

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross



Your Rights Your Views



**Independent
Advocacy**

Perth & Kinross

**Annual
Report
2024**

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross



Your Rights Your Views

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"I just wanted to say a massive thank you for yesterday's peer learning session. I have received very positive feedback today from everyone that attended. They found you very engaging and passionate and now have a much better understanding of advocacy." – PKC Senior Learning and Development Officer

Welcome from our Chief Executive Officer

Completing the reporting of Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross's activities in 2024 gives me tremendous pride and satisfaction in recognition of the challenging work well done.

I am pleased to note the value for money IAPK delivers on and take the opportunity to reflect on events that were personally rewarding as a lead in the Third Sector but, more importantly, raised the profile, extent and impact of IAPK on a national footing.

As CEO of IAPK, I was invited to represent IAPK at 10 Downing Street at the request of Secretaries of State. This was an event raising awareness of the Dame Barbara Windsor Dementia Research Mission Launch. The event was intriguing and gave me opportunities to network with peers from the charity sector, representatives and change-makers from all over the UK and Europe in science and technology, industry and finance, universities, politicians and people with lived experience.



Remembering

As an organisation we wish to record respectfully the losses we experienced in 2024.

Sandy Watts – Chair of IAPK Board from 2020-2024. Sandy passed away in February, and we wish to reflect on her commitment to IAPK, the Third Sector more widely, and to the HSCP Integrated Joint Board (IJB) in Perth and Kinross over many years. Sandy supported our current directors as they joined IAPK, and we are grateful to Sandy for the time she gave so willingly.

Carolann Barnes – Independent Advocate from 2020-2024. Carolann worked with people affected by drugs and alcohol, with lots of her time spent advocating for parents working with First Steps in PKC. Carolann represented IAPK at the Recovery Cafes and was a fantastic colleague to us all. Carolann made a difference to the people around her.

As the Chief Executive I wish to reflect that these experiences impacted the staff team, the board and me personally. I am proud to have known both women who were stoic and true. They were serious about their work and brought fantastic experience and qualities to make sure people were heard. I wish to thank the staff and directors at IAPK, and to recognise and appreciate the kindness and thoughtfulness of external stakeholders at the time.

Introduction

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross (IAPK) continues to uphold the right for individuals to be heard, make informed decisions, and access support during challenging circumstances. As a free and independent service, IAPK has grown significantly since its establishment in 1995, now providing advocacy to the people across Perth & Kinross.

Our Independent Advocates support people to gain access to information and explore and understand their options. They speak on behalf of people who are unable to speak for themselves or choose not to do so. They safeguard people who are vulnerable or discriminated against, or whom services find difficult to support.

IAPK is committed to supporting advocacy partners in maintaining their independence, whether by attending meetings alone or with an advocate. Our approach is flexible, adapting to each individual's needs while fostering trust and self-advocacy.

"No one understands me, thank you for taking the time to listen and understand." – Advocacy Partner

Key Highlights From 2024

This year saw a notable rise in demand, with 2235 referrals, 300 more than in 2023, reflecting an increased awareness of advocacy and human rights. We had a 29% return rate of advocacy partners, up from 25% in 2023.

Challenges such as funding constraints, the cost-of-living crisis, and service reductions have placed additional pressure on the sector, yet IAPK remains committed to ensuring access to advocacy for those who need it most.

IAPK has continued to evolve in response to these demands by:

- Expanding its advocacy provision, particularly for children and young people, mental health support, and those in secure settings.
- Strengthening collaborations with national and local partners to shape policy and service delivery.
- Advocating at national conferences and strategic forums, ensuring that independent advocacy remains a key consideration in policy discussions.
- Implementing a hybrid working model, balancing staff wellbeing with service delivery efficiency, and skills sharing in the workplace - learning from each other's skills and experience.
- Collaborating with SIAA to develop professional development pathways for independent advocates, aiming for an accredited qualification.
- Attending key national conferences, we gained insights into legislative delays, social challenges, and advocacy developments. Our participation in Scottish Government networks and local initiatives ensures we continuously enhance our services to meet evolving needs.
- IAPK engaged in national discussions on human rights, highlighting the rising demand despite stagnant resources. Our management team attended Scotland's first-ever human rights conference in November 2024 to stay at the forefront of these conversations.

Looking Ahead

In 2025 IAPK will publish our own strategic aims for the next three year period focused on:

People; Communication and Finance .

"Wherever we are in Scotland, if it's about Independent Advocacy, we're told to talk to Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross." – Human Rights Consortium

About IAPK

Our Vision Statement

"Bringing about the day when everyone's voice is heard and respected"

Our Core Values



Human Rights

We recognise the essential dignity and inherent Human Rights of every person. We encourage those with power to respect rights and secure social justice.



