



ADVOCACY HIGHLAND

Hello I'm Sheilis Mackay the Advocacy Highland Manager

I hope you'll be interested in this exciting new independent advocacy resource and will want to be involved in building its place in your community.



If you think people have the right to be heard then Advocacy Highland is for YOU. There are a variety of ways to be involved and we will offer you the support and training to do it. INTERESTED? Then read on

INVITATION TO OUR OPEN MEETINGS

We are holding a series of open meetings where YOU can find out more about becoming involved in Advocacy Highland. You are welcome to attend any of the following:

Wed 18th June '03	Wed 25th June '03	Wed 2nd July'03
At 2.00pm in the	At 5.30pm in the	At 2.00pm in
Lochaber College,	Maple Court Hotel,	RoyalMarineHotel
An Aird,	12 Ness Walk	Brora
Fort William	Inverness	

If you can't manage to any of the meetings you can send us the enclosed contact slip or contact us directly at:

**Advocacy Highland
The Gateway,
1a Millburn Road,
Inverness,
IV2 3PX
Tel/ Fax- 01463 233 460
E-mail- info@advocacy-highland.org.uk**



Manager

My name is Sheilis Mackay and I started as manager in February.

Usually the first thing people say to me is "what does your name mean?" or "is it Sheila?" To set the record straight Sheilis is Gaelic for Julia. I was born and brought up in Inverness and both my parents spoke Gaelic. My family all live in Inverness.

I worked in Edinburgh and West Lothian supporting people with mental health problems, older people, people with acquired brain injury, physical disabilities and learning disabilities.

Over the years I have done a lot of work with people in their community and with the voluntary sector to develop new services.

I used to manage a social inclusion project supporting adults and school leavers with learning disabilities to speak up and make choices about their lives.

My last job, Community Health Development Officer, involved listening to local people and assisting them to speak up about what affects their health and well being. Difficulties with damp housing, lack of money and poor transport were common.

My job was to identify what the Council and other agencies could

do to change the circumstances that people who are excluded have to live with.

My own personal experience of living with and supporting family and friends with disabilities has had a huge influence on me, my values and on my work.

I have always believed that people, any one of us, should always be at the heart of any decision making, particularly where it affects their lives. I actively assist and support people to speak up for what they want in life.

I am now delighted to be with Advocacy Highland and to Welcome Priya MacIennan our recently appointed Administrator. By the Autumn 6 locally based part-time Co-ordinators will be in post to recruit, train and support volunteer advocates.

Initially we will provide individual advocacy for:

- People who have mental health problems including dementia**
- People with learning disabilities**
- Frail older people**
- People who are homeless**

Our longer term aim is to provide for anyone who needs advocacy.



Advocacy in Action

Mabel was a quiet, considerate lady of almost ninety. Well known and liked in the village, she was remembered as a competent post mistress and dutiful daughter.

Mabel still lived in the house where she had been born and she wished to go on living there. Her nephews lived and worked many miles away, and were trying to persuade their aunt to stay with one of them, or go to the local care home.

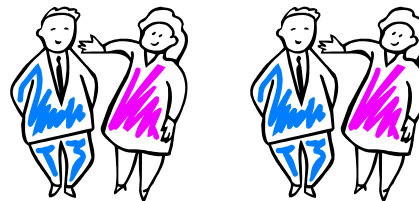
The local G.P. and nurse were both aware that Mabel was really distressed by this idea. They also knew that it would mean a lot to Mabel to have their support and reassurance. But, they also knew that Mabel was no longer able to cope and, in all conscience, neither of them could encourage her to stay at home.

Which is why they were both very glad that Mabel's neighbour was Donnie Grant, a local business man who divided most of his spare time between his family and the local football team. He and his wife had been good neighbours to Mabel when she had been caring for her parents.

Donnie would never have seen himself as an advocate for Mabel, but that is what he was. While she struggled to remain independent he stood by her, helping her to ask for what she needed, and leaving her free to make her own decision in her own time as to what she must do.

Mabel managed to stay in her own home for a lot longer than most people thought she would be able to. She was very happy in the remaining time that she had there and decided for herself

almost a year later to move into the local care home.



To **ADVOCATE** means to plead a cause - but we are not lawyers!

An **INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE** supports someone to speak up on their own behalf or speaks up for them if they are unable to do this for themselves.

An **INDEPENDENT ADVOCATE** does not belong to any group that may have an interest in providing services to the person concerned.

ADVOCACY HIGHLAND can support YOU to help someone in YOUR community speak up.



The Journey

A group of individuals drawn from advocacy providers, user groups, Highland NHS Board and Highland Council, met way back in 1999 to begin to pull together a report .

Advocacy in Action. The vision outlined in this report aimed for :

- independent individual advocacy in all Highland areas for all who need it
- separate independent individual advocacy for carers in all areas
- specialist support within the generic service for priority groups

time limited specialist advocacy for those directly affected by the services reprovisioned in association with 'The Same as You' report.

This development framework was adopted and endorsed in January 2001 by the Joint Committee for Action on Community Care (JCACC). It was recognised that there is a need for equitable development of advocacy across Highland and that the ability of someone to access advocacy should not depend on where they live.

In February 2001 the Scottish Executive issued a statement requiring all NHS Boards and Local Authorities to "work with local partners to develop proposals to ensure that integrated,

independent advocacy schemes are available to all those who need this type of support"

With this in mind an Advocacy Development Day was held in May 2001 in order to inform decisions on priorities for the development of Advocacy in Highland.

A costed proposal to support these developments was approved by the JCACC and the JCCYP (Joint Committee on Services for Children and Young People) in August 2002

From here work began to bring about a **new organisation** to provide generic independent advocacy across Highland. Carers advocacy and time limited advocacy for people with learning disabilities affected by the reprovisioning of services was also commissioned.

Advocacy Highland Steering Group has been working hard to build this new organisation. We are ready now to ask **YOU** to join us as we start forming the new Board. We want to ensure that the Board reflects the diversity of modern Highland life. We recognise that taking on new responsibilities needs some thought so we have organised training about independent advocacy and about becoming a Board Director.

THEN YOU CAN DECIDE.