

## **East Ayrshire Advocacy Plan: Engagement Feedback**

The views and experiences of people using advocacy services and carers were essential to the development of this Plan.

### **1. Key Findings:**

- Local independent advocacy services are highly valued by the people who use them: 97% of people who responded rated the support and advice as good or very good.
- Independent Advocacy support is accessible: 95% of people who responded said they found it easy to access advocacy support services.
- People were supported to express their views and opinions: 89% of people who responded found it easy to express their views and opinions.
- There is a gap in advocacy support for children and young people going through the child protection process.

### **2. Methodology:**

- 2.1. Market-stall feedback at East Ayrshire Advocacy Service Annual Conference 2023
- 2.2. Online and Paper survey
- 2.3. Offer of one to one interviews and discussion group to be facilitated by Partnership Engagement Officer

#### **2.1. Market-stall Findings:**

To ensure representation from across the range of participants at the conference responses were split into 3 categories:

- Person who uses advocacy services
- Carer
- Staff member (third and public sector)

Questions asked of all where:

- What do you love about advocacy?
- What could be improved?

A tree motif and paper leaves and hearts were used for participants to complete their answers. Generating a visual which encouraged participation and to be reviewed through the day by participants.



*Figure 1 Market-stall Feedback Tree with paper leaves and hearts*

A lot of love was shared for advocacy services, recognising the value and appreciation that exists towards the supports provided. Key points were about people being truly listened too, their human rights being respected and feeling supported to live life as fully as possible.

People who use the services highlighted:

*"People's got your voice – helps us to speak out when not confident"*  
*"Advocacy is great – 'she's been there for me when I need her!'"*  
*"Advocacy makes sure I can do the things I love, like sports"*  
*"Have someone on my side. Help me with my challenges"*

From carers present they felt:

*"I think the staff are excellent. Very approachable, work hard"*  
*"Listen to peoples voices"*

With staff members sharing:

*"I love Advocacy because it speaks truth to power"*  
*"Ensures all our East Ayrshire people have a voice!"*  
*"I love that advocacy enables people, helps people with no judgement!"*  
*"I love the people – They really are wonderful, warm and welcoming"*  
*"Great relationships with our services & communities"*  
*"I love the work Advocacy do. The voices they give to people to help improve their lives and the quality of their journey"*

Points for improvement, for people who use the services:

*"More staff and more resources – high in demand"*  
*"Why is there not many male advocates?"*  
*"Could be promoted better"*  
*"Keep up the good work"*  
*"Child Advocacy needs funding"*

From carers:

*"More information would be good"*

From staff members:

*"I would love to see a further expansion of Advocacy; they should really be looked at as a bigger player!"*  
*"Increased advocacy for children out with hearings"*  
*"Making sure everyone knows about the help and support available!"*  
*"More contact with other services (i.e. visits)"*

## 2.2. Online and Paper survey

A short survey targeted at those using or had recently used advocacy services was developed. To ensure accessibility Likert scale with 'emojis' was used for the four key questions addressing access, expressing own views, the support given and communication. With the remaining questions on what works well and what could be better being open text.

The survey was shared digitally with East Ayrshire CVO, East Ayrshire Advocacy Services and Who Carers Scotland. Additionally a flyer was produced which was shared via social media channels.