Independence

We are free from outside control, autonomous in our actions and remain uninfluenced by anyone other than our Advocacy Partners in our work. We only provide Independent Advocacy.



Partner-Led

We put the people we work with at the heart of our work. We are patient and skillful listeners who enable people to get their voices heard.



Honesty

We act and communicate with openness, integrity and transparency at all times.



Courage

We are proud to be champions of our Advocacy Partners and organisation. We support the right to challenge and are willing to question decisions and attitudes



Empowerment

We work with our Advocacy Partners to enhance their capacity to have their voices heard, make choices, and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes

"Thank goodness, you have managed to seek this young person's views and that they have felt safe to express them to you."

History & Growth

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross (IAPK) has provided free, confidential advocacy since 1995, growing from a small project with one co-ordinator and sixteen volunteers into a well established service with up to 15 paid employees. It became fully independent in 2003 and gained charitable status in 2004. Legislative changes, such as the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011, along with recommendations made by the Scottish Government, have shaped IAPK's development, expanding the team to seventeen staff.

IAPK safeguards people's rights, helping them understand their choices and ensuring their voices are heard. Demand continues to rise due to the lasting impact of COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, which has led more individuals and families to seek support for the first time. However, funding challenges and rising operational costs, including increased National Insurance contributions from April 2025, present ongoing pressures in our sector.

Independent advocacy organisations nurture a culture of hope and as 'Holders of Hope,' we hope IAPK continues to grow, but sustainable expansion depends on national and local governmental approaches to fair and efficient funding towards the continued effectiveness of the third sector.

At IAPK, those we support are known as "Advocacy Partners," reflecting our commitment to working alongside them. Referrals can be made by professionals, friends, family, or the individual themselves, and advocacy partners can opt in or out as needed.

We provide three main types of independent advocacy:

One-on-One Advocacy (Professional Advocacy), offering personalised short-term or long-term support.

Non-Instructed Advocacy for those unable to express their views directly, using alternative communication methods, observation, and insights from trusted professionals or family.

Collective Advocacy, such as for New Scots in Perth & Kinross, where group support helps individuals share concerns, influence policy, and reduce isolation.

By ensuring participation, inclusion, dignity, and control over decisions, IAPK continues to empower people to advocate for themselves and shape services that impact their lives.

Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross



Your Rights.

Statistics

Month	Number of New Referrals
Jan	534*
Feb	139
Mar	71
Apr	128
May	106
Jun	83
Jul	82
Aug	87
Sept	98
Oct	116
Nov	100
Dec	63
Total	1607

Total of 2235 referrals responded to in 2024

*The new referrals for January are inflated due to changing software

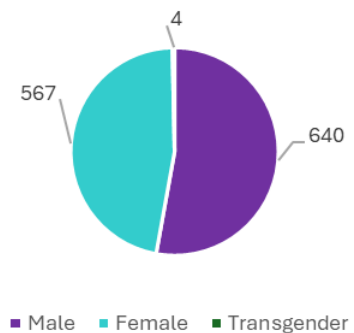
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Actions per referral (phone calls emails and face to face meetings)

Geographic Distribution of Referrals



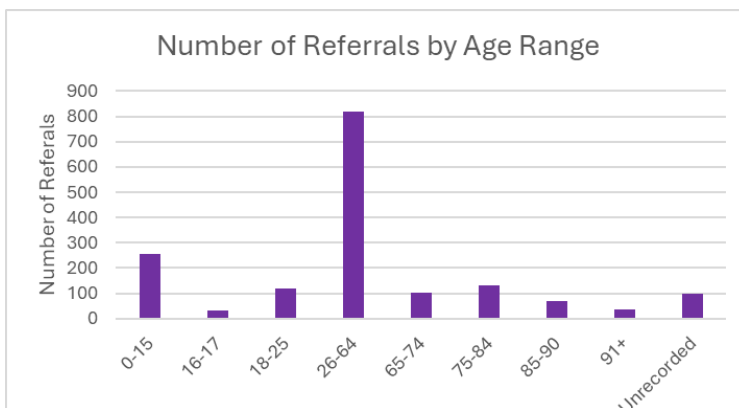
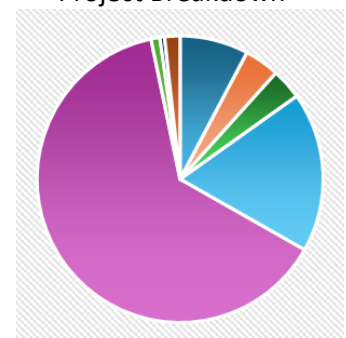
Number of Referrals by Gender



19,702 actions in total.

