

# *Mind Yourself!*

## *Peer Advocacy in Mental Health*

This is the Trustee's Annual Report for Mind Yourself! and Foyle Advocates as required by the Charity Commission NI.

This relates to the financial year 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

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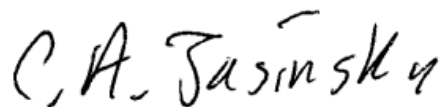
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Mind Yourself! is a unique organisation in Northern Ireland, set up by service users to provide support and advocacy with empathy and understanding to anyone experiencing mental health difficulties, regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious affiliation.

This document has been prepared by the Trustees based on the guidance provided by the Charity Commission and having regard for the Commission's Public Benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. A. Jasinska". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

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Claire Jasinska

Chairperson



### Some People We Have Helped

**John**  
 "When I first came to Mind Yourself! office, I didn't know what to expect. I met caring down - to - earth people who knew what it was like to go through what I went through. They helped me to regain my confidence after coming out of hospital."

**Louise**  
 "It's great to drop in and have a cup of tea with people who really know what it's like. I became a volunteer there. Working in such a supportive atmosphere helped me back on my feet again."

**Madge**  
 "They helped me to get my D. L. A."

**Tony**  
 "They were really helpful and easy to talk to."

### What's Special About Us?

**All of us, Volunteer Advocates and Employees have survived mental ill health.** We all know what it's like: "Been there, done that". We may have long term conditions but are in charge of our lives. We speak up for ourselves, support each other, and share positively coping strategies for living. We share this expertise with the public and mental health professionals through awareness-raising.

Mind Yourself! provides **accredited Peer Advocacy Training (First such course in Britain or Ireland), as well as consultancy and training to the statutory sector.** (For example, social workers and other health professionals.)

Mind Yourself! provides the WHSCT Peer Advocacy in Mental Health Service and is recognised as the mental health service users' forum for this area. We participate in Conferences, Trainings and Campaigns to end discrimination and stigma.

Mind Yourself! is a Registered Charity  
 No. NIC103800

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# Mind Yourself!

Peer Advocacy in Mental Health

26 - 28 Bishop Street,  
 Derry - Londonderry  
 BT48 6PP  
 Tel: 02871 263 461  
 Email: mindyourself@tiscali.co.uk

Open  
 Monday to Friday  
 12 - 4pm

# Mind Yourself!

Because we've been there and you needn't go through this alone

We are a unique, innovative **self-help** organisation for people experiencing mental ill-health. Our aim is recovery, through empowerment - enabling people to take control of their lives.

### What Does Mind Yourself! do

We represent people with mental health issues within the local mental health services. We provide a voice to air concerns and have a say in the planning and delivery of mental health services.

**Our special project, Foyle Advocates, provides a first class service** in hospital and in the community. Accredited Advocates help you to speak up for yourself and get the care you need. It's free, independent and completely confidential.

We **challenge the stigma** surrounding mental health issues, providing information and raising these issues by speaking out in the media etc.

We provide a **safe, confidential & supportive environment in which to share** our mental health experiences, through our Listening Ear Service, support groups, classes and informal chats in our office.

### Special Activities

#### Listening Ear

Often people just need to talk things over with someone outside the professional services, or their family or friends. Our Listening Ear Service is usually available without appointment, just call in or phone.

It's safe, confidential, non-judgmental.

#### Training for Advocacy

We offer an accredited 10 week course in Peer Advocacy and 10 weeks Development. All our Advocates work within a Code of Practice and Support and Guidance.

#### Recovery

Mind Yourself! has been a recovery oriented organization since it started in 1996. We seek person-centered services in which we have as much control of our condition as possible and an opportunity to have a meaningful life.

#### Volunteering Opportunities

Our Volunteers are central to provision of our range of services. Our training is in Advocacy. Our development includes opportunities in many skills and outreach work, as we take control of our lives.

### How can you contact us?

- Call in to our Office
- Telephone to arrange an appointment

Tel: 02871 263 461  
 Email: mindyourself@tiscali.co.uk

### If you are in hospital

Our members, Foyle Advocates, attend Grangewood (Previously Gransha) Mondays and Thursdays between 11am - 1pm.  
 Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital, Omagh, Mondays 2 - 4pm

See our posters and ask staff on your ward! let us know if you would like to meet us.

