

**Minutes of the National Network for Older people's
Advocacy in Wales Meeting
Thursday 14 December 2023
Via Zoom**

1. Welcome, Introductions, and apologies

LH welcomed everyone to the meeting today. There were 24 members in attendance

2. Speakers – Dr Clive Diaz and Lilly Evans, Cardiff University Research Department

Dr Diaz presented the slides detailing his department's work on Parental Advocacy. Q&A followed: LH commented that whilst she deals with advocacy for older people many of the comments raised in the presentation were very transferrable such as intervention coming too late due to mistrust, difficulty understanding jargon etc.

RJ from MHM Wales said that his organisation provides IPA services through the requirements of the SSWBA. It became apparent quite early the amount of parental support that was needed going through courts in relation to their children. RJ stated that over 60% of the referrals were for parental support. He wondered whether there would be any chance of the study looking at IPA and including IPA in future studies.

CD replied that they have had the debate at the commencement of the study and the idea was to focus on the 3 sites that he included in the presentation. He did see no reason not to look at this for future work as there was a need to have this broadened. The department would most certainly be looking at this if there was an opportunity for further bids.

RJ thanked CD for this as he personally felt that the NYAS results may give a somewhat skewed outcome as they have not been active for very long as an organisation. He was aware of issues where a parent was not supported because they were 16 years old. This should not have been a factor as they were still a parent and RJ felt that this case was not dealt with properly. He has data available from 2017 onwards and would be more than willing to share this if CD felt it appropriate or useful.

CD asked where RJ worked from with RJ replying that there covered Bridgend/NPT/Swansea. It may be of interest as well that NPT have put out a tender for a children's advocacy service that would be run by parent.

NH from NWAAA commented that she would certainly be emailing CD as they provide IPA through the requirements of SSWBA, and she is seeing an emerging theme that they are having to deal with that is not in their present agreement to deal with. The need is most certainly there, and they have dealt with cases but there is no budget in the current agreement to provide the service. Even looking at dealing with simple cases of travel, meetings, court proceedings etc are extremely expensive.

Because of this emerging theme funding being made available for specialist advocacy would be very welcome. NH also added that NWAAA will no longer be providing support in North Wales as funding has been awarded elsewhere on this occasion.

Dr Diaz thanked the group for their contributions today. He closed by commending that he would welcome contact from outside the meeting and he would be very grateful for group members to take part in the forthcoming survey which would be released in the New Year. All chat links can be found at the end of the minutes. He would look forward to working collaboratively in the future.

ACTION: Dr Diaz to share the slides with LH who will distribute them to the network.

3. Speaker – Donna Coleman, Regional Director of Llais West Wales

LH welcomed Donna Coleman who presented on the work of Llais. Q&A followed.

SH asked whether there was an age limit for Llais services.

DC said that the service is open to anyone except for “looked after” children. Llais were however, still developing the child and young people package.

MF noted that DC is also working in connection with advocacy, and he asked how long this additional role would be for and whether this was pan Wales.

DC confirmed she would be working in the additional role until March 2023.

MF also asked DC whether she would consider being involved in both the National Advocacy Network and the Regional networks and whether she would be willing to promote membership to other members of her team.

DC said that she would be very willing to play a part and whilst they were currently somewhat short on staff she would most definitely encourage other members to take part in national and regional advocacy networks. At this point there was a total of 36/37 staff that she could approach.

ACTION: MF to send DC dates for future meetings in the hope they can offer representation in all the regions going forward.

ACTION: LH to add DC to the National network distribution list.

LH wondered how Llais were progressing with the new element of social services complaints advocacy.

DC said that things were moving forward but not with the tsunami volume that was originally anticipated. There was a flurry of inappropriate housing relating complaints that were not in their remit.

LH hoped that we could work collaboratively with Llais and that there would be opportunities for cross referrals in the future.

4. Cost of living issues or any other themes we need to keep a close eye on

LH commented from the perspective of the HOPE and DAP projects housing, utilities and clients with complex mental health problems were still the most abiding themes.

KP commented that there are also problems with companies who have been accepted to supply homes with air source heating. It is becoming increasingly apparent that the systems are not fit for purpose and leaving homes without heating or water in some cases.

There was also the additional challenge that our team are having to contact each supplier directly now and there is great difficulty in getting in touch or receiving satisfactory conclusions from them.

5. Safeguarding

None

6. Training

LH said that KH is not available to attend the meeting today, but she would welcome any feedback from the group on thoughts such as the Big Events this year and whether there were any comments they wanted to share.

KH wanted to thank the project as she personally found the sessions very interesting and useful.

