

Sage Advocacy (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/92555>)

The right to have your voice heard and to participate in making decisions which affect you is a fundamental principle in a democratic society. It is a principle simply stated as "Nothing about you /without you".

Many people face challenges to their independence due to physical or mental illness, intellectual, physical or sensory disability, lack of family and community supports or an inability to access public services that meet their needs. Some people communicate differently and with difficulty and some people slowly lose their ability to make and communicate decisions as a condition, such as dementia, develops over time. Some are abused and exploited because of their vulnerability. Others feel disregarded or let down by healthcare services while some are harmed through adverse events or medical negligence.

In circumstances where people may be vulnerable, or have to depend on others, there is a need to ensure that their rights, freedoms and dignity are promoted and protected. Through support and advocacy the will and preference of a person can be heard and acted on; independently of family, service provider or systems interests.

The development of Sage Advocacy has been influenced by the scandals of Leas Cross in 2005, and Áras Attracta and Portlaoise Hospital in 2014. First established in June 2014 as a support and advocacy service for older people by the HSE, The Atlantic Philanthropies and Third Age, it was in 2016 asked to explore how it might address some of the more systemic issues relating to people with intellectual disabilities in the South-East. Sage Advocacy clg was established in September 2017 and on March 1st 2018 it assumed full responsibility for the governance and future development of the service. On July 1st 2018 the patient advocacy services, previously provided by Patient Focus, moved to Sage Advocacy which is now a support and advocacy service for vulnerable adults, older people and healthcare patients.

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