**GATA - A new advocacy service helpline for Gwent**

ProMo-Cymru has developed a new advocacy service helpline to support citizens living in Gwent (Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire) to have a voice and a choice when it comes to social care support services, particularly as defined by the Social Services and Well-being(Wales) Act (2014). Newport citizens can continue to access Dewis Centre for Independent Living for advocacy and advice.

**Introducing Gwent Access to Advocacy (GATA)**

Intended to be the first port of call, this free telephone helpline can be contacted on 0808 8010566 for advocacy-related information, advice and assistance. GATA is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 3pm. It is staffed by a highly skilled professional team of Helpline Advisor Advocates.

The service is available to Gwent residents aged over 18 who may need help to have their views heard, understand their options in relation to social care and support services they are receiving, or think they may need, and / or exercise more control over decisions that are being made about their social care and support. Carers and practitioners can also contact the service.

Led by the Gwent Regional Partnership Board, with support from Age Cymru’s Golden Thread Advocacy Programme, there has been a fully co-productive approach to developing this helpline.

Other important partners in this development are Age Cymru Gwent, Dewis Cil, Training in Mind, NYAS Caerphilly and the People First organisations within each Local Authority area.

Phil Robson, Chair of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board said: “Making sure that all our citizens are able to make their voices heard is vitally important if we are to truly transform and improve our health and social care services to be fit for the twenty first century. We know that the care system can be overly complex and not always easy for citizens to find and access the information and support that can best help them. Advocacy has an important part to play in making sure that all voices are heard – and we recognize that this is an important service that needs to be available equitably, where and when needed.”

**How GATA helps**

The Helpline team can help:

* Establish what matters and is important to the caller. Make sense of their situation and their needs. Explore options regarding any identified social care/support needs.
* Access and understand information that is relevant to their situation. Understand how to navigate any planning, review and decision-making processes.
* Reach the most appropriate destination as quickly and efficiently as possible, whether through direct representation or referral/signposting to face to face independent professional advocacy, other advocacy, or other support services.

**The benefits**

The model and pathway are unique; in addition to helping the individual concerned, there are other benefits too:

* Promote a better and wider understanding of advocacy
* Engage with a wider audience resulting in a wider take up of advocacy where needed
* Facilitate collaborative working and networking among advocacy service providers

Stephanie Hoffman, Head of Social Action at ProMo-Cymru, said; “Our expertise in developing and delivering online and digital information, advice, assistance and advocacy services, along with our reputation in valuing people’s rights, made us the perfect choice to develop and deliver this new service to benefit the citizens of Gwent.”

**Further information and printed materials**

If you would like further information or would like to request printed materials on Gwent Access to Advocacy (GATA), please visit [www.gata.cymru](http://www.gata.cymru), e-mail socialaction@promo.cymru or call ProMo-Cymru on 02920 462 222.

The Gwent Advocacy for Adults Strategy can be downloaded [here](https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Health_and_Social_Care/Information_Leaflets/15415_Our_Vision_2019-24_.pdf).

#END#

(WELSH BELOW)