

Advocacy Counts 7

A review of advocacy services for adults in Wales with a particular focus on older people



Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. A review of advocacy services for adults in Wales with a particular focus on older people	4
Introduction	4
Methodology	5
Key findings since Advocacy Counts 6	6
Number of services and people supported	7
Advocacy staff and volunteers	7
Advocacy services funded specifically for older people in Wales	8
Advocacy services for a wider client group but older people are supported as part of the service	8
Language	9
Quality and standards	9
Conclusions and recommendations	10
3. Developments in Advocacy in Wales	12

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1. Executive Summary

Advocacy Counts 7 provides an updated snapshot of advocacy provision in Wales for adults, with a particular emphasis on older people. It appears that the overall number of advocates, people supported, and the number of services funded to deliver advocacy across Wales have all increased since the last survey was reported in 2018.

Analysis of the survey responses was enhanced by follow-up interviews with respondents, along with discussions at advocacy network meetings across Wales. The analysis suggests that the increases are likely to be attributed to a much greater awareness of the advocacy services that already exist rather than a significant increase in the number of new services. An increase in the level of engagement by advocacy providers over the past two years in exercises such as the Advocacy Counts survey provide a broader picture of advocacy services for adults in Wales.

There is now a greater awareness and understanding of the quantity, quality, range and variety of advocacy that exists across Wales amongst advocacy providers, local authority commissioners and also by Welsh Government. An important future step is to extend this greater understanding to potential service users, information and advice services and also to social workers and health professionals who work directly with the potential beneficiaries of advocacy services. Increased training and information is required by professionals to increase their awareness of advocacy and also people's entitlements to these services in order to ensure their needs are met.

Overall, local authority managers now have a greater understanding of the advocacy services operating in their area and also their responsibilities for commissioning advocacy services. This has meant that the main area of new growth since Advocacy Counts 6 has been with the number of independent professional advocacy services commissioned under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (The Act), which have now increased from four to 20 local authority areas at the time the survey was undertaken.

Of particular concern for Age Cymru remains the continued fall in the number of specialist advocacy providers and advocates for older people. The loss of an additional specialist provider since 2018 means there's a further reduction in the specialist focus and expertise for supporting older people through advocacy services focusing on early intervention, prevention and community based advocacy. Older people are increasingly reliant upon accessing higher level statutory advocacy.

In light of the new requirements placed upon local authorities it is anticipated that demand for advocacy services will continue to grow and therefore the availability and sustainability of services is a priority for all involved. Interviews with advocacy providers and comments made during the survey suggest that cases are becoming increasingly complex and time-consuming and that this too will have an impact on the sustainability of services in the future.

2. A review of advocacy services for adults in Wales with a particular focus on older people

Introduction

We are pleased to present Advocacy Counts 7, our 7th report on advocacy provision for adults in Wales with a particular emphasis on older people.

Over the last 14 years Age Cymru has been reviewing availability of services, issues around funding and sustainability, quality of service and training of advocates, advocacy and its role in safeguarding, accessibility in terms of language, and knowledge and understanding of legislative changes in advocacy.

Our evidence has been used to influence grant funders, commissioners, and Ministers in Welsh Government. We have called for an end to the post code lottery of availability, for a more consistent funding approach, for increased sustainability of the sector and most importantly for people who need the support of these services to have access wherever they are in Wales. We also called for a new statutory duty for advocacy under The Act.

Independent advocacy is a vital service for individuals to ensure that the person (and their well-being outcomes) is placed at the center of the work of support services. Independent advocacy gives citizens voice, choice and control over achieving their well-being outcomes.

There have been significant developments in the field of independent advocacy in the period between Advocacy Counts 5 (2016), through Advocacy Counts 6 (2018) and now Advocacy Counts 7 (2020). The Act places a requirement on local authorities to make advocacy available for all individuals in Wales in certain circumstances including (but not exclusively) assessment, care planning, review and safeguarding. Nearly all Local Authorities have now commissioned services to comply with these requirements with many preparing to review and re-tender these services.

Advocacy Counts 7 presents the findings from our most recent survey. It explores the findings in light of the transition from the completion of the large scale grant funding projects to the completion of the first round of commissioned Independent Professional Advocacy services implemented under the new advocacy requirement within The Act. Advocacy Counts 7 will provide a broad snapshot of the current situation in Wales.

