



Advocacy in Fife

Fife Advocacy Forum

Supporting & Developing Advocacy Across Fife



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What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent Advocacy is a way to support people to have a stronger voice and have as much control as possible over their own lives.

Why is Advocacy Important?

Independent Advocacy helps safeguard and empower the most isolated and excluded people in Fife. Advocacy allows people to speak up when they have problems, to ensure their rights are protected, and to make sure that they are listened to.

Advocacy is about:

- Supporting someone to speak up about issues important to them
- Supporting a person to have their views heard and increase their self-confidence, self-worth and self-belief
- Supporting someone to make their own choices and decisions
- Representing the views of someone when they are unable to do so for themselves
- Listening to someone and trying to understand their point of view
- Supporting someone to know what choices they have and what the consequences of these choices might be

Advocacy is not about:

- Mediation
- Care Support
- Counselling
- Befriending
- Telling somebody what to do



The Fife Advocacy Forum

The Fife Advocacy Forum supports the development of advocacy across Fife and represents the views of local advocacy providers.

To help meet the needs of different people at different times in their lives there are several different types of advocacy. This booklet explains the range of advocacy available to people in Fife and provides details about the organisations that provide these services and how to contact them.

For more information on the Fife Advocacy Forum and the advocacy organisations in Fife please visit:
www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk

Who is Eligible for Advocacy in Fife?

Adults (16+) and Older People

Adults and older people in Fife who are over the age of 16 can access advocacy if they are affected by:

- Disability
- Chronic illness
- Dementia
- Mental illness
- Learning disability
- Personality disorder

and need help to safeguard their:

- Well-being
- Rights
- Care
- Other interests

Children and Young People (under 18)

Children in Fife under the age of 18 can access advocacy if:

- They are looked after by Fife Council: either at home, in Foster Care, Kinship Care or in Residential Care
- There are Child Protection procedures in place (aged 5 – 18 years)
- They have a mental health issue and/or a learning disability



Advocacy Services for Children and Young People

Children and young people who are eligible to receive advocacy (see page 5) can refer themselves to the services or someone involved in their care can do this on their behalf.

Barnardo's Children's Rights Service, Fife

Provides a Children's Rights Service for children and young people (up to 18). This includes children subject to a Child Protection Conference, or looked after children in foster care or purchased residential placements.

Take Note (provided by Barnardo's) supports families involved in Additional Support Needs Tribunals for Scotland (ASNTS).

Phone: 01592 266775

Email: fifeservices@barnardos.org.uk

Who Cares?

Provides professional advocacy for young people (up to 25) who are, or have been, resident in Fife's residential homes.

Phone: 07712 872096

Email: SGriffin@whocaresscotland.org

ENABLE Scotland

Provides advocacy for children and young people with additional support needs. This includes professional advocacy at children's hearings, and self advocacy support.

Enable also provides peer support advocacy for young people with learning disabilities, where they develop the skills to speak out for themselves.

Phone: 01592 659 295

Email: Lendahand@enable.org.uk

Circles Network in Fife

Provides professional advocacy to children subject to compulsory measures under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Act.

Phone: 01592 753383 or 01592 753168

Email: info.fife@circlesnetwork.org.uk



Professional (Issue-Based) Advocacy

A professional advocate will provide expert, specialist knowledge to help you to have your say on a specific issue.

This can for example include short-term support to help you:

- Understand your options and sources of help
- Express your views at meetings that affect you
- Discuss issues with Fife Council or NHS Fife staff
- Deal with formal issues that involve a Mental Health Tribunal, Child Protection Conference, or other statutory meetings

Once the issue is resolved, contact with the advocate will end. The advocate will support you to contact other organisations if required and people can be referred again for advocacy support in the future if required.

Circles Network in Fife

Circles Network in Fife provides advocacy for everyone who is eligible to access advocacy services in Fife. If you are in urgent or immediate need please contact Circles Network who have three contact points in Fife:

- 1 Hanover Court, North Street, Glenrothes KY7 5SB
- 5 High Street, Dunfermline KY12 7DL
- Westport Business Centre, 1 Old School Road, Cupar KY15 4EZ

Phone: 01592 753383 or 01592 753168

Email: info.fife@circlesnetwork.org.uk

Professional Advocacy

Susie's Story

Susie contacted Circles Network when she thought she might be evicted from her home because of rent arrears.

Her advocacy worker agreed to speak to the housing office on Susie's behalf as she found this difficult to do herself due to her mental health. The advocacy worker found there were problems because of the gap between the dates Susie was paid, and when she had to pay her rent.

By supporting Susie at a meeting at the housing office, her advocacy worker was able to help get her rent payment dates changed and resolve the problem.

Fife Elderly Forum

Fife Elderly Forum provides advocacy for people over 65 who are in community hospitals or residential or nursing care homes within Fife.

