



# Advocacy in Fife

Fife Advocacy Forum

Supporting & Developing Advocacy Across Fife



Autumn 2024



## 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?

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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

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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](http://www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk)**

# Who is Eligible for Advocacy in Fife?

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## **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
- Autism spectrum disorder
- 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.

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

Phone: 0300 303 1660  
Email: [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

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### **Barnardo's Children's Rights and Advocacy Service**

For children and young people up to 18.

Phone: 01592 651482  
Email: [fifeservices@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:fifeservices@barnardos.org.uk)

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## Professional (Issue-Based) Advocacy

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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.

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## **VoiceAbility**

VoiceAbility provides advocacy for everyone who is eligible to access advocacy services in Fife. If you are in urgent or immediate need please contact VoiceAbility.

Phone: 0300 303 1660

Email: [helpline.scotland@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline.scotland@voiceability.org)

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## **Fife Forum**

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

Office 1-2, Fraser Buildings, Millie Street, Kirkcaldy KY1 2NL

Phone: 01592 643743

Email: [info@fifeforum.org.uk](mailto:info@fifeforum.org.uk)

## **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.



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**Kindred (Fife)** Kindred (Fife) provides professional advocacy for parents and carers of children with additional support needs throughout Fife.

Evans Business Centre, 15 Pitreavie Court, Dunfermline, KY11 2YB

Helpline: 0800 031 5793 (10am to 4pm Monday to Friday)

Office: 01383 745651

Email: [FifeEnquiries@kindred-scotland.org](mailto:FifeEnquiries@kindred-scotland.org)

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### **Circles Advocacy**

Advocacy for unpaid carers and those experiencing substance misuse issues.

New Volunteer House,

16 East Fergus Place, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1XT

Phone: 01592 645360

Email: [carolann.haddow@circlesnetwork.org.uk](mailto:carolann.haddow@circlesnetwork.org.uk)

## **Professional Advocacy**

## **Susie's Story**

Susie contacted advocacy 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.

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**Lets Talk ASN** A joint initiative between Kindred Advocacy and Govan Law Centre - supporting families involved in Additional Support Needs Tribunals throughout Scotland, including Fife. All legal work is undertaken by Dailly & Co. Solicitors.

Fife families should initially call Govan Law.

Let's Talk ASN, c/o Govan Law Centre,  
18-20 Orkney Street, Glasgow, G51 2BZ.

Phone: 0141 445 1955

Email: [letstalkasn@edlaw.org.uk](mailto:letstalkasn@edlaw.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 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.



## Citizen Advocacy

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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.

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## **Dunfermline Advocacy (Dunfermline and West Fife)**

Website: [www.dunfermlineadvocacy.org](http://www.dunfermlineadvocacy.org)

Phone: 01383 624382

Email: [enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org](mailto:enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org)

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## **Equal Voice (Kirkcaldy & Central Fife)**

Website: [www.equalvoice.org.uk](http://www.equalvoice.org.uk)

Phone: 01592 653754

Email: [info@equal-voice.org.uk](mailto:info@equal-voice.org.uk)

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## **Include Me (North-East Fife)**

Website: [www.includeme.org.uk](http://www.includeme.org.uk)

Phone: 07487 566 442 (Mon-Wed) - 07487 566 937 (Tue- Thu)

Email: [contact@includeme.org.uk](mailto: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)

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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.

It allows people with learning disabilities to have the opportunity to advocate together for change, bringing common cause to those who hold power and influence over their lives.

It creates the opportunities where people with learning difficulties might develop the skills, attitudes and competencies which will be more widely valued in our society and to learn the skills of opinion development, articulation and engagement.

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

There are 17 local People First groups in Fife including two Women only groups, and two Men only groups. There is one hospital based group for residents of Mayfield at Lynebank. Other groups are spread across Fife. People First Development Workers will support 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, consultations, conferences and representing people with learning difficulties on many strategic committees in Fife.

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### **People First (Scotland)**

Website: [peoplefirstscotland.org](http://peoplefirstscotland.org)

Phone: 01383 624885 or 07834 328821

Email: [peoplefirstfife@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:peoplefirstfife@hotmail.co.uk)

### **Group Advocacy**

### **Erin's Story**

For most of her life, Erin's learning disability made her feel different from other people. Erin had no self-confidence and found it hard to go out or speak to anyone about her thoughts and feelings.

By joining a local People First (Scotland) group, Erin got support from other people who had been in similar situations. Through the group, Erin became involved in campaigning activities for women and parents with learning disabilities. This has led to improvements in services for other women with learning disabilities, and has also given Erin the confidence and ability to express her own view and take control in her daily life. Erin's reading and writing skills have also improved. In fact, Erin's confidence and abilities have grown so much that she has recently delivered a presentation on parents with learning disabilities at a conference in Edinburgh.

# Advocacy Providers in Fife

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**Fife Forum**

Making Community Connections



**DUNFERMLINE  
ADVOCACY**



**People First  
(Scotland)**



**Include Me**  
connecting people. changing lives

**Believe in  
children**



**Barnardo's**

**Fife  
Young  
Carers**



**VoiceAbility**



# Advocacy in Fife

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

**[www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk](http://www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk)**

or contact us at via Dunfermline Advocacy at [enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org](mailto:enquiries@dunfermlineadvocacy.org) with any questions or queries.

Fife Advocacy Forum

Supporting & Developing Advocacy Across Fife



supported by

Fife Health  
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Partnership