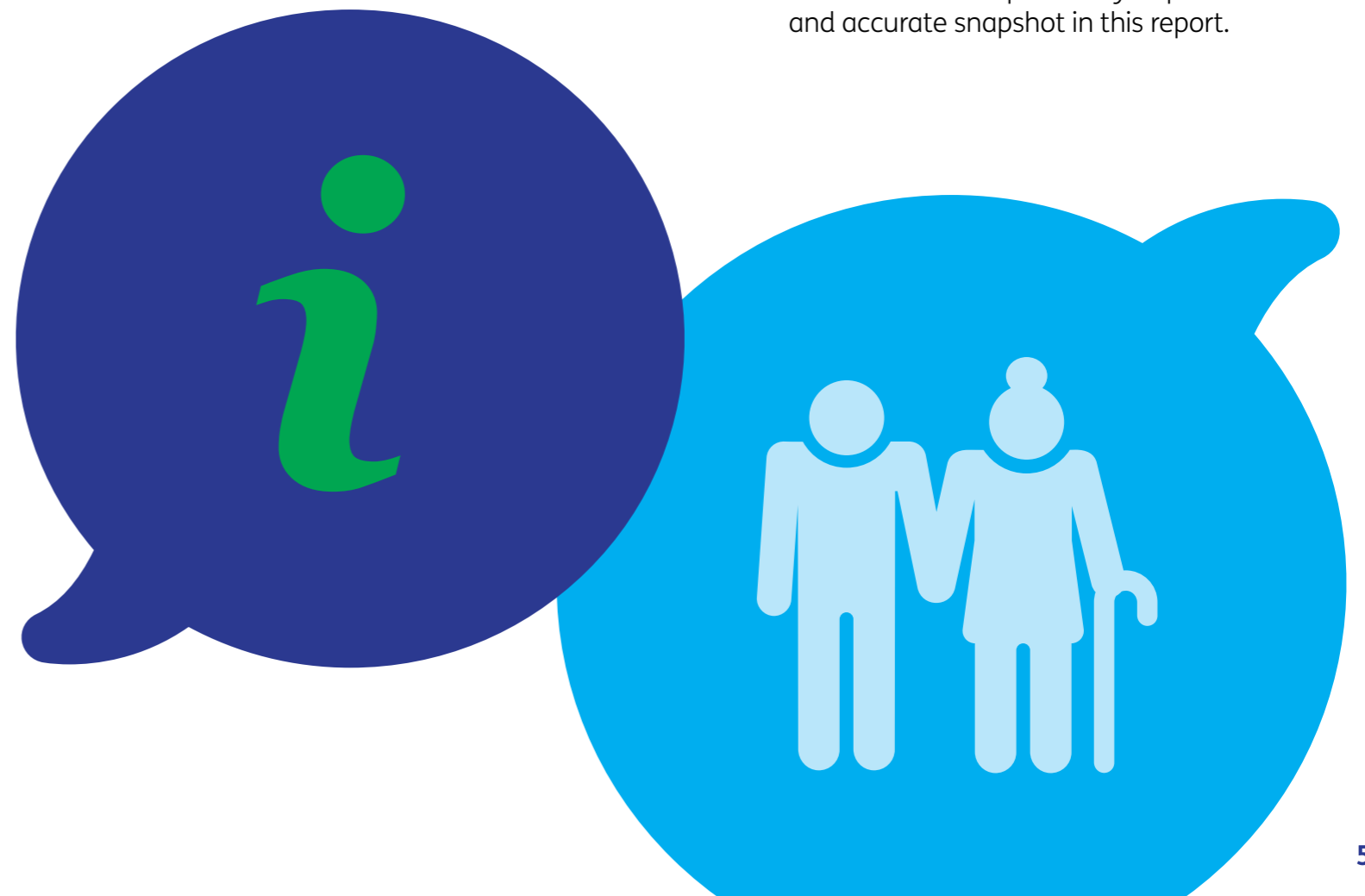
Methodology

An online survey was used to distribute our questions to providers. We have extensive knowledge of the advocacy sector in Wales but undertook a further desk top exercise to ensure we engaged with as many providers as possible.

