

For more information contact us at:

Main Office

Equal Say
11-13 Dowanhill Street
Glasgow G11 5QS
t: 0141 337 3133
e: info@equalsay.org

East Dunbartonshire Office

Enterprise House
South Bank Business Park
Kirkintilloch G66 1XQ
t: 0141 578 2335
e: andy.w@equalsay.org

East Renfrewshire Office

2 Burnfield Road
Giffnock
Glasgow G46 7QB
t: 0141 638 1846
e: yvonne@equalsay.org

**A guide to our
advocacy projects
in Greater Glasgow.**



www.equalsay.org



giving everyone a voice



Jean and Susheela kept in touch for many years



Jean & Susheela



Susheela was initially introduced to Jean as a crisis advocate to help her with a variety of demands from home visiting debt collectors. Jean also wanted to improve her reading skills so she could better attend to the many letters she received from them.

As Susheela was a student at that time and unsure of her future commitments, she helped Jean as a crisis advocate.

It took nine months to sort out some of the issues involved and Susheela subsequently moved away from Glasgow after graduating.

However, Jean and Susheela kept in touch for many years until a sudden illness took Jean from us. This joyful photograph is a reminder of happier times and a tribute to a great partnership.

What is advocacy

Advocacy is not something that is new or specific to people who have support needs.

It is an everyday activity that most people will experience regularly... but it's just that they don't call it advocacy.

For example:

A friend accompanies you when you return a faulty product to a supermarket.

A daughter attends a GP appointment with her elderly mother who is hard of hearing.

A work colleague helps you to write a letter appealing a parking ticket.



However, for some people (such as people who have a learning disability) there is no one around to offer that help and take on an advocacy role.

There can be many reasons for this such as people being socially isolated with no friends or family, or people who have experienced a lifetime of never being asked or consulted.

Advocates stand up for people, uphold rights, and challenge injustice.

Who needs an advocate

We have already mentioned that for most people informal advocacy happens everyday, but some people do not have their own natural networks to tap into.



This is especially true for some people, who perhaps have a disability and have not had many opportunities to make and sustain relationships.

People who were given no choice and forced to live in long stay institutions.

People who have no friends and relatives to look out for them.

Have not had many opportunities to make and sustain relationships.

People whose views are at odds with what other people want for them; support staff, social workers or families are often listened to before the views of the person themselves.

People who have never been asked for their point of view and who need help to explore their rights.

Who are equal say

Equal Say began life in 1995 and for the first two years provided advocacy for people who were residents of Lennox Castle Hospital.



Lennox Castle Hospital (LCH) was Glasgow's institution for people with learning disabilities. It occupied a site near Lennoxton, a village 10 miles to the North of Glasgow.

In 1997 Equal Say moved out of the Castle and into an office base in Partick. As the hospital closure programme accelerated, there were less people living in the hospital and more moving into ordinary homes in the Glasgow area.

We have now expanded to include a project in East Dunbartonshire for people with a learning disability or

mental ill-health; and a project in East Renfrewshire for anyone receiving a support service.

LCH closed in 2003 and other than a derelict listed building, the site has been cleared for future development.

Since 1995, nearly 400 people have volunteered to become an advocate for people who have been marginalised and have had no one to speak up for them.



Tell me more about how you advocate...



At Equal Say we have a fundamental belief that an ordinary unpaid volunteer can be a fantastic advocate.

At Equal Say we have a fundamental belief that an ordinary unpaid volunteer can be a fantastic advocate. This is underpinned by our policy of only ever asking one person to advocate for one other person. Whether the partnership is short term (Crisis Advocacy) or long term (Citizen Advocacy) the one to one nature of the relationship allows the advocate to be loyal only to their advocacy partner with minimal conflicts of interest.

We have seven Advocacy Co-ordinators covering projects in Glasgow City and East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire Councils. In certain circumstances our Co-ordinators can also act as advocates (Direct Advocacy) for instance, if someone was detained under the Mental Health Act or in urgent or crisis situations.

Sounds like a good thing... tell me more!

Could you be an advocate?

Do you or someone you know need an advocate?

All of our contact details are on the back of this leaflet. Anyone can make a referral by phoning, writing to us, sending an email or dropping into the office. This can be in confidence if you wish.

CITIZEN ADVOCACY
An ordinary citizen enters into a one to one long term advocacy partnership.

CRISIS ADVOCACY
An ordinary citizen enters into a one to one partnership to help resolve one or more issues.

DIRECT ADVOCACY
Time limited advocacy provided by a paid member of staff.

What help do volunteer advocates get



If you believe in a more fair and equal world and want to help people having a say by working towards more natural justice, we want to hear from you.

First of all we will always be honest with you and explain the nature of the role of an advocate and give you lots of support.

We will offer further specialised training or learning dependent on your needs and the nature of your advocacy partnership.

We will ask you to fill in an application form and give us the names of two referees and ask you to fill out an enhanced disclosure form.

You will be supported by a dedicated Advocacy Co-ordinator, who you can contact for advice, support or information.

We will offer you a comprehensive preparation course that covers everything you need to know.

If you want to help people have a say, to work towards more natural justice and believe in a more equal and fair world, we want to hear from you.