

Sage Advocacy: Uncomfortable truths of abuse must be recognised (<https://www.activelink.ie/node/109169>)

Awareness campaign aims to break taboos of adult abuse

Sage Advocacy marks 10 years of service to the public

An awareness campaign showing uncomfortable truths of abuse faced by vulnerable adults has been launched, to place a spotlight on taboos which must be broken.

Launching the campaign Sage Advocacy said: "Unsettling truths about what happens to thousands of people must be aired and responded to, even though some might prefer if they were not."

The drive was launched on the 10th anniversary of Sage Advocacy and comprises a series of 12 gritty images and messages cataloguing what Sage has witnessed during ten years of working with thousands of people, their families and services.

Chair of Sage Advocacy, Vice-Admiral Mark Mellett said: "These stories raise uncomfortable but very real issues:

- Few, if any, want to know about unnecessary and forced use of incontinence wear
- Few, if any want to discuss deprivation of liberty in places of care
- Few, if any, want to talk about adult children using the hospitalisation of a parent to take possession of the parent's home."

2023 was Sage Advocacy's busiest year to date during which it supported 7,903 people; taking on 1975 Individual Advocacy cases (an increase of 27% on 2022); and 5,928 Information & Support cases (up 39% on 2022 figures).

The campaign titled *Postcards with an Edge* will be widely promoted online and via an admobile on public streets. The materials are available to view at www.sageadvocacy.ie/supportus/postcards (<http://www.sageadvocacy.ie/supportus/postcards>).

They show and describe – the impact of financial abuse; deprivation of liberty in places of care; families seizing control of a relative's assets or decisions at a time of ill health, the impact when healthcare providers ignore the voice of the person being treated and the lifelong hardship that results from institutional abuse in early life.

Sage Advocacy recently announced the expansion of its service to provide advocacy supports to survivors of institutional abuse, many of whom experience difficulties in dealing with state institutions and officialdom.

Speaking on the 10th anniversary of Sage Advocacy, Mark Mellett said the initiative is designed not just to break down taboos, but also to promote a response from the public and professionals.

"If people suspect or know of abuses or vulnerabilities as described on any of the cards, we encourage them to contact Sage's Information & Support Service on 01 536 7330 or email info@sageadvocacy.ie (<mailto:info@sageadvocacy.ie>). Further information is available at www.sageadvocacy.ie (<http://www.sageadvocacy.ie>)."

Looking towards the future Mark Mellett said: "Since 2014 Sage Advocacy can look with pride at all that has been achieved including many thousands of people that we have supported on complex and challenging issues.

"However, fresh challenges await. The institutional and culture change required by the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) legislation, the progressing of the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission on Adult Safeguarding and deprivation of liberty in places of care are just some of these."

Mr Mellett also paid tribute to the late Philanthropist Chuck Feeney "whose enormous vision and funding made Sage and many other social, educational and democracy strengthening initiatives in Ireland and around the world possible."

The launch marks the stepping down of Mervyn Taylor as CEO of Sage Advocacy. Along with former Law Reform Commissioner, Patricia Rickard Clarke, he was a key figure in the development of Sage from November 2013 onwards.

The new CEO of Sage Advocacy is Bibiana Savin, a former volunteer and Regional Advocate with Sage. Most recently she was Assistant CEO responsible for Case Management and Support.

Postcards with an Edge can be viewed and are available for purchase at www.sageadvocacy.ie/supportus/postcards (<http://www.sageadvocacy.ie/supportus/postcards>)

Further information

Ronan Cavanagh, Cavanagh Communications: [086 317 9731](tel:0863179731) (tel:0863179731)
ronan@cavanaghcommunications.ie (mailto:ronan@cavanaghcommunications.ie)

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'

Sage Advocacy's approach is to collaborate where possible and to challenge where necessary and, when circumstances require, to go 'the extra mile' on behalf of clients. It has a strong focus on achieving social impact by identifying and addressing underlying systemic issues raised through individual case work. The motto of Sage 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

Date Entered/Updated

25th Jun, 2024

Expiry Date

23rd Jul, 2024

Source URL: <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/news/109169-sage-advocacy-uncomfortable-truths-of-abuse-must-be-recognised>