29% Return Rate

Project Breakdown



Project	Existing partners	New referrals	Total
Prison	30	86	116
Forensic	26	33	59
Drug and Alcohol	27	25	52
Children and Young People	105	165	270
Adult Mental Health	437	514	951
Unpaid Carers	3	12	15
Large Scale Inquiries	N/A	8	8
New Scots	N/A	26	26
Duty, triage and signposting	N/A	738	738
Total	628	1607	2235

Advocacy Services Overview

Procedural Justice & New Triage System At IAPK

In response to feedback from advocacy partners and professionals, IAPK redesigned its referral and allocations process in March 2024 to ensure a quicker response to referrals and to reflect the principles of procedural justice. Every referral is assessed by an advocate, who determines urgency and either allocates the case immediately or places it on a duty list for follow-up. Advocates on a rota conduct check-ins, discuss rights, and often resolve cases in a single call. This has improved response times, reduced the duration referrals remain open, and ensured procedural justice for those seeking support.

The introduction of a triage system has further streamlined referrals, reducing stress for both staff and advocacy partners. Individuals can now speak to an advocate on the day of referral, with 15% of cases being resolved at this stage. Many are signposted to relevant services, such as Shelter for housing or Citizens Advice or Welfare Rights for financial matters. In 2024, 297 partner meetings were held within triage, some leading to ongoing advocacy, while others provided one-off guidance.

IAPK's open-door policy, also introduced in 2024, has improved accessibility, allowing drop-in visitors to speak with an advocate or arrange an appointment without prior booking. This approach has empowered many advocacy partners to self-advocate, with some attending meetings independently after receiving rights-based guidance.

"No one else listens like this. You're the only one that helps dissect all of this. I can't speak to anyone else about this. You've been so helpful. You're so good at listening." – Advocacy Partner

Adult Mental Health

IAPK received at least six referrals weekly for people detained in hospital. Independent advocates visited wards across Perth & Kinross and Carseview, Dundee, supporting people with their rights, care, and treatment at their own pace. Recognising trauma, advocates worked with patients, families, and professionals to ensure clear communication.

We developed easy-read consent forms and increased font sizes for accessibility. Trauma-informed practice and active listening helped advocacy partners feel heard. Advocates often supported at meetings, ensuring discussions were more focused and accommodating.

In the community, we supported people with legal orders in raising concerns about hospital stays. Many were signposted to Care Opinion to express views.

"I don't think I would have had the same response if I had done this on my own." – Advocacy Partner

Prison

Prison referrals (10% of all referrals) came from HMP Perth & HMP Castle Huntly, with 70% of those from Castle Huntly from their substance misuse team. Despite a right to advocacy under MAT Standard 8, no extra funding was provided to IAPK to provide this advocacy.

In 2024, we received 116 referrals (39 from Castle Huntly, 77 from HMP Perth), with 86 being first-time advocacy partners. The remaining 13 had used the service before.

Advocates handled 201 meetings, 27 professional letters, 307 emails, one Children's Hearing, two health appointments, and 15 multi-agency meetings, including one Mental Health Tribunal from prison.

Key issues included overcrowding, long NHS waiting times, substance use treatment access, communication with social work and complaints about prison services. Some health concerns were near to fatal due to sepsis or severe health complications. IAPK advocated for access to health care.

"Thank you very much for helping him through this, he is much better."

Forensic

In 2024, we supported 59 advocacy partners at Rohallion, 33 of whom were new. Of these, 21 were in low-secure wards and 38 in medium secure wards.

We attended over 280 meetings, supported CPAs, sent 150+ emails, and provided live support at Mental Health Tribunals, CPAs, CTMs, and solicitor appointments.

Common concerns included communication with clinical teams and police liaison. We also facilitated the "SUG@R Group" (Service User Group @ Rohallion) for collective advocacy.



"Thank you so much for the support around this, it has been so helpful in moving things forward for him." – Clinical Psychologist

Unpaid Carers

In 2024, we supported 15 carers (12 new referrals), half in Perth City, half in rural areas. Home visits were often required, increasing costs and capacity challenges.

We carried out 266 actions, including care review meetings, emails, letters, and one-to-one sessions.

"Thanks for all your help over the past few months, both of us (advocacy partner and social worker) appreciated it." – PKC Social Worker

Large Scale Inquiries

IAPK supported eight large-scale inquiries (LSIs), gathering views from over 40 residents, plus staff and relatives, totalling 100+ people.

To strengthen professional networks, we engaged with social workers on presenting advocacy findings in case conferences.