The Advocacy Counts survey respondents are self-selecting. Responses are sought from organisations that are funded to deliver advocacy services for adults across Wales. Information is also gathered on the support that is given to older people either through dedicated services or as part of the wider client group. Despite all efforts we cannot guarantee we have data from 100% of providers.

The data which we collected was longitudinal, and therefore mirrored the other surveys in our series; we have extracted data to paint the fullest picture of advocacy services in Wales, making the data useful to commissioners, providers and citizens alike.

We originally sent the survey out in July 2019, making direct contact with as many providers as we could, including those we had already received responses from to previous surveys and those we had become aware of through the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP) during the intervening period. We were aware that a lot was changing in the advocacy sector and we have a responsibility to produce a clear and accurate snapshot in this report.



Key Findings since Advocacy Counts 6

- There has continued to be a decrease in the number of advocacy services (from 13 to 12) specifically for older people.
- There has been an 85% rise in services providing advocacy to a wider client group. The increase is from 41 to 76 services.
- There are fewer advocates delivering advocacy specifically to older people (from 37 to 31).
- There are 107 full time paid advocates working across Wales. This figure has doubled.
- There are 79 part-time paid advocates which is an increase of 25%.
- There are 140 volunteer advocates working in a variety of advocacy services across Wales. This is nearly treble the figure in Advocacy Counts 6.
- The total number of older people supported across all services over the last 12 months was 8,153, an increase of nearly 2,700 from Advocacy Counts 6.
- 523 fewer older people were supported by advocacy services funded specifically for older people than in 2016. This is a drop of 31%.
- The total number of people supported across all services in Wales over the last 12 months rose by 62% to 16,909.
- Services specifically funded for older people remain in only 15 of the 22 local authority areas in Wales. Services for a wider client group continue to cover all local authorities.
- At the time the survey was undertaken, two local authority areas in Wales had not commissioned their independent professional advocacy services as required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.



Number of services and people supported

	Advocacy Counts 5 2016	Advocacy Counts 6 2018	Advocacy Counts 7 2020
Total number of respondents	22	22	33
Number of services funded specifically for older people	19	13	12
Number of organisations providing these services	13	7	6
Number of other funded advocacy services where older people are part of the client group	44	41	76
Number of organisations providing these services	15	18	30
Total number of people supported	Unknown	10,402	16,909
Total number of older people supported	6,412	5,466	8,153
Number of local authority areas with services funded for a wider client group	22	22	22
Number of local authority areas with services specifically funded for older people	17	15	15

(Please note that one provider may have more than 1 advocacy service and some will have services specifically for older people as well as services for a wider client group).

Advocacy staff and volunteers

	Advocacy Counts 5 2016		Advocacy Counts 6 2018		Advocacy Counts 7 2020	
	Older people services	All service types	Older people services	All service types	Older people services	All service types
Full Time	20	87	10	44	8	99
Part Time	23	43	12	51	10	69
Volunteer	30	36	15	38	13	127

Advocacy services funded specifically for older people (50+) in Wales

Our survey suggests that there are 12 services funded specifically for older people compared to 13 in 2016. The number of organisations providing those services has gone down from seven to six. Three of the organisations provide two advocacy services each, with two providing one service each and remaining organisation providing four services.

Unsurprisingly, the number of older people supported by these services during the previous 12 months has also dropped, reducing from 1,709 in 2018 to 1,186 in 2020. The number of paid and volunteer advocates has also dropped from 37 in 2018 to 31 in 2020.

Respondents to our survey reported that they are funded to provide a broad spread of advocacy services across the categories listed in Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) that accompanies The Act. However, there is still inconsistency in the availability of these services across Wales, especially for older people.

Geographically, there was a reduction in the number of counties with advocacy services specifically for older people between 2016 and 2018 from 17 to 15. Despite the loss of one organisation specifically supporting older people, the number of counties has not reduced and remains at 15. The local authority areas with gaps in services are; Bridgend, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Flintshire, Merthyr, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea. However, older people may be able to access support from services with a wider client group as all local authority areas have at least seven advocacy services, as identified through the mapping of advocacy services undertaken with the support of services attending the advocacy network meetings across Wales.

