**Course briefing: Advocacy modules**

**Introduction**

These learning materials will assist those who are not independent professional advocates, but who do *advocate* (e.g. non-advocacy professionals, friends, family, carers) to fully understand the role of an advocate and how this is reflected in their own actions, thus identifying themselves as advocates.

These materials will support the implementation of the principles and ethos of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act by supporting citizens to achieve the well-being outcomes that underpin it. The learning from the modules will contribute to giving people a stronger voice and greater control over their lives. In particular they will allow those who need care and support and their carers to make an active contribution to their own well-being by creating skilled and confident advocates to stand alongside them.

Those who identify themselves as advocates (or as having an advocacy function) will be supported to enhance their existing knowledge and skills to more effectively assist others to engage, understand and participate in decision-making processes including discussions around their needs in relation to care and support.

**Course aims**

Those providing information, advice or assistance to support an individual to be heard often do not recognise themselves as advocates or lack the confidence to advocate effectively and often therefore do not fulfil the potential of their role in supporting a person to achieve what matters to them.

By accessing these modules, individuals, whether they are formal or informal advocates, will be able to identify their own role as an advocate and enhance their skills in this area. As a result, they will be able to advocate more effectively for individuals they support, ensuring that Independent Professional Advocacy provision is only used in cases where it’s needed.

**Target audience**

The course is not suitable for Independent Professional Advocates. It is intended that learners accessing the modules will be:

* Family members/friends/carers who wish to informally support individuals in their lives to have a voice and express choices
* Professionals working in a non-advocacy setting who wish to formally support individuals within their client group to have a voice and express choices
* Individuals who wish to learn about advocacy to reach a decision as to whether they are acting or wish to act as an advocate on an informal or formal basis

**Course Structure**

The course comprises of the following modules:

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| **Introduction and Background**  This module is mandatory for all learners and should be delivered prior to embarking on any other modules. | Learning outcomes for this module are that by the end of the session learners will be able to:   * Understand the origins of the training modules and how they’ve been developed * Give an overview of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (‘the Act’) and its key principles * Understand the importance of advocacy to the implementation of the Act * Be aware of the advocacy training modules available and the learning that each has to offer |
| **Module 1 – What is Advocacy...?**  It is advisable that any learners embarking on module 2 or 3 should complete this module  first to ensure a sound knowledge base. | Learning outcomes for this module are that by the end of the session learners will be able to:   * Explain what is meant by the term ‘advocacy’ * Recognise what an effective advocate does/does not do * Describe the advocacy process and identify key considerations for the advocate at each stage |
| **Module 2 – Am I an Advocate…?**  It is advisable that any learners embarking on module 3 should complete this module first to ensure a sound knowledge base. | Learning outcomes for this module are that by the end of the session learners will be able to:   * Identify when and how they themselves may act as advocates * Understand why they may be unable to advocate effectively in some situations * Know what alternative options are available to ensure that the person receives ongoing support if they are unable to advocate effectively |
| **Module 3 – Enhancing Advocacy Skills**  This module is optional, and allows for the trainer to exercise a degree of flexibility in choosing which workshops best meet the needs of the learners. | Learning outcomes for this module are that by the end of the session learners will be able to:   * Identify the key skills required to be an effective advocate * Recognise their own advocacy skills and relate them to their own experiences * Demonstrate new and/or enhanced skills to complement their role as an advocate |

**The training pack**

The pack has been designed to provide a full set of delivery materials and resources for trainers to deliver each module in its entirety. It is designed to provide a degree of flexibility so that trainers   
can select and/or adapt resources to be appropriate to their specific audience. Each module is intended to be interactive and comprises a variety of learning styles to maintain learner interest and motivation throughout. Modules offer a testing/teaching approach whereby exercises test learners’ knowledge before offering consolidation through ‘teaching’ to address gaps.

The ‘Introduction and Background’ module briefly sets the scene for learners (this module comprises a PowerPoint presentation, including trainers notes, and a lesson plan), whereas modules 1-3 each include a broader range of materials comprised of the following:

* PowerPoint presentation (including comprehensive trainers notes)
* Lesson plan. This is intended as a template for trainers to refer to and adapt as necessary
* Learners’ workbook. This offers learners a structured approach to note-taking to serve as an aide memoir following completion of the module. Included is some key information from slides, spaces to note thoughts around exercises and additional opportunities to note incidental learning
* Resources linked to exercises. These comprise a variety of formats including case studies, statement cards, group work sheets, etc. They are cross-referenced to the trainer’s notes and lesson plans using the module number e.g. Module 1 includes resources 1a, 1b, 1c, etc; Module 2 includes resources 2a, 2b, 2c, etc
* Personal action plan. This offers an opportunity for learners to reflect on their learning and how they might translate this into action following the session. Trainers may wish to agree a follow-up discussion with learners to check progress with this and offer support for meeting further learning needs
* Evaluation form. This is a suggested format for gaining learner feedback immediately after the course. If a follow-up discussion is agreed in relation to the Personal Action Plan (above), this may be an opportunity to gain more reflective feedback from the learner

**Adapting content and resources**

The intended audience for the modules is broad and therefore learners’ experiences and areas of existing knowledge will vary. The pack offers resources relating to a variety of groups e.g. children and young people, older people, people with mental health needs, etc, however it may be necessary for the trainer to select and/or develop resources specific to the experiences of their audience.

The information presented in the pack is up-to-date at the time of writing, however trainers may need to update and adapt parts of the pack to ensure it relates to current practice at the time of delivery.

**Delivery methods**

The modules have been designed to offer flexibility in terms of delivery whereby they may be delivered separately in smaller sessions or together in one longer session.

The timings suggested in the lesson plans are based on the optimum group number of approximately 12 learners. As the sessions are designed to be interactive, anything substantially smaller or larger than 12 may require additional thought and planning.

It is suggested that to deliver the Introduction and Background module along with modules 1 and 2 would take approximately a day in all, with module 3 being variable depending on the number of workshops delivered and in what format. (N.B. a larger group of learners may be accommodated for module 3 by running workshops concurrently and facilitating the movement of learners around the room).

As with all training sessions, it is important that the room used has sufficient space for learners to be able to move around and hold discussions in smaller groups where the programme requires this.

In addition to the resources provided in this pack, the trainer will require:

* A projector and laptop to run the PowerPoint presentation
* A flipchart pad and pens
* Post-it notes or similar
* Paper and pens for learners (where workbooks are used paper may not be required)

**Trainer requirements**

The topic of advocacy is often misunderstood and can lead to confusion where a clear, confident approach to learning isn’t offered. While it’s acknowledged that no one person will have ‘all the answers’, it is strongly advised that trainers delivering these modules are:

* Experienced in the delivery of participative group training
* Is vocationally competent i.e. has sound knowledge and experience of advocacy