With LSI funding now merged into core funding, our dedicated ASP/LSI role ended. However, student social workers helped gather views under an experienced advocate's guidance, with reports compiled by our Advocacy Manager.

"Your professionalism, passion, enthusiasm, and caring nature should be bottled and given to everyone."

Children & Young People (Under 26 Years Old)

Funded by Education & Children's Services (ECS), Perth & Kinross Council (PKC), and the Scottish Government, we supported 270 children, with 165 new referrals (24 had used advocacy before).

Advocates attended hearings, reviews, tribunals, and case conferences, holding 400+ meetings to gather children's views. Over 2,500 actions were taken, averaging 10 per child, including emails, letters, calls, and meeting attendance.

"I feel like being back with dad has been night and day, I feel I can now concentrate in school, thank you for being by my side." – Young Person

Drug & Alcohol

We supported 52 partners, with 25 new referrals and 14% returning users. These figures exclude substance misuse cases within Adult Mental Health and Prison Advocacy.

Child protection was the key theme for those seeking advocacy support who have drug and alcohol used. Others reasons for advocacy included health care and housing.

"You're the first person that's listened." -
Advocacy Partner

Photo from Recovery Walk Glasgow Green October 2024



New Scots

A collective advocacy group was launched in September 2024, providing a safe space for cultural exchange and mutual support. Over 30 people participated, with an average of nine attending each week. The group developed shared values, planned future activities, and supported each other to raise concerns with professionals. A focus on human rights led members to access legal aid, work permits, and healthcare.

"..if we continue doing things like we did, it would bring peace and attract many others to join."

Individual advocacy for New Scots

- A partner in the country for five months without legal support was helped to find a solicitor and prepare for his asylum interview.
- A minor wrongly classified as an adult had been emailing the wrong contact. Advocacy redirected him to the correct team, leading to a full age assessment.
- A partner wrongly penalised for fare evasion was supported in reporting identity fraud, resulting in the penalty being revoked and reducing his stress.

"No one understands me. Thank you for taking the time to listen and understand."

Collective Advocacy for New Scots

- The group shared concerns about hotel conditions, which advocacy compiled and passed to Mears' management. Their feedback was acknowledged and shared with staff.
- Members also took turns presenting their cultures, fostering discussion and connection. They valued the opportunity to share experiences, learn from each other, and strengthen community bonds.

"Enjoy talking to people and sharing cultures."

Photo from Recovery
Walk Glasgow Green
October 2024 IAPK
Attended



Strategic Meetings

In 2024, our senior leadership team participated in over 20 local and national strategic meetings. In 2025, we will remain active in 16 strategic groups, ensuring independent advocacy and human rights are embedded in wider strategic planning—not just at an individual level but across policy and decision-making.

Health & Social Care Partnersip (HSCP) Meetings	Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP) & Medication Assisted Treatment Standards (MATS) Meetings
Adult Protection Committee	Community Justice Partnership
ASP Sub-group	Strategy Group (starts in 2025)
Strategic Planning Group	Finance Sub-group (starts in 2025)
Keys to Life	MATS Implementation Group – community
People Seeking Asylum Steering Group	MATS Justice Forum – Prison
NHST – Model of Care Steering Group	Alcohol & Drug Partnership
NHST – Independent Oversight and Assurance Group	
Workforce Planning – Learning	
The Collab – Autism and Mental Health	
Autism Strategy Group	

Children & Young People Meetings	Other Meetings
Child Protection Committee	Community Justice & Safety Partnership
CPC Quality Assurance Working Group	Community Justice & Safety Forum
CPC Practice Improvement Working Group	Community Integration Network (new scots)
Promise Delivery Group	Tayside Integration Network (new scots)
Children's Hearing Improvement Partnership	Mental Health Strategy
Fathers Inclusion and Participation Sub Group	Third Sector H&SC Strategic Forum
Language Leaders – National Group	Tayside Advocacy Forum – Tayside wide group
Expert Reference Group & National Providers – Children's Hearing Advocacy	Care by Design: Shaping Impact Together – PKC HSC
Children, Young People & Families Community Partnership Planning	CEAG
Trauma Working Group	Advocacy Consortium – national group
Child Poverty Action Group	

"I just wanted to say thank you for your contribution at the end of the session. It was really well timed and summed up how we are feeling about this exciting piece of work. We see huge potential in bringing the system together for the benefit of all children and young people in Scotland." – Scottish Government, Children's Rights

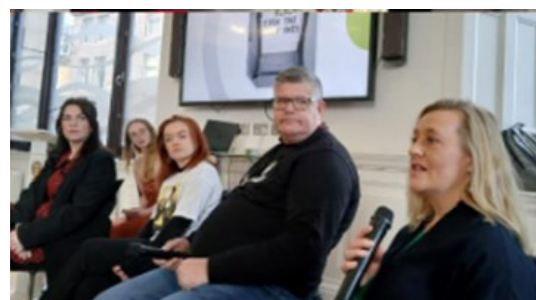
Conferences, Visited Organisations & Events Attended in 2024



Invitation to the Dame Barbara Windsor Dementia Mission Reception at 10 Downing Street, Our CEO Julie Hutton was invited and attended.

