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Your Advocate is

Mental Health Advocacy Project (West Lothian) SCIO
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Mental Health Advocacy Project
(West Lothian) SCIO

ADVOCACY AGREEMENT



*...Services for you,
influenced by you...*

MHAP (West Lothian) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Charity no. SC011560

Mission Statement

We endeavour to provide service users with the opportunity to take control of their own lives, help them to exercise choice based on their needs and wishes, and to have their views heard.

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages.
Please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service on 0131 242 8181.

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.
الرجاء الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على الهاتف 0131 242 8181

এই তথ্য আপনি ব্রেইল, টেপ, বড় অক্ষরে এবং কমিউনিটির বিভিন্ন ভাষাগুলিতেও পাবেন। অনুগ্রহ করে ইন্টারপ্রেটেশন অ্যান্ড ট্রান্সলেশন সার্ভিসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। টেলিঃ 0131 242 8181

這份資料是可以凸字、錄音帶、大字印刷及社區語言的式本提供。請聯絡傳譯及翻譯服務部，電話：0131 242 8181

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ (ਬ੍ਰੇਲ) ਨੇੜਗੀਨ ਦੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਲਿਪੀ, ਟੇਪ, ਵੱਡੇ ਫਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇੰਟਰਪ੍ਰੈਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਤੇ ਟਰਾਂਸਲੇਸ਼ਨ ਸਰਵਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ : 0131 242 8181

یہ معلومات بریل (اندھوں کے رسم الخط)، ٹیپ، بڑے حروف کی طباعت اور کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبانوں میں دستیاب ہے۔
براہ مہربانی انٹرنیشنل اینڈ ٹرانسلیٹنگ سروس سے ٹیلیفون نمبر 0131 242 8181 پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Informacje te mogą być przekazane na język Braille'a, dostępne na taśmie magnetofonowej lub wydane dużym drukiem oraz przetłumaczone na języki mniejszości narodowych.
Prosimy o kontakt z Usługami Tłumaczeniowymi pod numerem 0131 242 8181.

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Mental Health Advocacy Project (West Lothian) SCIO

Service User Feedback

We are always looking for ways to improve the service that MHAP provides.

If you have worked with or are currently working with our project and wish to provide feedback, please feel free to complete the form that accompanies this booklet and return it to us (see address on back page).

Complaints

We aim to provide a high quality advocacy service, and as part of this we understand that there may be times when you may feel unhappy about the service you receive.

We take complaints about our service seriously and we aim to resolve any complaints in a sensitive and professional way.

If you wish to complain about any aspect of our advocacy service you can:

- ◇ Report your complaint to your advocate, or
- ◇ Report your complaint to an advocate of your choice (see back page), or
- ◇ Write to the Complaints Officer at MHAP (see address on back page)

You can also request a copy of our complaints procedure for further information.

The Mental Health Advocacy Project (MHAP) offers professional independent individual and collective advocacy services for anyone who has or has had mental health and/or addiction problems living in or receiving treatment in West Lothian.

The project also provides advocacy services to HMP Addiewell.

We aim to empower service users to become involved in decisions about their care and treatment and to help them protect their rights. We can help people with detention and care and treatment issues, housing, family, criminal and benefits and finance issues.

Our project is service user led and our volunteers help us to provide a wide range of individual and collective advocacy services.

Our service is confidential and free.

Referrals

We operate a flexible referral process, with people referring themselves or from other agencies/services.

We will give priority to people subject to the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000 and the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. We will endeavour to meet the request for these types of referrals within 3 working days.

We will endeavour to meet the request of Addictions, Welfare Reform, HMP Addiewell and hospital-based referrals within 10 working days.

For any referrals outwith the above, we will aim to respond as quickly as possible however, during busy periods we may operate a waiting list but this will be advised of at time of referral.

You will be assigned the appropriate worker based on the nature of your issue and experience. Your assigned advocate will remain working with you throughout the time it takes to deal with your issue. However in some circumstances the assigned advocate may need to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances. If this does need to happen you will always be consulted.

Requests for specific advocates cannot always be met.

Advocacy

Under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, everyone in Scotland who experiences mental health difficulties has a right to access independent advocacy services.