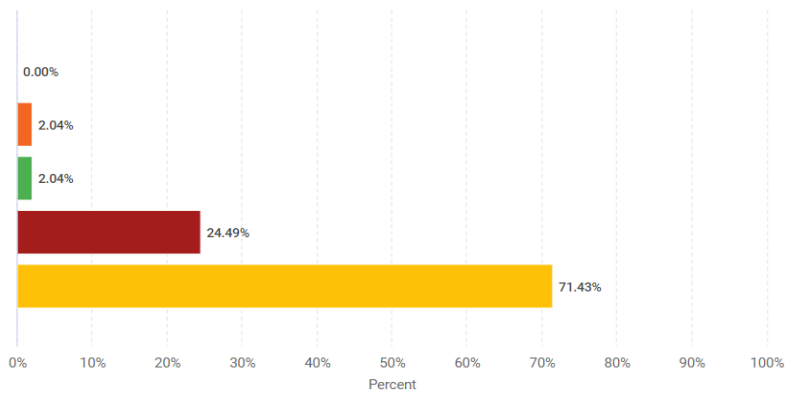


Figure 2 Online survey flyer

Paper copies of the survey were also distributed to East Ayrshire Advocacy Services and Who Cares? Scotland.

49 people in total responded to the survey. 46 people identified as having accessed East Ayrshire Advocacy Services, 1 person for Who Cares? Scotland and 2 people noted other and provided individual names.

How easy did you find it to access advocacy support services?

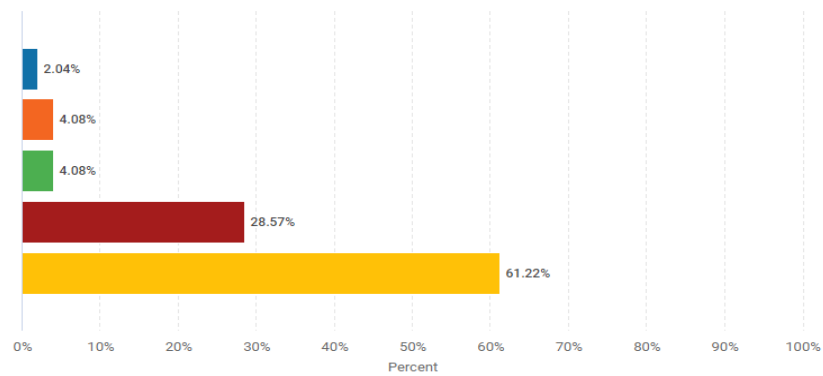


Answer Choices	Very hard	Hard	Neither easy or hard	Easy	Very easy	Response Total
	0.00% 0	2.04% 1	2.04% 1	24.49% 12	71.43% 35	49

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0

95% of people who responded said they found it easy or very easy to access advocacy support services.

How easy was it for you to express your views and opinions?