### Where Are We?



**LEGALITIES**

Mind Yourself! (also known as Mind Yourself! and Foyle Advocates) is registered with the Charity Commission NI under the number NIC103800 and is located at:

26-28 Bishop Street,  
Derry/Londonderry BT48 6PP

Mind Yourself! office is open from 12 noon to 4 pm, Monday to Friday.

No appointment necessary

**CONSTITUTION AND PURPOSE**

Article 4 of Mind Yourself! Constitution:

4.1.1 The organisation is established for the advancement and education and the relief of those suffering from the effects of mental illness in Northern Ireland (the area of benefit) by means of:

- a) acting as an organisation for users of mental health services to enable them to share their voice and their views, experiences and ideas, in relation to mental health issues;
- b) fostering mutual support among people suffering from the effects of mental illness;
- c) promoting understanding of mental illness and discouraging prejudice against those who experienced or are experiencing any form of mental illness;
- d) advancing education, for the benefit of the general public, about the needs, experiences, (and human rights entitlements) of people suffering the effects of mental illness.

**TRUSTEES**

Claire Jasinska.....Chairperson.

Barry McElhinney.....Treasurer.

Carmel McElhinney.....Secretary

Martha McClelland.....President and Committee Member

Daniel Farren.....Committee Member

**TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Trustees are appointed by ballot at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Those who are interested in the position of Trustee put their name forward to be considered. Every volunteer has a vote and those who have served with Mind Yourself! for six months or more have the opportunity to be voted in as a member of the Management Committee. Office bearers are selected by proposal and seconded by another member of the Management Committee.

## **ABOUT MIND YOURSELF! and FOYLE ADVOCATES**

Mind Yourself! and Foyle Advocates is a mental health charity, set up 25 years ago by a small group of people with mental health difficulties (service users). At the time, they felt their experiences of the mental health services was largely negative and this had a relatively negative impact on their mental health. Therefore, they decided to set up a support group for themselves to support each other. Later, funding from North Western Trust provided for a small premises which they were able to open to the general public to provide a listening ear, information and sign-posting service and any other help that could be given.

The following year a “Peer Advocacy in Mental Health” course was developed, which was assigned 12 credits by the Open College Network (OCN). From this “Foyle Advocates” was developed to provide a voice for those who find it difficult to speak up for themselves. This can be at Tribunals, the Psychiatrist, their G.P.s’, Social Security assessments or any other situation where a client would feel vulnerable.

The course is facilitated by two qualified peer advocate tutors. The maximum number of participants is six.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Potential volunteers are recruited through advertising our Peer Advocacy Course in the “Derry Journal” and “Londonderry Sentinel”. Applicants for the course submit an application form and are invited to a face-to-face interview. It is essential that all applicants have experienced or are currently experiencing mental health issues. Applicants are then notified of the decision of the interview panel. Applicants who complete the course successfully will be presented with a certificate of attendance from Mind Yourself! and will also gain a Level 2 in Peer Advocacy in Mental Health certificate from the Open College Network. Those who complete the course successfully may then put their name forward to become a volunteer. It is not a necessary requirement to become a volunteer (although it is a desirable outcome), as the main emphasis is on the individual’s own recovery.

Those who wish to become Volunteers are required to submit an Access (Northern Ireland) Check before commencing voluntary work in our organisation.

During the period 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023, Volunteer hours totalled 1,520.

Our organisation could not exist without our loyal Volunteers who give up their free time on a daily basis to help others and we thank them for their hard work and commitment to the organisation.

### **MAIN ACTIVITIES TO FURTHER PUBLIC BENEFIT**

Mind Yourself! provides a listening ear, information, signposting, help with form completion, advocacy and support services to anyone experiencing depression, anxiety or any other form of mental ill health, as well as any other help we can provide at our office in Bishop Street.

These services are also provided at Grangewood Hospital, Gransha Park, Derry/Londonderry from 11am until 1pm Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 2pm to 4pm every Tuesday at the Tyrone and Fermanagh (T&F) Hospital, Omagh, under contract with the Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT).

The following is a record of the number of clients that Mind Yourself! has provided assistance to during the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31 March 2023:

.

Telephone calls and visits to office.....	531 clients
Grangewood Hospital .....	245 clients.
Tyrone/Fermanagh (T&F).....	298 clients.

