



Speaking up for Advocacy

Good news has been scarce on the ground but CIB garnered its own sunshine story in October when the then Minister for Social Protection, Eamon Ó Cuív announced the go-ahead for the restructured National Advocacy Service for people with disabilities on 5th October.

This followed the evaluation report on the pilot Community and Voluntary (C&V) Programme of advocacy which was presented to the Department of Social Protection earlier in the year.

The report praised the achievements of the pilot programme for the innovative work undertaken and the numbers of cases dealt with. However, in order to create greater coordination and a more consistent service for people with disabilities across the country, the report recommended a move to a national structure.

The former C&V Programme was organised through projects which were hosted by a range of organisations around the country. The new service is based on five regions. Each region has an advocacy regional manager, 1-2 senior advocates, 5-7 advocates and an administrator. Dublin is one region, the others are the North East, South East, South West and West. These regional services are hosted by five Citizens Information Services.

Advocates are now organised in teams to cover the region in which they are based. This structure will enable the service to develop under a national plan with consistency of standards, better case review, mutual support and substitution when advocates are absent.



**National
Advocacy
Service**

for People
with Disabilities



Secretary General, Dept. of Social Protection, Niamh O'Donoghue, (then) Minister Eamon Ó Cuív, CIB Chair Sylva Langford and CIB CEO, Tony McQuinn at the announcement of the National Advocacy Service in Oct 2010

New for old? Transition Arrangements

Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Well we're nearly there but moving from one service to another means a change of gear! The move from the pilot programme to the National Advocacy Service was done under *Transfer of Undertakings* legislation. The Regional Advocacy Managers posts which are new positions were advertised. An internal competition from within the former C&V programme was held for the senior advocate posts. On 20th December 2010 existing advocates transferred to the new service through the designated CIS in each region. For the initial period most remained working from their old locations while reporting to the new regional managers. Advocate posts were allocated on a regional basis. In regions with a surplus of posts, advocates were

selected by a three person interview panel. The new service has been granted the same level of funding as the pilot programme. By April most advocates will be in their new locations. They will deal with any transferred cases as well as taking steps to reach new and more vulnerable clients, particularly those in residential services.

The new National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities will be formally launched on March 30th 2011 at an event in Dublin Castle which will also celebrate the work done by the Community and Voluntary Sector Advocacy Pilot Programme.

Thank you to the C&V projects

We would like to thank the C&V Advocacy Projects for their great work. Below are some of their photos and quotes which remind us of the achievements of

the pilot programme and its seminal influence on how advocacy is understood in Ireland.



Limerick Advocacy Service 2010



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Jennifer Kiely at a DATA Advocacy event



Josephine Flaherty, Marie Wolfe and Chris Glennon at the CIB Advocacy Conference 2006

This is what they said about the C&V Advocacy

Advocacy has to be a one-to-one service as everybody has different problems/issues and may need individual attention.

Although I don't agree with everything you (the advocate) say, I know you are there to stand up for my daughter and I am so glad she has someone who is completely on her side and I know she really trusts you.

(Mother of female client)

Just someone willing to listen without judging...

My appeal against the decision on my claim for D. A. was upheld because of your persistence, support, and time you devoted to my case

The advocate gave me a lot of time and I'm so grateful for that. I would like to thank the advocate for believing in me, listening to me, helping me.

In my years of working with people with disabilities, Advocacy has had the most positive impact on my role as a professional.

I found it to be a flexible and understanding service... it opened doors to new supports and opportunities.

Thanks for trying to make me visible

*I feel more in control of my life now
(Woman living in a group home)*

The advocate can reach where we can't: our employment contracts can be a problem whereas this doesn't arise for her: she has more freedom.

Local Service Provider

We are parents of a child with various disabilities and down through the years we have felt isolated and alone. We had the support and help of our Advocate which has given us the energy to pursue the outstanding issues... for our son.

First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you and then you've won.

Clare Independent Advocacy Service

You are like a terrier, you just keep going at it.

Client to advocate

Standard Bearers!

Part of the work of the Advocacy department in CIB involves deciding on standards and for the last six months a working group has been discussing standards for advocacy. In a first draft they have grouped standards around six principles:

Accessibility

Accountability

Diligence and Competence

Respect and Dignity

Independence

Empowerment

Some principles would apply across the board – for example, accountability (which takes in governance) is pretty standard for all organisations, and all staff are expected to be diligent and competent. It behoves disability organisations to be especially careful about accessibility and to respect the client at all times. The ones that pertain specifically to advocacy are independence and empowerment which must be built into all structures.

The principles are fleshed out with standards and key indicators. Within CIB a general quality assurance group is developing a system of accredited standards for advocacy, information provision and money advice.

Hints from Advocacycase.ie

Case management emphasises actions and improves services for vulnerable clients.