MHAP Advocacy Services

Individual Advocacy

Your advocate will work with you on a one to one basis to help and support you through what may be a difficult time. Your advocate can support you with:

- Speaking to professionals such as Doctors, Nurses, Lawyers, Social Workers etc
- Meetings and appointments
- Written communication
- Locating information or services.

Collective Advocacy

Collective advocacy allows groups of people with shared experiences to work together to discuss issues and take forward views that may influence change. The Mental Health Advocacy Project co-ordinates and supports:

- West Lothian Service Users' Forum
- West Lothian Reps' Group

Step Out Group

Based in West Lothian the "Step Out" Group is a self help group that promotes a natural healing for body and mind. Members support each other to express emotions and to help deal with conditions associated with anxiety, phobias and panic. Referral for this group is done through MHAP. There are currently two groups operating in West Lothian; Deans and Whitburn.

What we expect from you

We expect you to:

- Keep us up to date with any changes in your personal contact information.
- Keep us informed about developments concerning the issues we are working on with you.
- Do as much as you can to share with your advocate the actions necessary to resolve your issues.
- Treat all advocacy staff with respect.
- Understand and accept that if we believe you might hurt yourself or another person that we may be obliged to tell other people who need to know.
- Try to be on time for appointments and let us know as soon as you can if you are delayed or need to cancel.

If in the course of our work with you, you don't respond to our phone calls or letters etc. we will assume you no longer require our services and we will close your file. After this it would be regarded as a new referral if you then required further advocacy. You will therefore not be guaranteed the same advocate.

We reserve the right to end your advocacy agreement if we believe we are unable to develop a positive working relationship with you.

Service User Consent

In order for us to be able to help you with your issue we will require you to sign the enclosed authorisation which not only allows us to speak to third parties on your behalf but also means you agree to the terms of your advocacy agreement and understand that we require to retain and record personal information relating to the work we are doing with you.

What is Advocacy?

There may be times in our lives where we need some support to face difficult situations or make difficult decisions. At these times many of us would like to have someone at our side to help. Advocacy is about standing alongside people at these times.

Advocacy is about:

- Speaking up for people or helping them to speak up for themselves when they feel they are not being heard
- Listening to what people want and helping them to find the best way to achieve it
- Helping people to access the information they need to be able to make informed choices and decisions to remain in control of their own health and social care

Advocacy can help you become aware of your rights, explore your options and help you to influence decisions that are being made about your future.

Advocacy will not make judgements, advise you or tell you what to do and it will not make decisions on your behalf or talk to anyone without your permission.

Advocacy is not a befriending, mediation or counselling service.

Independent Advocacy

Being independent means your advocate is not tied to any other providers of health services or agencies which means they are free to act on someone's behalf completely free of conflict.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of fundamental importance to the advocacy process and is as highly valued by us as by you. Any information you give your advocate remains confidential within our service.

If you decide that you wish to have advocacy we will need to keep personal documentation about you along with case notes in order to carry out work on your behalf. This information will be kept to a minimum, in strict confidence and securely stored. We will not use the information for any other purpose than to support you with advocacy issues.

We will not disclose information on you to any other person unless we have your consent. Exceptions to this policy are allowed if we feel that you or any other person is at risk from serious harm.

We run in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 which means you have a legal right to see all information we hold about you. Once we have received a request to view your information we will supply you with a copy of the contents within 28 working days.

Once advocacy services are no longer required your file will be closed and held in a secure and confidential archive for 4 years. It will then be destroyed in line with the Data Protection Act or sooner if you request it.

You can request a copy of our Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy for further information.

Our Aims

We aim to:

- Empower you to become involved in decisions about your care and treatment
- Help you to protect your rights
- Offer a friendly and accessible service
- Value and respect service users

We will work with you to try and help resolve your issue and whilst we cannot always guarantee the outcome you may be hoping for, we will make sure that you are listened to.

What you can expect from us.

- A friendly and accessible service.
- Support to get the information that you need to help inform and support your decisions and choices.
- We will treat you with respect and not judge you.
- We will keep in touch with you when we say we will.
- If we have to cancel or change meetings we will let you know as soon as we can.
- We will not disclose any of your information with anyone else unless you give us your permission.
- We will listen to what you want and will not do anything that you do not want us to.
- We will keep you informed as to the work we are doing for you.

We do not offer befriending, mediation or counselling services and do not give advice.

We believe that in order for us to be able to do the best that we can for you, we need to be able to work with you in a productive and effective way.