

## **Sage Advocacy extends its service to survivors of institutional abuse (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/108108>)**

### **People who spent time in a State-run institution invited to contact Sage for support and advocacy services**

Sage Advocacy has invited contact from survivors of institutional abuse – following the extension of its information, support and advocacy service.

Sage was approached by the Department of Education in late 2023 to extend its services to meet the needs of survivors of institutional abuse – ensuring that they benefit from all supports, whether public, private or voluntary, which relate to their welfare.

The service is open and survivors affected by institutional abuse can contact Sage Advocacy at [01 536 7330](tel:015367330) (tel:015367330), or email [info@sageadvocacy.ie](mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie) (mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie).

The service is free of charge and confidential, and Sage Advocacy will act on the person's behalf, independent of family members, service providers and systems interests; whether church, State or corporate.

For the last 10 years, Sage Advocacy has provided information, support, advocacy and safeguarding to people experiencing difficulties in their lives. It has worked to protect older survivors from risk of abuse and from being forced into care settings where they do not want to be.

Sage has also supported women whose cases were being reviewed through CervicalCheck and acted on behalf of younger people inappropriately placed in nursing homes; it established a Family Forum that responded to the risks faced by residents of nursing homes during Covid. This has all been performed in addition to Sage Advocacy's primary role as the National Advocacy service for older people, vulnerable adults and healthcare patients.

Incoming CEO Bibiana Savin said that Sage Advocacy was now pleased to be available to act as an independent advocate for survivors, resident within the State and in foreign jurisdictions, with no limits regarding age.

Ms Savin said: "The Department of Education, via its *Supports for Survivors of Institutional Abuse Bill* 2023 has identified Sage Advocacy as the most suitable agency to advocate on behalf of survivors. This empowers Sage Advocacy to extend its service in this area and to treat equally all survivors, regardless of the type of institution that they have experienced, ensuring that they benefit from all supports, whether public, private or voluntary, which relate to their welfare.

"Our approach is to collaborate where possible, to challenge where necessary and to 'go the extra mile' when it is required. We put the client and their wishes first and our national network of regional advocates are available to provide survivors with support and advocacy at local level."

"Our staff are trained to work to quality standards and to the code of practice for independent advocates. We also support our staff with mediation and conflict resolution skills as well as trauma awareness and safeguarding skills."

Project Manager of the service Michael Daly said: "Our focus is to ensure that survivors are supported to access all services that they are legally entitled to and to assist them in engaging with complex issues including, for example; housing issues, financial abuse, migrating or moving home, care, decision-making, health and social welfare issues.

"We can work with people across all settings; for example, private homes, hostels, prisons, residential services / housing with supports, nursing homes, hospitals and hospices. The more survivors we can engage with, the greater our understanding will be of the specific issues they need support with and advocacy for, and the greater our ability will be to make well informed efforts to address the systemic issues that are identified."

Sage Advocacy is fully funded from public sources, chiefly the HSE and the Department of Education, with additional funding from EU programmes and the Department of Justice. Institutional abuse survivors can now contact Sage Advocacy at [01 536 7330](tel:015367330) (tel:015367330), or email [info@sageadvocacy.ie](mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie) (mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie).

### **Further Information**

See [www.sageadvocacy.ie](http://www.sageadvocacy.ie) (<http://www.sageadvocacy.ie>)

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**Sage Advocacy** is the National Advocacy Service for Older People. It works to ensure that people have easy access to information, support, independent advocacy and safeguarding services in all settings: homes, day centres, respite facilities, congregated care settings / nursing homes, hospitals, hostels, hospices and in the process of transition between them. It also provides supports to vulnerable adults and healthcare patients in situations where no other service is available to them.

It is currently expanding its services with the support of the Dept of Education to meet the support and advocacy needs of survivors of institutional abuse. Since it was established in 2014, with the support of the HSE and The Atlantic Philanthropies, it has built a strong reputation for independence of thought and action and is a 'go to' service in relation to issues of capacity and decision making.

Sage provided information, support and advocacy services to almost 8,000 people in 2023 and demand for its services is growing. The work of Sage on behalf of clients is independent of family, service provider or systems interests. The service is free of charge and confidential. Sage Advocacy ensures that a person's voice is heard, that their wishes are taken into account and that they are assisted, in whatever ways necessary, to be involved in decisions that affect them. The motto of Sage Advocacy is 'Nothing about you / without you'.

*Responsibility for the overall development and governance of the service rests with the Board of Trustees of Sage Advocacy clg | CRO #610824 | RCN #20162221 | CHY #22308.*

**Region**

Nationwide

Further Information (<https://sageadvocacy.ie/>)

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