The Trustees of Mind Yourself! are committed to continue these services and are currently looking for funding to expand on them.

## **MIND YOURSELF! AND HYGIENE REQUIREMENTS**

Since the lifting of Covid requirements, Mind Yourself! has reverted back to its original method of operating. Instead of clients having to access our services by telephone only (as was the case during Covid), they are now able to avail of our walk - in service once again, usually without the need for a prior appointment.

Although Covid 19 restrictions have been lifted, Mind Yourself! continues to adhere to strict hygiene requirements.

Social distancing has been relaxed, but Mind Yourself! provides face masks available on request for our volunteers, staff and clients. Hand cleanser is provided for clients and our volunteers and staff are encouraged to use it on a regular basis throughout the day.

The office is thoroughly cleaned at the end of each working day.

Health and safety procedures are observed and monitored closely with daily records kept of general cleaning throughout the premises.

Should further restrictions occur, Mind Yourself! is fully equipped to deal with the issues which may present.

Contact  
 Foyle advocates  
 by calling at our office

*foyle advocates*

26-28 Bishop Street  
 Derry/Londonderry BT48 6PP  
 Telephone: (028) 7126 3461  
 Telephone: (028) 7126 3318

Open  
 12 Noon - 4.00pm  
 Monday - Friday  
 email:mindyourself@tiscali.co.uk




*foyle advocates*

Supported by The Western Health and Social Care Trust

*If you are in hospital:*  
 We hold regular sessions at:

Grangewood Hospital  
 (Previously Gransha Hospital)  
 Monday and Thursday 11am-1pm  
 (Next to Banagher Day Centre)  
 and  
 Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital  
 Omagh.  
 Monday 2pm - 4pm

You can also ring our office from hospital  
 and ask for an advocate to come  
 and see you.



*foyle advocates*

*“Helping you to get through”*

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*foyle advocates*



26-28 Bishop Street  
 Derry/Londonderry BT48 6PP  
 Telephone: (028) 7126 3461  
 Telephone: (028) 7126 3318

*“Helping You  
 To Get Through”*

A PROJECT OF mind yourself!  
 AN INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH GROUP  
 CHARITY REG. NO. NIC103800

*Who are Foyle Advocates?*

*foyle advocates*

is a unique project - the first of its kind  
 anywhere in this country. We are free,  
 confidential, trained and independent of  
 the mental health services.

Our aim is to promote empowerment - to  
 help people experiencing mental health  
 problems regain power over their own lives  
 and futures.

We seek to do this through:

- ◆ self help
- ◆ mutual support
- ◆ information
- ◆ advocacy

*What is advocacy?*

An Advocate is someone who speaks up for  
 you, if you need that on your road to recovery.  
 If you have mental health problems, it is  
 sometimes difficult to make your needs heard.  
 This can make it hard to get the right  
 treatment and care.

A Peer Advocate is a volunteer who has also  
 experienced mental health difficulties as  
 has everyone within the organisation.

Support from a Peer Advocate helps us  
 towards a good partnership for recovery.

*I keep feeling  
 people are  
 ignoring me!*

*Quite so!*



*When this happens,  
 you might want to  
 see an advocate*

*Your advocate can*

-  Provide a listening ear to  
 help identify your needs
-  Make your needs and  
 wishes clear to those  
 who care for you
-  Get you information  
 about what is available  
 and how to get it
-  Provide support and  
 encouragement as you  
 learn to become your  
 own advocate, if that is  
 what you wish

## **PEER ADVOCACY TRAINING**

Mind Yourself! was fortunate this year to secure funding for another year, supported by the Public Health Agency through the CLEAR Project. This enabled us to deliver our unique training programme, OCN Level 2 in Peer Advocacy in Mental Health.

Our model of Peer Advocacy Training has been successful for the past 24 years. The duration of the course was ten weeks, one day per week which covered many aspects of Mental Health including communication, stigma and empowerment, mental health law, housing and the social welfare system. We welcomed Guest speakers who gave talks on mental health, CBT and also mental health law. The course was followed by a further 6 support sessions of 4 hours per session where the candidates participated in activities to improve their mental well - being. These activities included Mindfulness, Meditation, Aromatherapy and Laughter Yoga and all proved to be a great success.

Four candidates successfully completed the Programme and all candidates agreed that the training and support sessions had a significant positive effect on their mental well-being, self-esteem and confidence and made them all more hopeful for the future.