Advocacy services for a wider client group but older people are supported as part of the service

The number of responses to the Advocacy Counts 7 survey has risen compared to all previous versions of the survey. 33 organisations completed this survey compared to a maximum of just over 20 for each of the previous surveys. As a result, the overall figures for all areas of service delivery, for services that support adults of all ages, have increased to the highest recorded levels when compared to previous reports.

Since 2018 the number of services providing advocacy to a wider client group where older people are also supported has risen by 85% to 76 in 2020. The number of people supported by these services has also risen to 16,909 from 10,402 in 2018.

The number of organisations providing these services has continued to rise, with the figure increasing from 18 to 30 in the last two years. Likewise, the number of full-time and part-time advocates have both risen to the highest levels reported in the Advocacy Counts series of reports. The number of volunteer advocates has seen the greatest increase of all, rising from 53 in 2018 to 140 in 2020.

In contrast to advocacy services funded specifically for older people, the number of older people supported within services catering for a wider age group has continued to see a significant rise with an increase from 3,757 in 2018 to 6,967 in 2020. It would appear, therefore, that an even greater percentage of older people (85%) are now receiving their advocacy support from services working with all ages of adults rather than from services dedicated to supporting only older people. Overall, the total number of older people receiving advocacy support has also risen since 2018 to the highest recorded level of 8,153.

An even broader range of advocacy services than reported previously are delivered across Wales, covering all the types of advocacy described in Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of The Act. Since Advocacy Counts 6, the number of local authority areas where independent professional advocacy commissioned under The Act is now being delivered has risen from four to 20.

There continued to be a complete geographical coverage of advocacy services for a wider client group across Wales. Building on the results of the survey, the GTAP team have mapped the range of advocacy services in each local authority area in Wales, undertaking follow-up interviews where necessary. The results show that at least seven different types of advocacy service are available to adults in each local authority area in Wales, depending on their eligibility.

Some additional comments made by services include:

“Increased demand for litigation friend work, but no funding available. Overall, demand is outstripping funding.”

“The issues referred to our one to one advocacy service are becoming more complicated and individual cases are taking up more advocacy hours.”

“Cases involving supporting people experiencing modern slavery.”

“More funding is need as the demand is going to grow with the current prediction of an aging population.”

“Greater work needs to be done with local authorities to raise awareness of their responsibilities under the Act and also with their staff. Local authorities need greater support to identify the resources they are required to make available for advocacy.”

Language

In providing advocacy services to ensure citizens' voices are heard and their wishes respected, it is necessary to offer support in the medium with which they are most comfortable whether that is English or Welsh.

There has been an increase in the number of organisations with Welsh speaking advocates from 10 in 2018 to 16 in 2020. This represents a small improvement with 55% of our respondents now having Welsh speaking advocates compared to 50% previously. The actual number of Welsh speaking paid advocates has also increased from 34 to 46.

The uptake of advocate support through the medium of Welsh continues to be very low, with nearly 90% of services reporting that 10% or less of their support is provided in Welsh, with many reporting no uptake at all.

Quality and standards

In 2020, 70% of respondents have the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) or are working towards it, which is a significant improvement on the situation reported in Advocacy Counts 6 where half the organisations didn't have the QPM and were not working towards it.

There continues to be an increase in the number of organisations whose staff now have the City and Guild's National Advocacy Qualification. It increased during the period 2013 to 2018 from 9 to 16 and has now increased again to 21. In addition to this, three organisations also have advocates that either have or are working towards the BA in Advocacy qualification.

Conclusions and recommendations

Advocacy Counts 7 provides an updated snapshot of advocacy provision in Wales for adults, with a particular emphasis on older people. It appears that the overall number of advocates, people supported, and the number of services funded to deliver advocacy across Wales have all increased since the last survey was reported in 2018.

Follow-up interviews with respondents and discussions at advocacy network meetings across Wales do not, however, support the view that there has been a large increase in the number of new organisations established or new services commissioned during the last two years. Discussions suggest that most of the increases can be attributed to a much greater awareness of the advocacy services that already exist and a corresponding increase in the level of engagement by advocacy providers in exercises such as the Advocacy Counts survey. Therefore, it may be concluded that the results in Advocacy Counts 7 provide a broader picture of advocacy services for adults in Wales. This greater awareness has also developed within the advocacy sector itself as organisations now report knowing more about each other and as a result, are able to explore opportunities to collaborate and support each other.

