

Dates for your diary: Events to launch new advocacy consortium

LAUNCH: WED 18TH JUL / ADVOCACY EVENT: WED 19TH SEP



In the coming months, Advonet and its new advocacy consortium partners will be holding two events.

Launch event: Wednesday 18th July

The first will launch the consortium and introduce changes to advocacy service in Leeds. It will be held on **Wednesday 18th July**.

The launch event will help to set out the new consortium's vision. It will spell out what advocacy can do for the people of Leeds and celebrate the bringing together of Advonet, Touchstone, Age UK Leeds and SignHealth.

It will be held at the Ramgarhia Sikh Centre on Roundhay Road and will be open to the public and people who

work for third sector groups in Leeds. It is free to attend and opens at **10am**, finishing at **12:30pm**. A light lunch will be provided.

If you are interested in coming, you can register for a free ticket on our Eventbrite event page, which is at eventbrite.co.uk/e/advonet-advocacy-consortium-launch-event-tickets-44838844190. However, there are limited spaces available.

Strengthening the City: Wednesday 19th September

The second event, meanwhile, is on **Wednesday 19th September**. Its aim is to focus on engaging with concerned citizens, smaller groups and bigger organisations who want to work with us in boosting advocacy

provision across Leeds. It will build on the success of last year's "Strengthen the City Through Advocacy" event.

It is open to people from third sector organisations and smaller community groups, as well as other interested individuals who want to connect with the consortium and use advocacy to make a greater difference to more people's lives. We are looking for organisations and individuals to help co-organise and plan this event.

If you or your organisation would like to be involved, we would love to hear from you. If you are interested in coming to either or both events and would like to know more, please contact us. Email office@advonet.org.uk or call **0113 244 0606**.

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 providers work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice”

The Advocacy Charter, 2016

Big Lottery Fund gives long-term funding to Leeds Autism AIM

Leeds Autism AIM, our free advocacy, information and mentoring service for autistic adults in Leeds, has recently been awarded three years funding from the Big Lottery Fund. The new funds will enable us to maintain our existing services and, together with recent funding from the Leeds CCG, develop our support further.

The AIM service is increasingly in demand, having supported over 400 people over the last year, and would like to thank the Big Lottery and CCG

fundors in enabling us to develop and expand this much-needed service.

The AIM team will be introducing additional employment support at the Hub, with disability employment advisors visiting fortnightly from Tuesday 1st May. Aspiement will run fortnightly sessions starting in June. Please look at our website to check out our timetable of activities at our weekly drop-in autism hub, as well as all of the other support that we offer. Find it at leedsautismaim.org.uk.

Exciting changes at Advonet - see pages 2 & 3

What does the new contract mean for Leeds in the future?



Scenes from an advocacy meeting

After the new five-year contract to deliver statutory advocacy services was awarded to Advonet, Touchstone, Age UK Leeds and Sign Health, what will happen next?

Our ambition is to make advocacy more accessible to more people facing disadvantage through an ever-growing range of creative advocacy partnerships.

Advonet will be focusing on finding new ways to reach those that need advocacy the most, linking better to those communities where there has been an identified need for advocacy support.

To do this, we will work with the strengths and skills of individuals or services locally giving them additional tools and resources to better enable them to put forward their needs and

wishes.

We will be developing our advocacy outreach surgeries and pop-up advocacy clinics in communities across Leeds, starting this autumn. We will be offering free training in advocacy skills tailored to individual groups, as well as consultation and support.

We will also be developing our peer support and new resources such as self-advocacy toolkits. We will build on our long history of using people with knowledge of local communities to expand our volunteer support and client involvement groups further.

The involvement of people with lived experience has been important to us in the many years we have been delivering advocacy in Leeds and we want people that may benefit from our

services to guide how we develop.

We will be looking at new ways to involve people in the future. If you are interested in being part of this or have involvement ideas you want to share please contact us.

