



# Advocacy Highland Spring Newsletter

MARCH 2021

Welcome to the **Spring 2021** edition of our newsletter!

Here at Advocacy Highland, we are still adapting and changing the ways in which we deliver our advocacy support due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Face-to-face advocacy meetings are not currently being held, in line with the national lockdown restrictions.

We are still providing advocacy support over the phone, by email, and through online video chat. As restrictions change, we will continue to adapt the ways in which we provide our advocacy support, keeping in line with all safety measures.

Thank you, again, to our advocacy partners, our volunteers, and to all of our staff for their patience and support during this time.

Advocacy Highland are delighted to announce that we have **2 new members of staff** and **3 new board members!**



Welcome to **Matt Blackhurst**, our new Mental Health Advocate, and **Shona Street**, our new Advocate!

Another big welcome to our three new board members, **Magdalene Maclean**, **Philippa Cliff** and **Alistair Ferns!**



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## What's New?

### Our thanks to Shirley Bannister

At the end of 2020, Shirley made the decision to stand down as Chairperson, and leave her position on the board.

Shirley has been a great support to Advocacy Highland, putting in a huge amount of work, and sharing a wealth of knowledge with us. She will be hugely missed, and we are all so grateful for everything she has done for us.

We'd like to take this moment to thank Shirley, and wish her all the best for the future.

### Volunteer Friendly Award

Since our last newsletter, we applied for - and were awarded - the Volunteer Friendly Award.

The Volunteer Friendly Award is a quality standard that supports, recognises and rewards groups who are good at involving volunteers.

### New Pilot Project: Young People's Advocacy

We are delighted to announce that this March, we have successfully secured all of the necessary funding to launch our brand new project, Young People's Advocacy (Under 16s), across Caithness and Sutherland.

Over the years of working throughout the Highlands, many of our staff at Advocacy Highland have become increasingly aware of the need for independent advocacy support for the young people in our local communities.

The project will launch in Caithness and Sutherland initially, as this is one of the areas that we identified in our research as being in particular need.

Through this project, young people will have the opportunity to access independent advocacy support from our new Young People's Advocate for a range of different issues, such as school meetings, Children's Hearing meetings, and meetings with police or social work.

We really believe in the benefits of this project, and we cannot wait to get started on it later this Spring.

## Funding News

This month, we are very excited and to announce that we have successfully secured new funding from three excellent Scottish funds. We'd like to say an enormous thank you to Foundation Scotland's **Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund**, the **Caithness and North Sutherland Fund**, and SSE's **Beatrice Caithness Fund**. We are so grateful to each panel for all of their time and support.

### Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund

Foundation Scotland's **Response, Recovery and Resilience Fund** have generously awarded us **£5000**. All of this money will go towards buying new laptops for our staff.

Over the last year, the majority of our work has moved online due to the pandemic. Efficient and up-to-date laptops are needed now, more than ever!

Thank you to Foundation Scotland!



### Caithness and North Sutherland Fund

**CNSF** have generously awarded us with **half** of the money we need to launch our new project, Young People's Advocacy, across Caithness and North Sutherland.

This project is one we've been hoping to launch in the Highlands for years, and we wouldn't be able to do so without the help of the funders in our local communities.

Thank you to CNSF!



### Beatrice Caithness

SSE's **Beatrice Caithness Fund** have generously awarded us with **the second half** of the money we needed to launch the Young People's Advocacy pilot project!

We're super grateful to everyone on the panel for recognising the potential that this project holds for supporting young people in and around Caithness.

Thank you to SSE's **Beatrice Caithness Fund!**



## OUR FEEDBACK

Allison, one of our Area Co-ordinators, received this feedback from an advocacy partner she worked with in the later months of 2020. This advocacy partner, whose name we've hidden, was subject to different types of elder abuse from different members of her family.

Allison met with the advocacy partner to find out her views on the situation, liaised with the social worker on her case, and was on her side when she felt afraid for her safety. The advocacy partner was grateful to Allison for supporting her no matter what she said, for not judging her, and for not making her feel as though there were two sides to this story.

Below is a copy of the thank you card that was left for Allison. It reads the following:

"Dear Allison,

Thank you very much for all you have done for me. You were a life saver. Of course you know how it all went down at the end, and the police were brought in. You probably know that (blank) and (blank) came up and I am going back with them, but I am still trying to get a little place of my own. You were so very kind to me and I hadn't known what kindness was for a long time.

Thank you once again"

Dear Alison  
 Thank you very much for all you have done for me, you were a life saver. Of course you now know how it all blew up at the end and the police were brought in. You probably know that ~~the~~ [redacted] and [redacted] came up and I am going back with them, but am still

trying to get a little place of my own. You were so very kind to me and I hadn't known what kindness was for a long time.

Thanking you once again  
 [redacted]

If you want to stay up-to-date with changes, or just want a daily dose of Advocacy Highland, follow us on our social media pages -

Facebook: Search 'Advocacy Highland'

Instagram: @advocacyhighland

Twitter: @AdvocacyHi



### Advocacy is...

- ◆ Having your voice heard
- ◆ Standing up for and sticking with a person and being on their side
- ◆ Standing alongside people who are in danger of being pushed to the margins of society
- ◆ Being safeguarded when you are unable to do this for yourself due to incapacity
- ◆ Being listened to
- ◆ Offering support to have your views taken into account
- ◆ Offering support to consider the choices people have and what the consequences might be
- ◆ Being treated as an equal
- ◆ Empowering

### Advocacy is Not...

- ◆ Counselling
- ◆ Befriending
- ◆ Making decisions for someone
- ◆ Advising or telling someone what to do
- ◆ Speaking for someone when they are able to speak for themselves and able to express a view
- ◆ Mediation
- ◆ Care and support work
- ◆ Persuading people to do what services want
- ◆ Solving all someone's problems for them
- ◆ Filling all the gaps in someone's life
- ◆ Acting in a way that benefits other people more than the person you are advocating for
- ◆ Agreeing with everything a person says and doing anything a person asks you to do
- ◆ Knowing everything
- ◆ Imposing your views/values



## CONTACT US

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### Mental Health Advocates—

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### Advocates—

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Copies of our policies regarding privacy and data protection are available on our website at [www.advocacy-highland.org.uk](http://www.advocacy-highland.org.uk) or you can request copies by contacting us at [info@advocacy-highland.org.uk](mailto:info@advocacy-highland.org.uk) or writing to us at 2 Seafield Road, Inverness, IV1 1SG.

