**Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Consultation Document.**

**Deadline 30 April 2021**

**Introduction**

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 strengthened the responsibilities for local authorities and health boards to provide an enhanced range of advocacy services and introduced a duty to provide independent professional advocacy. The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB) committed the two local authorities to co-produce an approach to advocacy that:

* Promotes a strong, positive image of independent professional advocacy throughout the Region to encourage people’s access.
* Provides easy access to independent professional advocacy and other forms of advocacy and support.
* Provides high quality advocacy and independent professional advocacy to anyone who need it without delay.

**What is Advocacy?**

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights,

represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.” (Action for Advocacy, 2002).

The Code of Practice for Advocacy says the following principles should be reflected in arrangements for planning, commissioning, monitoring or review of advocacy services in the area. The process must ensure that people are empowered to express their own views, wishes and feelings and are able to participate fully as equal partners.

Advocacy services should:

* be led by the views and wishes of the individual
* be champions of the individual’s rights and needs
* be well publicised and easy to use
* work exclusively for the individual
* be well managed, prompt, responsive and provide value for money
* respect confidentiality
* have effective, accessible Compliments and Complaints procedures
* promote and monitor equality

**Consultation**

A Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Steering Group has produced a draft Regional Strategy for future advocacy services for adults to meet the responsibilities and duties to provide advocacy in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the advocacy needs of local citizens through considering all types of advocacy from informal advocacy by family or friends, through other forms of non-statutory independent advocacy to independent professional advocacy as defined by the Act 2014.

Early engagement with Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Providers in response to the new requirements of the 21014 Act identified:

* Each advocacy provider maintained their own separate referral route for citizens and professionals.
* Current advocacy provision was highly regarded by citizens and commissioners
* A disparity of performance measures compromise quality comparisons between providers
* There was no clear regional profile of advocacy
* Limited evidence was available to identify gaps in provision
* No specific requirement on providers to deliver Independent Professional Advocacy.

**General comments on the early engagement with providers:**

1. Are the early findings still relevant?
   * If not, can you update your comments?

**General Comments on the Strategy**

1. Does the Strategy convey a strong coherent image of Advocacy in the region?
   * If not, how can this be improved?
2. Do you agree with the definitions of Advocacy in the strategy?
   1. If not, can you suggest another?
3. Do you think the strategy sets out a clear vision for advocacy in the region?
   1. If not, how can we improve this?
4. Do you agree with the main principles?
   1. If not, can you suggest another and explain why?
5. The Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Steering Group is keen to develop independent professional advocacy alongside a range of other forms of non-statutory advocacy. Is this the right approach? Or should the strategy focus only on independent professional advocacy?

**Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Strategic Priorities**

Welsh government commissioned Age Cymru to deliver the Golden Thread Advocacy Programme to support the implementation of Part 10 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Golden Thread have produced the Framework and Toolkit for the commissioning of Adult Advocacy and set four principles for the effective commissioning of Independent Professional Advocacy as set out below:

**Through the consultation process we are asking people who use advocacy services, advocacy providers and other stakeholders to comment on the Four Strategic Principles. Please refer to the relevant sections in the draft strategy when providing feedback.**

**Priority 1: Adopting a systemic co-productive approach with all stakeholders**

The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board is committed to working alongside citizens, services users and cares to inform the development and quality of social services across the region.

1. Does the strategy clearly describe a co-production approach to advocacy support in the region?
2. Does the strategy set out the benefits of co-production?
3. Should co-production demand a high priority in the strategy?
4. Does the strategy set out how Advocacy will work co-productively with citizens in the planning, delivery and monitoring of Advocacy in the region?
5. Does the strategy set out the right commitments?

**Priority 2 - Forming purposeful, collaborative relationships between local authorities, health boards and providers.**

The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board advocates for a collaborative approach to the development of this strategy and the future approach to advocacy across the region.

1. Is the Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Network sufficiently supported to take a leadership role in the development and monitoring of advocacy in the region?
2. Comment on the current purposefulness of the relationships between local authorities, health boards and providers.
3. Do you have ideas of how these relationships can be improved?
4. How can a common Advocacy Strategy aid relationship working?
5. Does the strategy set out the right commitments?

**Priority 3 - Sharing common understanding of what advocacy is and the specific role of independent professional advocacy.**

The Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board is keen to promote the benefits of all forms of advocacy, so that no one is left feeling they are not heard.

1. Is the draft strategy sufficiently clear about the difference between independent professional advocacy and other forms of advocacy including self-advocacy? What can we do to improve this?
2. Is the draft strategy sufficiently clear about when the different forms of advocacy should be used?
3. Is the strategy sufficiently clear about the benefits of each type of advocacy?
4. Does the strategy set out the right commitments?

**Priority 4: Sharing a common agreement about when independent professional advocacy is appropriate, and always considering its accessibility and application alongside other forms of advocacy**

The vital importance of raising awareness and improving understanding of advocacy has been a consistent message from the start of the commissioning process. Without this, take-up of the advocacy offer for adults in the social services system is likely to remain low, and individuals who could benefit from advocacy will continue to miss out on the specialised form of support that advocacy provides.

The take-up of independent advocacy and independent professional advocacy across the region remains lows. We are concerned that this means that individuals who could benefit from advocacy continue to miss out on the support that advocacy provides.

1. Does the strategy demonstrate a commitment to all forms of advocacy provision?
2. Does the strategy make it clear how people can access advocacy services? What can we do to improve this?
3. Does the draft strategy do enough to promote the engagement of people from a diverse range of backgrounds and circumstances? For example: people with mental health problems, people living in remote locations, people from BAME communities or people from the LGBTQ communities?
4. Does the strategy set out the right commitments?

**The Commissioning Process**

The Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Strategy 2020-2015 will set out the approach that the partnership will take to commissioning advocacy services for the next five years, so it is really important we get this right.

The process of Analyse, Plan, Deliver and Review will ensure that the principles and actions contained in the strategy continue to direct advocacy services throughout this time.

1. Is this the right approach?

**Final Comments**

Is there anything else you would like to say about the strategy? Please use the box below to include anything that is not covered in the questions above.

Thank you for your time.

Your feedback will be considered alongside the views of professionals, advocacy providers and those of people who use advocacy to inform the final version of the strategy and the approach that Cardiff and Vale Social Services to when commissioning new advocacy services over the next five years.

Closing date for submissions is 30 April 2021.