National Meetings and Conferences
Human Rights Consortium Scotland
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA) Conference
National Collaborative
National Providers Network CHA
Dame Barbara Windsor Dementia Mission
Helping Hands
Mapstone Lecture – Giving Voice to the Vulnerable; achieving fairness in the justice system
Generations Working Together
Child Impact Assessment Launch

Photos from, Community of Practice Presentation, by IAPK December 2024



Organisations that visited IAPK	Organisations we presented to
Children's Rights Officer	Community of Practice
Deaf Links – Deaf& blind awareness	REACH
See, Think, Act Training	School Nursing Team
Tayside's Clinical Lead for Personality Disorders	Direct Work Practitioner Forum with Rebecca Oosterhoorn, PKC
TCA & Women's Aid	Peer Learning with Social Work Stu-
Aberlour – antipoverty presentation	NHS Tayside E-Module on Inde-
CELSIS – Section 25 – child protection	Children's Panel Member Training -
What Matters To You – Tommy Whitlaw	Events Attended
PKC Promise Lead – Elaine Watson	Recovery Walk
Move Ahead	The Collab – Autism & MH
Family Group Decision Making	Community of Practice
Mental Health Officer Bella Fairman	

Operational Developments

Staffing & Recruitment

Organisational Development and Team Growth at IAPK

In 2024, IAPK prioritised recruitment, training, and team development, ensuring a strong induction process where experienced staff actively support new colleagues. Senior and administrative roles were reviewed, leading to clearer responsibilities, improved supervision, and a structured CPD planning matrix. These changes, led by the Operations Manager and CEO, involved months of planning, budget revisions, and outsourcing HR and values work. The Advocacy Manager contributed insights from the independent advocacy team.

Recognising the need for cultural reflection post-pandemic, IAPK engaged in facilitated workshops in June and October 2024 to refine organisational values.

These sessions encouraged open discussions on what fosters a positive work environment and what hinders it, enhancing our workplace culture.

This process established a lasting partnership with an external agency, now an *'Ally of Advocacy'*, who will continue supporting IAPK in 2025. Feedback from the facilitator in October was, *"It's normal to see team improvement, but not usually this quickly,"* highlighting the team's commitment to positive change.

Following a period of internal staffing challenges, recruitment and retention were key priorities. In 2024, eight employees left, however the positions were all filled with recruitment rounds in June and October.

Key Staffing Developments

- **Advocacy Manager** – Sarah Fogg was promoted internally, having joined IAPK as a student in 2018 and progressed through various roles.
- **Communications Officer** – Sam Hirscht transitioned from Systems Administrator as IT developments necessitated dedicated communication management.
- **Drug & Alcohol Advocacy** – Following the loss of independent advocate Carolann in October 2024, the team have maintained support for advocacy partners while the recruitment process took place. The position has now been filled, and the new staff member is set to start in January.
- **New Team Members (2024):**
 - **Adult Independent Advocate** – Noelia Torralba Blanch (Spanish speaker, early years practitioner).
 - **Receptionist & Facilities Administrator** – Julia Sus (Polish speaker, enhancing first-contact accessibility).
 - **Forensic Independent Advocate** – Bruce White (25+ years in the charity sector).
 - **New Scots Advocacy Project – Collective Advocacy Coordinator** – Becky Mack (experience in refugee support, focusing on collective advocacy for asylum seekers).

Service Adaptation & Expansion

The Large-Scale Inquiries (LSI) advocacy role was integrated into the adult advocacy team following funding changes. Additionally, IAPK advertised for three new positions, with successful candidates starting in January 2025.

With these additions, IAPK now has 18 paid roles, with one remaining vacancy in the children's team. These developments have strengthened internal communication, enhanced workplace wellbeing, and improved staff collaboration, benefiting advocacy partners, staff, and professional partners. As Perth & Kinross's leading human rights organisation, IAPK remains committed to shared HSCP goals.

"Thank you so much for coming along and supporting me."

Student Placements

We offer mutually beneficial placement positions for Social Work students at Dundee University, Robert Gordon's University and Perth UHI.