We are giving additional organisations an opportunity to be more involved in the new Leeds Advocacy Network, that began with our first *Strengthening the City through Advocacy* event last year.

If you are interested in finding out more about the benefits of joining this network, you can attend the upcoming information events or contact us for more information.

We are looking forward to working with you to help make advocacy in Leeds even stronger in the coming years!

Changes to our newsletter

Our monthly print newsletter will now become quarterly. From now on, we will produce one, new-look four-page leaflet every three months.

In addition to that, we will be producing a monthly email newsletter, which you can sign up to shortly. This will be launched in early May.

We will also be putting more of our

news on our website to keep you all in the loop about what we are up to and how advocacy can benefit the people of Leeds.

In the new-look newsletter, we will have more space for opinion pieces around advocacy and related topics. We will also have space for news from our consortium partners.

Communications plan online!

Advonet's new document that tells you about our future communications work is online! You can find it at advonet.org.uk/commsplan

Meet our new team members!



Lee-Simone
Greenfield



Clare de Arostegui



Mark Healy -
SignHealth



Debbie McVeigh -
Age UK Leeds

Lee-Simone Greenfield is our new **Advocacy Director**. She joins us in a brand new role from York Mind and will work alongside our Chief Executive to help shape how Advonet works in providing advocacy to people in Leeds.

We have a new **Finance Director** and Data Protection Lead! **Clare de Arostegui** will be starting in early June and will be supported by the existing members of our Finance

team.

Mark Healy is our new **Advocate**. He is on secondment from SignHealth and will be working with deaf people in Leeds who want someone to speak up for them if they are experiencing mental health issues.

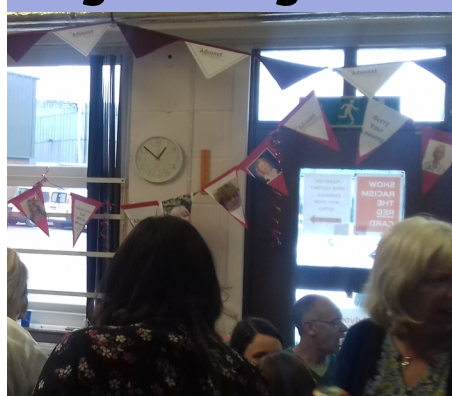
Debbie McVeigh and **Geraldine Scott** join us on secondment from Age UK Leeds as **Lead Advocates**. They will both be working with older people in Leeds to give them a voice,

as part of our Community/SPA team.

Kerry Shipley will be a **Lead Advocate** and is on secondment from Touchstone. She will work with our IMHA team.

Mark, Debbie, Geraldine and Kerry all join us from partners in the new advocacy consortium. They will each bring expertise from our partners, enabling us to give greater advocacy support to people from different communities.

Farewell to long-serving staff



Advonet saw a number of long-serving staff leave their posts for new roles elsewhere after many years of service. We said goodbye to Anne-Marie Ledson, Fiona Jenkins, Paul Wright, Emma Williams, Hilary Ashton, Lindsay Ambridge and Stella Chatterton this spring.

To give them a send-off, we held a leaving do in the Advonet office and gave them all leaving gifts. We wish this magnificent seven the best of luck in their new roles and thank them for all their hard work.

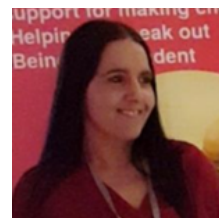
Old faces move into new roles



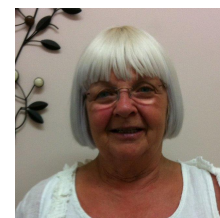
Wendy Cork



Bushra Javed



Rosie Whitmore



Irene Crawshaw

Wendy Cork is our new **Advocacy Development and Partnerships Director**. Her role involves building wider advocacy provision across Leeds and leading the consortium's communications strategy.