Phone: 01592 643743

Email: info@fife-elderly.org.uk

Professional Advocacy

Jane's Story

Jane is in her 60s and was in hospital - she was unable to go home due to her physical disability. She also had the added responsibility of caring for her 13 year old granddaughter.

A social worker suggested she move to a care home temporarily while suitable housing was found. After four months Jane contacted Fife Elderly Forum. After eight months, with support, Jane was finally allocated a new home suitable for herself and her granddaughter. Despite having no contract for the admission into the care home, Jane was issued with a bill. With further support from her advocate and the intervention of a solicitor there was no further demand for payment of fees.

Jane is now writing a book about her experience.

Fife Women's Aid

Fife Women's Aid provides advocacy for women who are experiencing, or have experienced, domestic abuse.

If you need support in these circumstances, please contact:

Phone: 0808 802 5555

Visit: Unit 26, Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue, Dunfermline KY11 3BZ

and 8 Lady Wynd, Cupar KY15 4DE

Professional Advocacy

Laura's Story

Laura and her children were subjected to stalking and harassment by her ex-partner. Her ex-partner had also accrued a number of debts when living at the same address, which meant that debt-collectors were now chasing Laura.

Fife Women's Aid was able to help Laura speak to a solicitor and provide information that helped her to understand the legal process. They provided ongoing professional advocacy support while Laura took out an order against her ex-partner, and helped her sort out her financial problems.



Citizen Advocacy

A Citizen Advocate is someone who:

- Will build a trusting relationship with you
- Will help you resolve any problems and difficulties you face
- Can help ensure you live an active life in your community

A Citizen Advocate will usually give you support on a longer-term basis. Many Citizen Advocacy partnerships last for several years. Shorter-term support is also available when someone would benefit from a Citizen Advocacy relationship to help resolve an issue.

Citizen Advocacy is provided by three organisations in Fife. The organisation you contact will depend on where you live in Fife.

Dunfermline Advocacy (Dunfermline and West Fife)

Website: www.dunfermlineadvocacy.org

Phone: 01383 624382

Email: enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org

Equal Voice (Kirkcaldy & Central Fife)

Website: www.equalvoice.org.uk

Phone: 07772 235572

Email: equalvoiceincentralfife@yahoo.co.uk

IncludeME! (North-East Fife)

Website: www.includeme.org.uk

Phone: 01334 656242

Email: contact@includeme.org.uk

Citizen Advocacy

Agnes' Story

Agnes was first introduced to her Citizen Advocate Beryl in 2001, and they have been close friends ever since. Agnes and Beryl share a love of animals and walking Beryl's dogs together was the focus for establishing their partnership.

Beryl's close relationship with Agnes has meant she is able to confidently represent Agnes and express her concerns and wishes. Over the years Beryl has always been there at Agnes' care review meetings, has accessed help to obtain mobility allowance and a blue badge, and has sourced funding and support to allow Agnes to go on holidays. She also supported Agnes through a move to a more accessible flat.

The two meet regularly and enjoy each other's company immensely, whether they are just having a cuppa in each other's homes, are out and about for lunch, going to the cinema, or celebrating birthdays and Christmas. Agnes has said 'We are friends for life!'



Group Advocacy (Collective Self Advocacy)

Group advocacy is designed to allow people with the same concerns, issues or experiences to provide support to each other and to work together to highlight issues and campaign for improvement.

In Fife, group advocacy is provided by People First (Scotland) and is available to anyone with a learning disability.

There are several local People First groups throughout Fife including a women only group, a men only group and groups for hospital residents. The People First team will work with you to find a suitable local group.

Members take part in local groups and are also involved in other work, such as raising awareness of adult protection issues, delivering hate crime training, translating documents into easy read formats, and representing people with learning difficulties on various local committees.

People First (Scotland)

Website: peoplefirstscotland.org

Phone: 07834 328821 or 07841 362170

Email: peoplefirstfife@hotmail.co.uk

Group Advocacy

Simon's Story

For most of his life, Simon's learning disability meant that he was used to other people telling him what he had to do. Simon felt that his own views and wishes were often ignored and he was not given the opportunity to make any decisions for himself.

By joining the local People First (Scotland) group, Simon got support from other people who had been in similar situations. Through the group, Simon was involved in campaigning activities. This has led to improvements in services for other people with learning disabilities, and has also given Simon the confidence and ability to express his own views and take control in his daily life. Simon's reading and writing skills have also greatly improved.

In fact, Simon's confidence and abilities have grown so much that he has recently delivered training, including talking about his own experiences of hate crime, to several groups of high school pupils!

Advocacy in Fife

To find out more about the types of advocacy available in Fife, please visit the Fife Advocacy Forum website:

www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk

or contact us at
admin@fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk
with any questions or queries.

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