Local authorities now have a great understanding of the advocacy services operating in their area and also their responsibilities for commissioning advocacy services. This has meant that the main area of new growth since Advocacy Counts 6 has been with the number of independent professional advocacy services commissioned under The Act, which have now increased from four to 20 local authority areas at the time the survey was undertaken.



In some areas these are new services where nothing similar existed before, whilst in others, the existing advocacy services have become formalized and aligned to the requirements of The Act or a new service has been commissioned to replace existing provision. Concern has been raised during interviews that the fulfillment of statutory requirements for advocacy may have an impact on the availability of lower level, preventative, community based advocacy. Initial analysis suggests that these are gaps in provision, although further research and analysis will be required to accurately assess the availability of such forms of advocacy.

The increased awareness and understanding of the quantity, quality, range and variety of advocacy that exists is very encouraging. However, follow-up interviews and discussions with advocacy providers suggest that an important future step is to extend this greater understanding to potential service users.

Another area for future development remains to increase the awareness of advocacy, and people's entitlements, with social workers. Whilst managers and commissioners in local authorities may have an increased understanding, more training and information is required by social workers who work directly with potential beneficiaries of advocacy services.

Of particular concern for Age Cymru remains the continued fall in the number of specialist advocacy providers and advocates for older people. The loss of an additional specialist provider since 2018 means there's a further reduction in the specialist focus and expertise for supporting older people through advocacy services focusing on early intervention, prevention and community based advocacy. Older people are increasingly reliant upon accessing higher level statutory advocacy.

The loss of an additional specialist provider since 2018 is another indication of the changing focus of commissioning to providers who deliver to all ages across a larger geographical area, with 85% of older people now supported by advocacy services who support adults of all ages. Overall, Age Cymru are encouraged to note that the number of older people supported has risen by 50% since 2018 to the highest recorded level of 8,153.

In light of the new requirements placed upon local authorities it is anticipated that demand for advocacy services will continue to grow and therefore the availability and sustainability of services is a priority for all involved. Interviews with advocacy providers and comments made during the survey suggest that cases are becoming increasingly complex and time-consuming and that this too will have an impact on the sustainability of services in the future.

Age Cymru remains committed to supporting the development of the independent advocacy sector in Wales and views it as a vital tool to secure the well-being of all citizens, not just that of older people. Age Cymru's GTAP initiative has been funded by Welsh Government over the past four years to support the implementation of Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of The Act in a strategic and unified way, seeking to develop consistent, sustainable services across the whole of Wales. GTAP will end on 31st March 2020. Age Cymru will continue to promote improved access to advocacy for older people across Wales and the future development of advocacy in Wales through a new project funded by Welsh Government.

For further information, please contact Age Cymru by emailing goldenthreadadvocacy@agecymru.org.uk

Please note:

The Advocacy Counts survey respondents are self-selecting. Responses are based on whether they provide funded advocacy services that are specifically for or include older people as part of their client group. While we endeavour to collect data from all providers, completion of the survey is not mandatory.

The data which we collected was longitudinal, and therefore mirrored the other surveys in our series but we have extracted data to paint the fullest picture of advocacy services in Wales, making the data useful to commissioners, providers and citizens alike.

3. Developments in advocacy in Wales

Review of the Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy)

Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of The Act has been revised, is now available on the Welsh Government website, and took effect from 1 January 2020.

Change from Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards to Liberty Protection Safeguards

Legislation is going through the UK Parliament that will result in the transition from the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) arrangements to the revised Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) during 2020. During the progress of this legislation through Parliament, concern has been expressed that it may reduce the effectiveness of Safeguards that are put in place for vulnerable people. It is intended that the new regulations will come into force from the 1st October 2020 and further details on the effects that this new legislation may place on independent advocacy services will be released during the course of 2020.

Impending changes to the Community Health Councils and complaints advocacy

Legislation is currently going through Welsh Government that will result in changes to Community Health Councils (CHCs). One of the potential effects of this is that the remit of the CHC complaints advocacy services could extend to cover Social Services complaints. It may not be until 2021 that the full details emerge about the consequences may be of this new legislation on advocacy and also on work practices within.