- **Greater focus on client outcomes** - easier for advocates and line managers to analyse:
 - where & how time is spent on cases
 - areas of advocate expertise
 - identify where new skills are required.

- **Clients deserve a consistent quality service**

CIB and advocates seek to **improve practice through setting standards and analysing how cases are managed.**

Electronic records and review with managers and peers are key tools.

A secure electronic case management system which is safely backed up ensures compliance with Data Protection Legislation.



"I forgot my password, but surely you *recognize* me!"

Ireland is divided into five parts for advocacy at least!

Below we set out the five Advocacy regions & phone contact details.

Ben North 086 0218778

Ben North (Advocacy Manager Region 1) has a background in psychology and has worked in social services in the UK and Ireland for the past 10 years. His Masters was on the marginalisation of people with a Mental Health difficulty. In his last position his main focus was on quality where he has experience of implementing systems with a strong human rights bias. Ben wants the NAS to be a service that is a model of excellence and international best practice in the field of Advocacy for people who are vulnerable.

Region 1

Dublin mainly within the M50 but excluding parts of Blanchardstown and parts of North Dublin

Ben North

Suzy Byrne
Margaret Tumbleton
Sarah Campbell
Sarah L. Campbell
Jim Comiskey
Jenny Cullen
John McCrudden
Ruth McCullagh
Tessa Van Keeken

Manager

Senior Advocate
Senior Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate



Ben

Louise Loughlin 086 4102083

Louise Loughlin (Advocacy Manager, Region 2) is originally from Glasgow, Scotland. She worked for several years as a solicitor and her in-depth knowledge of the law – particularly in the area of mental health will be useful in her new role. Louise's hopes for NAS are that it can provide access to advocacy services for people unable to articulate their views who have previously been unrepresented. She is eager to build a highly professional and skilled service and to develop its social policy element through identifying suitable test cases to bring about legislative change.

Region 2

North East: Westmeath, Cavan, Fingal, Louth, Longford, Meath, Monaghan

Louise Loughlin

Louise Dawson
Andrea Reynolds
Pauline McKenna
Mary Chapman
Catherine Marsh
Ann Saurin

Manager

Senior Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate



Louise

Selina Doyle 086 0409978

Selina Doyle (Advocacy Manager Region 3) comes from England and moved across the waters 6 years ago for a new stress free life! She has worked in the field of disability for 23 years in various roles including child development, care, day and residential services and is a qualified Social Worker. Selina's other areas of study include mediation and various disability courses.

Selina hopes that the NAS will make a tangible difference to the lives of the people supported; enabling them to achieve a good quality of life rooted in rights, choice and keeping a person-centred perspective.

Region 3

South East: Offaly, Carlow,, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Wexford, Wicklow

Selina Doyle

Christina Devine
Rachel Bergin
Jolene Kelly
Patty O'Malley
Gerald McCann
To be appointed

Manager

Senior Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate
Advocate



Selina

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Patricia O'Dwyer 086 0223984

Patricia O'Dwyer (Advocacy Manager Region 4) came originally from Tipperary but has worked for 25 years in Australia in human service organisations. Her recent work has been in the development and implementation of individualised supports for people with disabilities living within their community.

She hopes that NAS will provide a high quality, outcomes-driven service which will engage and enable the most vulnerable people with disabilities in our community to achieve their rights and entitlements and improve their quality of life.

Region 4

South West: Waterford, Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Tipperary

Patricia O'Dwyer	Manager
Deirdre Lillis	Senior Advocate
Gerry Rattigan	Senior Advocate
Mary Carroll	Advocate
Israel Finnerty	Advocate
Grace Moore	Advocate
Anna Newman	Advocate
Anne-Marie O'Sullivan	Advocate



Patricia

Josephine Keaveney 086 0201095

Josephine Keaveney (Advocacy Manager Region 5) lives in County Clare and has managed DPOC, the Centre for Independent Living in County Clare, for the last six years. Previously she worked as a mediator with the Local Employment Service in Ennis and earlier as a manager at Ailwee Cave near Ballyvaughan. She sees the National Advocacy Service (NAS) as the culmination of three decades of awareness raising, campaigning and eventually legislation. This, the fourth decade, supported by NAS, will be about implementation of all that recent legislation and policy promises.

Region 5

West/North West: Leitrim, Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Roscommon

Josephine Keaveney	Manager
Clare O'Neill	Senior Advocate
Helen Collins	Advocate
Carmel Donovan	Advocate
Greg Duff	Advocate
Andrea Farrell	Advocate
Marion Gallagher	Advocate
Martina Kilgallon	Advocate
Rebecca Leavy	Advocate
Elaine Morris	Advocate



Josephine

Good management is the art of making problems so interesting and their solutions so constructive that everyone wants to get to work and deal with them.

- Paul Hawken