***PEER ADVOCACY in MENTAL HEALTH*****October 2022 - January 2023****COURSE TIMETABLE**

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Introduction What is Advocacy and the Role of the Advocate?</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>2nd November</b>	<b>Communication.</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Mental Health Difficulties: Many Perspectives. Communication Problems. Evaluation Period.</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Mental Illness, Treatments and Therapies. Stigma and Empowerment.</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>23rd November</b>	<b>Mental Health: The Law and the Person. Treatment: Alternative Views.</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> November</b>	<b>Mental Health Resources Available Locally. Keeping Safe. Evaluation Period.</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Housing and Mental Health: Issues and Resources. Foyle Advocates, Code of Practice, Confidentiality.</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Welfare Rights and Benefits. Difficulties and Treatments: Alternative Views.</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Getting Started as an Advocate. Revision: Creating Questions for Quiz. Evaluation Period.</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> January</b>	<b>Quiz (in Teams); Full Course Evaluation. Presentation of Certificates; Celebration Lunch</b>

## **A TYPICAL DAY IN THE OFFICE**

1. Ensure that advocacy room is warm, neat and tidy and that there is a supply of pens and paper in each room
2. There must be two Advocates on duty at all times. The Advocates will decide among themselves before the first client enters the office, which one will deal with the client.
3. Check telephone and message book for appointments for the day.
4. If an Advocate has called in sick, the Advocate on duty informs the Volunteer Co-ordinator who will secure adequate cover for that day.
5. The Advocates prepare to meet their clients and will offer them tea or coffee on arrival.
6. As the day progresses, Advocates deal with telephone clients as well as those coming into the office. This typically involves listening ear, providing mental health support, form completion, housing and Social Security information.
7. On other occasions Advocates may be involved in networking, distributing posters and leaflets to other organisations, such as Doctors' surgeries, health centres, pharmacies etc to inform the public about our work.
8. At the end of the day, the Advocate in charge ensures that the heating, computers, lighting and all electric appliances are turned off and locks up.

## **EMPOWERMENT OF THE CLIENT**

Foyle Advocates promote empowerment and provide choices to our clients.

This is done in many aspects of our work:

We are a listening ear service, and we are non-judgemental. We ourselves have had similar experiences to our clients. This empowers the client to know that they can discuss their issues in a private and confidential place and to be listened to by someone who can and does empathise with them.

We also signpost to other organisations that can help with specific issues, if need be. Our role is not to give advice or counsel, but to use our experiences of depression, anxiety and other forms of mental health issues to provide a listening ear, support and advocacy service and to give information on other services.

## **REVIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT THE END OF YEAR**

Mind yourself! accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 were prepared in accordance with The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and were approved by the Treasurer and Trustees.

The accounts were consequently examined by an Independent Examiner under Section 65 of the Charities Act.

Financial performance has been consistent with projected budgets and forecasts for the year.

### **Income**

Income receipts for the year totalled £37,229, an increase of £4,428 from the previous year. We received our regular income from WHSCT and also CLEAR funding to conduct our Peer Advocacy Training Programme.

### **Expenditure**

Expenditure for the year totalled £39,506, an increase of £4,656 from the previous financial year.

Wages and salaries remained the same as the previous financial year at £9,934. However, £1260 of this amount was apportioned to the CLEAR project and no duplicate funding occurred.

There was an increase of £3941 in Volunteers Expenses from the previous year as more Volunteers claimed expenses

CLEAR expenses amounted to £3068, plus a contribution towards wages.

There was a slight increase in Telephone and Internet Costs of £160.

There was a significant increase in Heating and Lighting Costs of £891 as all energy suppliers increased their rates.

There was also an increase in Bank Fees and Sundries of £33 and £270 respectively. There was a very small increase in Insurance costs. There was a decrease in Postage, Repairs and Maintenance and Subscriptions

Rent, Accountancy Fees and Depreciation remained the same as 2021-2022 at £12,000, £1,128 and £350 respectively.

Apart from Heating and Lighting costs, all other expenditure remained as predicted by our annual budget.

### **Reserve Account**

Our reserve account stands at £26,574 as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 we had accumulated restricted and unrestricted funds of £58,610. However, this cash reserve has been assigned to our future needs in the event of a reduction in funding or any future gap in funding.