Over the last 12 months we have had, eight student placements from across the different universities, this amounted to 429 working days with IAPK, adding to support to partners and the organisation. Wider implications of learning and practice have been enhanced through developing robust collaboration with PKC Learning & Development Team and IAPK welcome this way of working.

Wellbeing—Hybrid Working & Employee Assistance Programme

Following the introduction of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023, IAPK took steps to enhance employment terms and introduced a hybrid working model in October 2024. This test for change allowed staff to work office-based on Mondays and Fridays, with optional home-based working from Tuesday to Thursday.

The shift to flexible working had no significant impact on staff working patterns, as most continued to use the office as their primary base. With the majority of the team present three to four days per week, IAPK has chosen to extend this model, with ongoing monitoring through support and supervision to ensure balance and maintain high staff morale.

The importance of in-person connection became evident during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when advocacy partners expressed a strong preference for face-to-face support. Recognising this, IAPK promoted office-based working as soon as possible post-pandemic. While it took time to establish, this approach strengthened the organisation, allowing for the successful implementation of the hybrid model, which will continue to be reviewed to ensure it meets both staff and service needs.

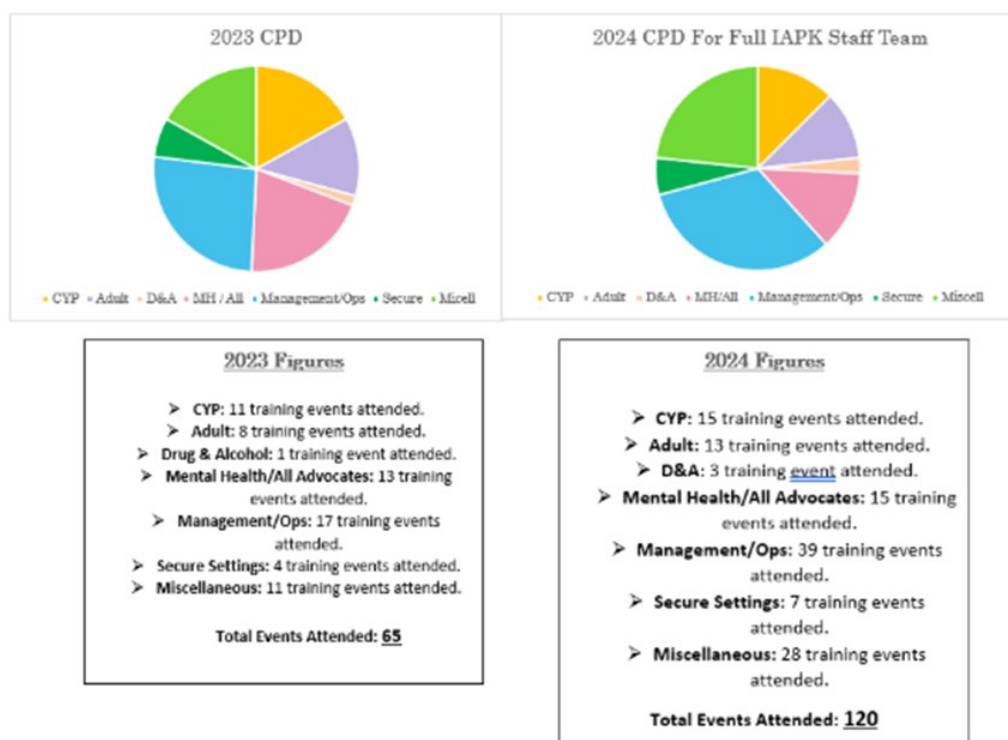
"Any issues you have, IAPK will resolve them for you."

Training & Development

IAPK understand the value of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and encourage all staff to undertake CPD. This year staff attended 120 CPD events, a significant rise from 2023 (65 events). This rise was driven by two key factors:

1. A stronger CPD monitoring and implementation process, introduced in 2023. The CPD Planner was reviewed three times a year by the full operations team and monitored monthly by the Advocacy Manager and Management Administrator.
2. Recruitment of new staff, which placed a greater focus on training and development.

Throughout 2024, IAPK worked both internally and nationally with our governing body to develop a mandatory training framework for all Independent Advocacy organisations in Scotland, which remains in progress.



List of Mandatory Training

- Codes of Best Practice – SIAA
- Adults With Incapacity Training / 3 Acts Training
- Advanced AWI training provided by SIAA
- Clan Law Training – children’s advocacy
- Child Protection Training
- Non-Instructed Advocacy Training
- Talking Mats Training
- Chairty Log (IAPK’s Case Management Software)
- Microsoft 365 Training

"You have been my child’s Champion."

Refurbishments In 2024

To accommodate a growing staff team and increased online meetings, we refurbished our existing premises to enhance flexibility, confidentiality, and accessibility.