Bushra Javed has been appointed as **Volunteer and Peer Advocacy Manager**. Her role is to help build up our volunteer advocacy service and recruit volunteers who have lived experiences like those of our clients.

Rosie Whitmore is the **Advocacy Manager for Health Complaints Advocacy**. Irene Crawshaw is the **Advocacy Manager for IMCA**.

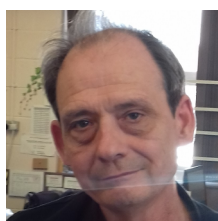
Paul Holland is the **Advocacy Manager for IMHA**, while Kevin Speakman is the **Advocacy Manager for Community Advocacy**.

We have also increased the number of advocate roles as part of our commitment to providing the best possible advocacy service.

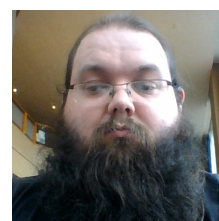
Our Admin team welcomes Luke Aylward as **Communications and Network Officer**. He's responsible for providing IT support and working on all of Advonet's communications such as this newsletter. Katie Whitham's new role is **Database & Advocacy Support Officer**.



Paul Holland



Kevin Speakman



Luke Aylward



Katie Whitham

Advocacy training

The dates for our next free Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills (EANS) training course have been set. The two-day training will be on **Thursday 21st June** and **Tuesday 26th June** and will be delivered by Advonet staff.

Both sessions are from 9am to 4pm. The venue will be confirmed soon, but if you want to come, you need to do both days in order to complete the training. Please visit advonet.org.uk/resources/training/ to book a place.

Trustees wanted

We are still looking for new members of our board of trustees. The board is responsible for making sure that we provide the best possible advocacy service to the people of Leeds. They meet once every three months, with occasional discussion outside of those meetings.

We are looking for people with lived experience, as well as professional experience to join the board. Email Philip at philip.bramson@advonet.org.uk for more info.

Citizen Advocates wanted to give people a voice



All smiles: Citizen Advocate Vicky with advocacy partner Andrew

Advonet are looking for volunteers to support adults with learning disabilities in Leeds as Citizen Advocates. Citizen Advocates are fully-trained volunteers who support adults with learning disabilities with a range of things including:

- Visiting a client, or clients, and coming to know their values, wishes and preferences
- Being independent of professionals who provide services such as housing, care and support
- Being independent of the client's family
- Building a one-to-one relationship and advocating for the client, or advocacy partner, when needed
- Identifying the client's choices and decisions, but not making or influencing them

Full training over four days is provided and includes learning disabilities awareness, safeguarding and our two-day Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills course in May.

If you are interested, please email Julia at julia.kinch@advonet.org.uk or go to advonet.org.uk/Join-Us/Volunteers if you would like more information.

WHAT'S ON IN SPRING?

**Thursday
24th May**

Leep The Bridge Club Night - run by Leep1
Tickets: £7 (carers/support workers go in for free)
Time: 7pm-10pm
Venue: Tiger Tiger, 117 Albion St, Leeds LS2 8DY

**Tuesday
22nd May**

Autism Reference Group - the reference group feeding into the Leeds Autism Strategy, hosted by Leeds Autism AIM - Time: 5pm-6:30pm
Venue: Lovell Park Hub, Wintoun St, Leeds LS7 1DA

People's Parliament choose reps for next Partnership Board meeting



At the People's Parliament meeting on **Tuesday 3rd April**, attendees voted on who would represent people with learning disabilities at the next Leeds Learning Disability Partnership Board meeting.

Three people were chosen: Susan Hanley came first with 22 votes. Bernie Spellman and Janet Simpson came joint second with 20 votes each. Susan, Bernie and Janet will be at the next Partnership Board meeting on **Tuesday 19th June**.

At the meeting, which is the reference group for adults in Leeds with learning disabilities, attendees were greeted by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Jane Dowson.

Contact us



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