LH added that we are always keen to listen to the suggestions and make all our training as appropriate as possible. There is SSWBA training available on 19 December with Luke Clements. LH has noticed that there are over 80 people currently booked to attend this session which is very encouraging.

In the meantime, if anyone has any training requirements then please email Kath Hawkins to discuss this further.

Right Care – Right Person

LH wanted to update the group on a future training opportunity that will take place in the New Year. It has become apparent that using the Police when having to deal with people in a mental health crisis was not the best way forward and we will be looking into options available for us. This will be led by Welsh Government and Westminster and was recently tagged for our attention by Natasha Fox. At this point there is no more information, but LH would keep the group informed as more information becomes available. It was hoped that LH could find speakers willing to attend the group to talk about this issue at future network meetings.

SH commented that she thought that the Police force in Wales did employ mental health specialists and wondered whether this service was still in operation.

LH replied that she was unsure of that but the whole point was that there so many unknowns. By April 2024 we should have a better idea of what this will look like but as a group we would investigate it in more detail starting in the New Year. She appreciated that there would be differences in the regions, and she would be grateful if this could be fed back into all the regional network groups in Wales.

7. Updates from each organisation/regional network updates

HOPE/DAP

KP is delighted that HOPE now has a full team in operation again and we are still in the position of waiting to hear whether more funding will be made available for DAP after March 2024.

Age Connects Cardiff

GB informed the group that tenders are out for advocacy services in Cardiff and Vale. They are extremely busy including the traditionally quieter time in the lead up to Christmas.

CADMHAS

KH said that she had no updates at present to report.

MHM Wales

RJ has added a link in the chat function (available at the end of these minutes) in connection with a freedom of information request he submitted, and he would welcome the thoughts on comments on the confusing reply he received. RJ was interested to hear how much paid IPA advocacy there was. From an organisational perspective the IMCA and IPA service were very busy.

ACTION: Group to look at the link and pass comments to RJ at MHM Wales.

Promo Cymru

SH said that they were very busy across all the hub gateway services. They were short staffed and going through the recruitment process.

NWAAA

NH said that she did not have any updates to report but did note that she will look into how many referrals they had signposted to Llais since their inception.

From January 2024 NWAAA will not be providing advocacy service in Flintshire and Wrexham as this tendered had been granted to ASNEW. There is also a new provider for self-advocacy within Wrexham. She did not have the contact details but once she has them she will email MF to let him know and for him to update the records.

ACTION: NH to email MF with self-advocacy contact details.

NWAAA are also working on a joint project with CADMHAS within Gwynedd and Anglesey. This is a short funding project looking at the gap in mental health advocacy with Community advocacy specialist in mental health. This will be reviewed as the tender is for 8 months and NH wondered if it will continue beyond this.

ACTION: Adrian added a link to self-advocacy in the chat box. The link can be found at the end of the minutes for the group to look at.

Finally, NH and Kath Hawkins continue to provide advocacy awareness training for organisations, in particular the interest shown by a large care home recently has been very encouraging. LH feels that this is particularly important to help increase knowledge of the advocacy services and information in connection with DOLS. She feels that there is still a lack of understanding about the topics as 21A challenges for places and this continues to get smaller and smaller.

LH confirmed that within HOPE we are seeing cases that are becoming increasingly complex and difficult for volunteers to cope with where clients are presenting with mental health problems.

ACTION: NH will send LH the relevant information as she agrees that mental health issues in referrals are all encompassing and a key barrier to progressing and helping clients. This service is currently only available in Gwynedd and Anglesey now.

8. Regional Advocacy Networks update

MF commented that the Common themes connecting the most recent round of regional network meetings had discussed included parental advocacy, commissioning, and cost of living impact of services. All had also discussed plans for Advocacy Awareness Week, the QPM and Code of Practice reviews and the Big Events.

Advocacy Network Minutes
14 December 2023

Regarding the much-anticipated release of Advocacy Counts 8, MF said that there had been some delay, but it would be released early next year. Again, he requested that there only be one reply per organisation please and he would very much welcome as many participants as possible for Advocacy Count 8.

9. Actions from minutes of the last meeting

None

10. AOB

Links from Chat Box in Zoom

Speaker Contact email
diazcp@cardiff.ac.uk

Speaker Contact email
donna.coleman@llaescymru.org

Freedom of information reply submitted by Richard Jones MHM
<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-11/atish19156.pdf>

Marc Forster Service information link
<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/our-work/advocacy/hope---helping-others-participate-and-engage/advocacy-services-in-wales/>

11. Close

LH thanked everyone for attending this morning and took the opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Date of next meeting 14 March 2024