The impact of COVID-19 highlighted the need for dedicated, confidential meeting spaces, especially as many meetings continue to be held online. Management has worked extensively to ensure the premises meet these demands while maintaining a welcoming, professional atmosphere. Visitors frequently comment on the warmth of our reception area. Having a staffed reception from 9am to 3pm has allowed us to maintain an open-door policy, reducing barriers to accessing advocacy. This human-centred approach ensures that everyone who engages with IAPK—staff, advocacy partners, or visitors—feels welcomed and supported. Maximising our premises' potential, we continue to strengthen our ability to deliver high-quality, independent advocacy in Perth & Kinross.



Until 2023, part of our building was sublet to a local charity. After this arrangement ended amicably, we utilised the space to create three smaller meeting rooms and two additional office spaces. These spaces provide a calm environment where advocacy partners can share their views openly, reinforcing our commitment to offer time, space, and compassion.

Since completing the refurbishment in September 2024, the benefits have been substantial. Staff now have improved facilities to conduct confidential meetings, reducing the reliance on external venues. The open-door policy we have adopted has further strengthened accessibility, fostering a welcoming environment for both advocacy partners and professionals. While the loss of rental income and the cost of refurbishment were financial considerations, the long-term benefits to service delivery outweigh these challenges.

Enhancing Accessibility Future Plans

Our strategic vision includes plans to create an appropriate kitchen space for staff, advocacy partners, and collective advocacy groups, such as New Scots and a future Children and Young People's collective. Ensuring wheelchair accessibility is a priority, and we aim to secure funding to make the premises as inclusive as possible.

"It has been incredible to see the young person being able to participate in today's Hearing, with the support of their advocate." – Children's Panel Member

"Thank you for all you've done, you really opened the communication channel. I do believe you've been a positive influence in getting as far as we did with it all."

New Website—Went live December 2024

As part of our strategic plan, we prioritised updating the IAPK website (www.iapk.org.uk) to enhance transparency, engagement, and accessibility. Following the redesign of our logo, we returned to the same local design company to create a website that better reflects our organisation's identity and values. Recognising the need for a consistent and accessible digital presence, we aimed to complement our printed materials while reinforcing our organisational message and tone.

Led by our Management Administrator and supported by the Communications Officer, the project involved close collaboration with the design team to ensure the site is user-friendly, visually engaging, and fully accessible. The content is written in non-judgmental language, and new features have been introduced, including:

- **IAPK News** – A dedicated space for updates and developments.
- **Reports & Resources** – Providing advocacy partners and professionals with essential information on Children's Hearings, Mental Health Tribunals, and other processes from an independent advocacy and rights-based perspective.
- **Online Referral Form** – Individuals and professionals can make a referral to our service 24/7, streamlining access to our services. This has already been widely adopted by professionals and the public.

FAQs – Offering insights into Independent Advocacy Perth & Kinross, with links to the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance (SIAA).

The website is designed as a platform for future growth, incorporating plans for easy-read materials, translation tools, and interactive resources on human rights and responsibilities

Our long-term goal is to develop the website as an empowering resource for advocacy partners, equipping them with the tools and information needed to exercise their rights with dignity and control. By providing practical support through accessible digital means, we reinforce our core belief that knowledge and self-advocacy are fundamental to empowerment.

"The only source of knowledge is experience." – Albert Einstein

"Like seeing new faces and learning about cultures."

Case Management System



In January 2024, we transitioned from Salesforce to Charity Log, a case management system better aligned with the needs and values of the charitable sector. This change has increased our confidence in data management and reporting, strengthening our ability to analyse and communicate key insights. We continue to refine internal and external data analysis, enhancing quality assurance and auditing processes identifying areas for improvement. In this first year, staff training has been a priority, with regular reviews and updates to optimise the system's functionality.

Challenges

- 1. Service Level Agreement (SLA) Changes** For the first time in IAPK's history, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) redefined our SLA to focus exclusively on 'key beneficiaries,' merging LSI work into the main contract rather than treating it separately. This shift, coupled with unclear communication, created power imbalances between HSCP staff and IAPK, temporarily disrupting service delivery. When the LSI award ended abruptly, we had to quickly adapt, clarifying to staff that advocacy support was now limited to key beneficiaries. This uncertainty led to hesitancy in accepting referrals, shifting our response from 'we help anyone' to 'we're not sure we can.' To prevent future disruptions, IAPK remains committed to collaborative working and maintaining clear, transparent communication within the partnership.
- 2. Remote Working Decisions by Local Authority** The local authority's continued preference for remote working required IAPK to invest in creating confidential spaces for online meetings and case conferences. The prolonged reliance on virtual meetings, which differed from our staff's preferences, also influenced decision-making and actions. However, we are encouraged by a gradual shift back to valuing in-person engagement, with many meetings now alternating between online and face-to-face formats.
- 3. Financial Impact of National Insurance Changes** The planned increase in Employers' National Insurance Contributions in April 2025 will impact IAPK's budget. This will necessitate a review of financial plans and business strategies to ensure sustainability.
- 4. Environmental Impact** Throughout 2024, Tay Street was closed because of the installation of a new "super sewer" by Scottish Water. This has caused disruption and will continue to through 2025, with a new completion date mid/late Spring 2025.