Introduction of the new qualifications framework and new advocacy qualifications

Changes have been proposed to the advocacy qualification in Wales following a review of qualifications for health and social care and childcare by Qualifications Wales. The changes will come into effect from September 2020, although the existing qualification will be recognised as a predecessor qualification for those who have started or already attained it. According to a presentation given by Karen Wakelin and Sharon Cole at the Wales Advocacy Conference in November 2019, the changes will result in one level 4 qualification that reduces duplication and gives equal status to all forms of advocacy.

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

This Act is aimed at improving the wellbeing of people in Wales, by improving the quality of the social care and support that they receive from a wide range of providers. One of the principles of the Act is that any commissioned independent professional advocacy service, providing support under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, will be regulated and inspected by the Care Inspectorate Wales. This came into force for providers of children's advocacy in April 2019. It has yet to be applied to providers of adult advocacy and the potential for this wider policy impact upon future advocacy provision still remains.

Golden Thread Advocacy Programme

Age Cymru has shown a major commitment to the development and sustainability of independent advocacy services for older people and citizens in general over the last 14 years.

The Golden Thread Advocacy Programme (GTAP) was established by Age Cymru in partnership with Age Connects Wales and Diverse Cymru in 2016 and funded by Welsh Government to support the implementation of the advocacy element of the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act (2014).

To achieve this, three overarching objectives were established:

1. To develop a National Framework for Commissioning Independent Professional Advocacy for Adults in Wales

2. To support and build the capacity of the advocacy sector in Wales, and

3. To raise awareness of advocacy



The following is a summary of what has been achieved in the last two years of the programme:

1. To develop a Framework and Toolkit for Commissioning independent professional advocacy for Adults under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The GTAP team has produced a framework based on their experiences of working with local authorities and providers across Wales, guided and advised by a Strategic Reference Group made up of representatives from Welsh Government, Health, WLGA, All Wales Adult Services Heads, a member from the GTAP Board, National Commissioning Board and ADSS Cymru.

The framework is supported by a toolkit which is focussed around the commissioning cycle (Analyse, Plan, Deliver and Review). The primary audience for the framework are local authorities and other service commissioners.

The Framework and Toolkit were launched at an event for local authority staff on 14th October 2019 and at the Welsh Advocacy Conference on 7th November 2019. Both documents can be accessed from the GTAP webpages on Age Cymru's website. Workshops have taken place to introduce the Framework and Toolkit to local authority staff and to explore how they can use the Framework to commission independent professional advocacy for adults under The Act.

GTAP has facilitated numerous co-productive workshops to support the development of local and regional advocacy strategies as well as to inform the commissioning of advocacy services. So far, 20 local authorities have commissioned independent professional advocacy.

2. To support and build the capacity of the advocacy sector in Wales

The National Advocacy Network receives presentations from a range of expert speakers to support the skills and knowledge of advocates. GTAP has also supported the development of regional advocacy networks across Wales to provide stronger regional strategic voices. It is intended that the networks will become self-sustaining.

Advocacy services across Wales have been mapped and documents placed on the GTAP webpages to show which advocacy services are available in each local authority area across Wales.

Resources and guides have been produced to extend understanding of independent professional advocacy under The Act, the role of Appropriate Individuals and how advocacy can be most effectively included in Population Assessments.

GTAP organised a Welsh Advocacy Conference in November 2019, bringing together over 100 practicing advocates from across Wales to discuss a range of topical issue during presentations and workshops.

Advocacy Counts 7 report supports this objective by providing a picture of the adult advocacy sector in Wales.

3. Awareness raising

A range of bilingual awareness raising tools have been developed. These include booklets, leaflets, bookmarks, a visual representation of the range and types of advocacy services, a decision making process for independent professional advocacy referrals and a DVD.

The resources are being distributed as widely as possible with a focus on those who may need to understand the role of an advocate and how they can help.

Thirteen newsletters have been published and provide useful information, updates, and good practice in advocacy. They also provide links to useful documents, training, websites and news all about advocacy.

As mentioned earlier, GTAP will end on 31st March 2020. Age Cymru will continue to promote improved access to advocacy for older people across Wales and the future development of advocacy in Wales through a new project funded by Welsh Government.

All GTAP resources will continue to be available at www.agecymru.org.uk/advocacy



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