t interfere in their day-to-day jobs.
9. Protect the good name, reputation and image of Partners in Advocacy, and tell people about it in a positive way.
10. Carry out Board business properly and efficiently. Everyone has special skills, knowledge and experience – this helps the Board to make good decisions.

## **5. WHAT KIND OF PERSON MAKES A GOOD BOARD MEMBER?**

A Board member should show that:

- They are committed to Partners in Advocacy and to its aims and values.
- They have skills, knowledge and experience which would be useful to help the Board make good decisions.
- They are willing to give Partners in Advocacy the time and effort needed to be an effective Board member.
- They have ideas about how Partners in Advocacy can do its work.

- They are willing to speak up about what they think – and to speak in a way which everyone can understand.
- They understand and accept the legal responsibilities and liabilities of being a Board member.
- They are able to work as part of a team, and able to support each other to make the Board work for everyone.
- They will carry out their work for Partners in Advocacy honestly and openly.

## **6. SUB-COMMITTEES**

The Board only has one sub-committee at the moment, the Personnel Sub-committee, which looks at staff issues and policies. This meets a couple of weeks before the Board meeting. Sometimes the Board delegates things to the Personnel Sub-committee – this means they ask it to consider certain matters and make decisions.

There are other groups which get together from time to time to look at other things – for example we have had a group looking at communication issues.



APPLICATION FORM FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**1. Where did you hear about Partners in Advocacy?**

**2. Personal Information:**

Full Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Home Tel. No.: .....Work Tel. No.: .....

May we, with discretion, telephone you at work? Y/N

E-Mail: .....

Have you previously applied to Partners in Advocacy for paid or voluntary work? If so, please give details:

**3. Why do you want to join the Board of Directors at Partners in Advocacy? What skills and experience do you think you will bring to the organisation? (Continue overleaf if necessary)**

<b>4.</b>	<b>Please give details of a referee whom we may contact without further permission:</b>		
	Name	Address & telephone no.	Occupation
In what connection do you know them?		For how long?	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Do you know of any reason which would disqualify you from becoming a charity trustee or company director?</b> (e.g. undischarged bankruptcy, dismissal from previous directorship for dishonesty). You must be over 18.		
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conflicts of interest</b> Do you have a paid or unpaid job with a service provider in any of the areas in which we provide advocacy, or do you have any other connections which may provide a conflict of interest?		
<b>7.</b>	<b>Disclosure and Conviction</b>		
Please give details of any criminal convictions or cautions you have had which might relate in any way to your role in working alongside vulnerable people. We may carry out an Enhanced Disclosure (Police check) and by signing this form you will be agreeing to this check.			
<b>7.</b>	<b>Data Protection Statement</b>		
The information obtained in this form will be treated in confidence and not shared with others. It will be retained in computer and computerised files and some information will be entered on our database. Such information will be used anonymously in the statistical information we provide to funders and other third parties. Any use of the information will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.			
<input type="checkbox"/> I have read and understood this statement and agree to accept it. <input type="checkbox"/> I have had this statement explained to me and I understand and accept it.			
<b>13.</b>	<b>Certification</b>		
I certify that the information I have given on this form is correct.			
Signature: .....			
Date: .....			

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form**

This information will be treated in the strictest confidence. It will be used to assist us to evaluate whether we are succeeding in our attempts to create a diverse pool of Board members; information will be aggregated and used anonymously.

*Please tick the appropriate response in each of the following sections:*

Age

- 16-24     25-34     35-44     45-60     Over 60

Do you have a disability?

- Yes and Registered     Yes and not Registered     No

Gender

- Male     Female

How would you describe your cultural/ethnic origin? (The following categories include mixed race if you define yourself as Black, Asian etc)

- Black – Black British
- Black – African/African-Caribbean
- White
- South Asian (includes Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Indian)
- East Asian (includes Chinese, Indonesian, Thai etc)
- Any other (please specify) .....

**Thank you for providing this information**