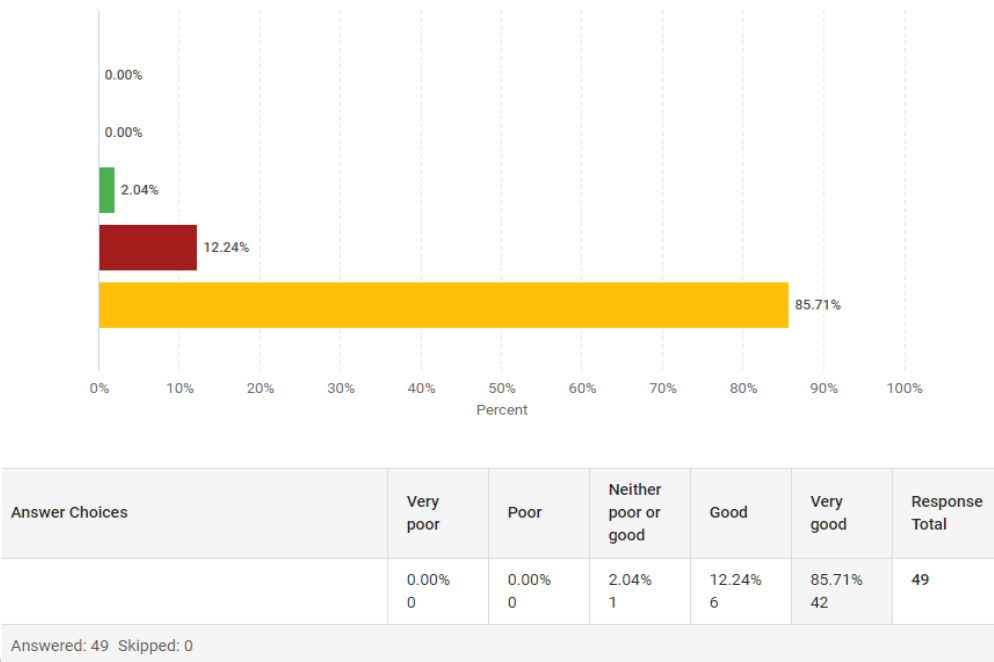


Answer Choices	Very hard	Hard	Neither easy or hard	Easy	Very easy	Response Total
	2.04% 1	4.08% 2	4.08% 2	28.57% 14	61.22% 30	49

Answered: 49 Skipped: 0

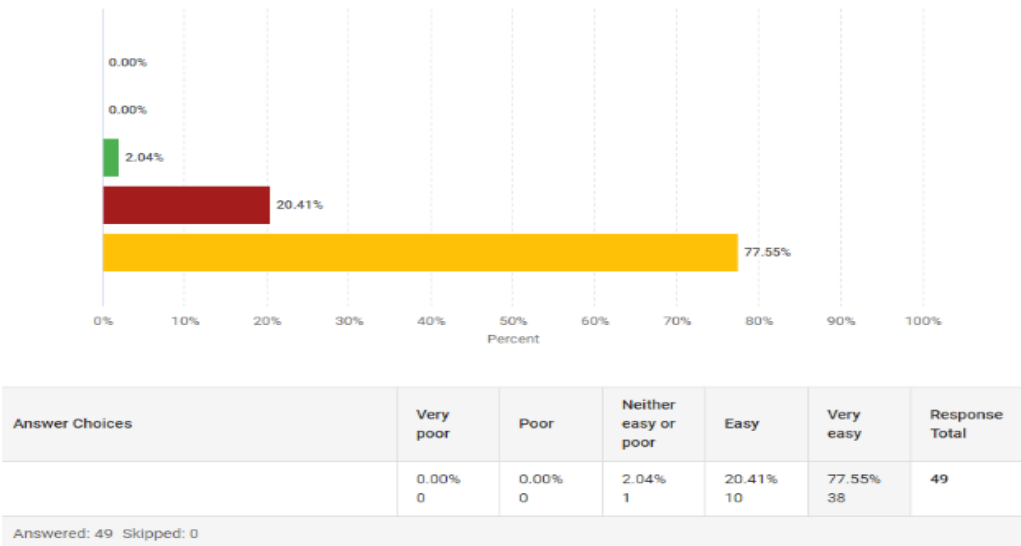
89% of people who responded found it easy to express their views and opinions, with 6% of people finding it hard or very hard.

How would you rate the support and advice you were given?



97% of people who responded rated the support and advice as good or very good.

How would you rate communication and information received?



97% of respondents felt the communication and information received was easy or very easy to understand.

Figure 3 Word-cloud of what works well themes



When asked what works well about advocacy the key themes were of the importance of an advocate taking the time to truly listen to the individual and supporting them to achieve what is important to them. Navigating systems, paperwork, appointments that can often be confusing, overwhelming and anxiety inducing.

When asked what could be better about the advocacy supports in East Ayrshire increased awareness of advocacy services and the supports they offer was a key theme. The demand for the service, the funding needed to be able to respond to people quickly and recompense those workers appropriately was also highlighted by a number of respondents. Overall however people commented on how good the service was and couldn't see anyway it could be better which was reiterated in the open text box with much thanks being given to the service and to individual Advocates.

### 2.3. Offer of one to one interviews and discussion group to be facilitated by Partnership Engagement Officer

The offer of one to one interviews and discussions groups was made to the advocacy organisations and on sharing the survey. However this offer was not taken up on which may have been reflective of the time of year this engagement was carried out.

Lorna McIlreavy, Partnership Engagement Officer

January 2024