

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 2023 to 31st March 2024.

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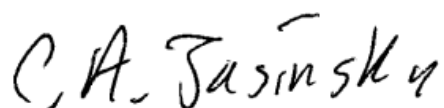
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INTRODUCTION

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



Claire Jasinska

Chairperson

What does Mind Yourself! do?

We represent people with mental health issues within the North West area. We provide a voice to explore concerns and have a say in the planning and delivery of mental health services.

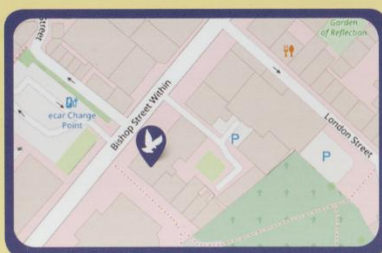
Our special project, Foyle Advocates provides a first class service in Mental Health Hospitals and in the community. Accredited Advocates help you speak up for yourself and get the care you need. It's free, independent and completely confidential.

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.



How can I get in touch?



Call into our office:

26-28 Bishop St
Derry / Londonderry
BT48 6PP (next to Bishop's Gate Hotel)

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday: 12:00 - 16:00
Saturday & Sunday: Closed

Call or email to speak to an advocate:

T: 028 7126 3461
E: mindyourself@tiscali.co.uk
www.mindyourself.net

If you are in hospital:

Our members, Foyle Advocates attend:

Grangewood (previously Gransha)
Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11am-1pm

Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital & Rathview House, Omagh
Tuesdays 2-4pm

We are an independent charity funded by Western Health & Social Care Trust



"Helping you to get through"
You are not alone

T: 028 7126 3461
mindyourself@tiscali.co.uk
www.mindyourself.net

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 positive 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, we train social workers and other professionals.)

The Western Health and Social Care Trust has selected Foyle Advocates as its Mental Health Advocacy service throughout the area.



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 very popular and 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 in Mental Health and further support sessions. All our Advocates work within our code of practice with regular support and guidance.



Recovery

Mind Yourself! is a recovery oriented organisation.



Volunteering Opportunities

Our Volunteers are central to the provision of our range of services. Our training is in Advocacy. Our development includes opportunities in many skills as well as outreach work.



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

We 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 you build a good partnership for your recovery.



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
John Breslin.....	Committee Member
Keith McElhinney.....	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 29 years ago by a small group of people with mental health difficulties (service users). At the time, they felt their experience 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 2023 until 31st March 2024, Volunteer hours totalled 2324 hours p.a.

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 1st April 2023 to 31 March 2024:

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Telephone calls and visits to office.....	472 clients
Grangewood Hospital	337 clients
Tyrone/Fermanagh (T&F).....	358 clients

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

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, Peer Advocacy in Mental Health.

Our model of Peer Advocacy Training has been successful for the past 28 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 and Mental Health Law. The course was followed by a further 4 support sessions of 4 hours per session where the candidates participated in activities to improve their mental well - being. These activities included Mindfulness, Getting a good night's sleep and Meditation and were successfully delivered by Cabhrach. Potala delivered a session on Meditation and we also included Music Therapy sessions. All activities 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.

OCN

We are currently updating our existing OCN Peer Advocacy in Mental Health Training to include modules such as Autism, ADHD and Dyslexia and their correlation to mental ill health. This will be sent to OCN for re-accreditation

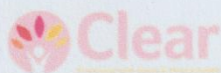


PEER ADVOCACY in MENTAL HEALTH

COURSE TIMETABLE

Wednesday 3rd January – Wednesday 28th February 2024

Day 1	3 rd January	Introduction What is Advocacy and the Role of the Advocate?
Day 2	10 th January	Communication.
Day 3	17 th January	Mental Health Difficulties: Many Perspectives. Communication Problems. Evaluation Period.
Day 4	24 th January	Mental Illness, Treatments and Therapies. Stigma and Empowerment.
Day 5	31 st January	Mental Health: The Law and the Person Treatment: Alternate Views
Day 6	7 th February	Mental Health Resources available locally. Keeping Safe. Evaluation Period
Day 7	14 th February	Housing and Mental Health: Issues and Resources Foyle Advocates, Code of Practice. Confidentiality.
Day 8	21 st February	Welfare Rights and Benefits. Difficulties and Treatments: Alternate Views.
Day 9	TBA	Mental health - Autism, Dyslexia and ADHD Getting Started as an Advocate. Revision: Questions for Quiz. Evaluation Period.
Day 10	28 th February	Quiz (in Teams): Full Course Evaluation. Presentation of Certificates. Celebration Lunch.



Charity Reg No NIC103800



Project supported by the PHA

Supported by the Public Health Agency through the CLEAR Project

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 prepares 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 31st March 2024 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 £38,520, an increase of £1,320 from the previous year. We received funding from WHSCT and also CLEAR funding to facilitate our Peer Advocacy Training Programme.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the year totalled £42,675, an increase of £3,175 from the previous financial year.

Wages and salaries increased to £11,300, an increase of £1,366. However, some of this amount was apportioned to the CLEAR project and no duplicate funding occurred.

There was an increase of £1,719 in Volunteers Expenses from the previous year.

Rent increased by £300 from the previous year as our landlord increased our rent by £100 from January 2024.

CLEAR expenses amounted to £4176, including a contribution towards travel costs for our Facilitators and Administration Costs. Other costs included Advertising, Stationery, lunches for the Facilitators and Participants, travel expenses for Participants and general sundries.

There was an increase in Telephone and Internet Costs of £336.

There was a decrease in Heating and Lighting Costs of £464.

There was also a decrease in Bank Fees and Postage and Stationery of £11 and £16 respectively. Sundries increased by £212. There was a reduction in Repairs and Maintenance and Depreciation. Subscriptions and Accountancy Fees remained the same as of 2022-2023.

Reserve Account

Our Reserve Account stands at £26,937 as of 31st March 2024.

At 31st March 2024 we had accumulated restricted and unrestricted funds of £54,455. 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.