Key Challenges in 2024

- Increased demand vs. available resources
- Impact of local infrastructure projects (road closures affecting accessibility)
- Funding constraints for essential services



Future Objectives for 2025

- Strengthening partnerships with local authorities & stakeholders
- Expanding independent advocacy awareness
- Securing sustainable funding
- Enhancing accessibility initiatives (e.g., collective advocacy spaces, website improvements)

"I am so excited for my order to come off, thank you for being there." – Young Person

Financial Overview

In the current financial climate, adopting a full cost recovery model across all funding provisions is essential to ensuring the long-term sustainability of independent advocacy. Without this approach, the service faces increasing financial risks. Aligning with the Third-Sector Interface (TSI) Scotland Network's Fair Funding Charter (<https://tsi.scot/local-fair-funding-charter/>) would provide greater financial security, enabling more accurate strategic planning and ensuring advocacy services are fully funded.

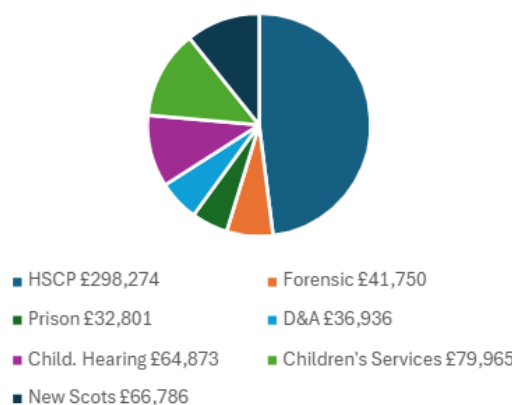
At present, no cost-saving opportunities have been identified within IAPK's budget, and the organisation began the last financial year in deficit.

Financial growth is particularly needed for leadership roles, including the CEO and Operations Manager, where salaries have remained stagnant for several years. While all staff receive small annual pay increases, the lack of adjustment for senior positions raises concerns about long-term business strategy, continuity, and organisational development.

Ring-fenced funding prioritises direct advocacy delivery, often excluding essential operational and management costs. This creates challenges in recruiting and retaining senior staff, posing a risk to the organisation's long-term stability. Addressing this imbalance is crucial to sustaining high-quality advocacy services and ensuring the organisation can continue meeting growing demand.

	Apr 2024– Feb 2025	Apr 2023– Mar 2024 (PY)	Total Change
Total In- come	548,231	561,705	13,474
Expenses	555,363	609,590	54,227
NET Oper- ating In- come	(7,132)	(47,886)	40,754
Other In- come	0	1,150	1150
Other Ex- penses	0	31	31
NET Income	(7,132)	(46,767)	39,635

Draft Budget For 2025-2026



* Information here does not include IAPK's reserved funds.

** Budget subject to change depending of funding changes.

"Many thanks to all of you, and your team, for your input last night at our Training Event. Everyone was very complimentary about your input, and those attending certainly benefitted from your talks and discussions."

Impact of Independent Advocacy—Case Studies

Prison Advocacy Example 1

A father and daughter were reunited following his prison sentence when he was given full custody. He felt information about him post release was not factually accurate anymore, and the risks to the child were no longer present. The independent advocate highlighted this in meetings and in written statements about him and his changed circumstances. The advocacy partner said he was able to gain back some dignity as a father and felt the increased respect written in the reports about him.

Prison Advocacy Example 2

A prisoner was without an appropriate mattress or seating within his cell. Attaining one had proved difficult due to the budgets outside of the advocacy partner's control. His independent advocate set up a meeting with health care team, and the prison management. After talking to prison management about this he now has the mattress required for his degenerative spinal condition. Not only does this aid his sleep, but his overall demeanour and his ability to do practical tasks throughout the day.

Non-instructed Advocacy

Being unable to convey a view does not mean a person is without a view. Advocates use non-instructed advocacy to gather views of people unable to convey a view in a direct way.

With non-instructed advocacy it is important to establish what can be ascertained. To do this the advocate will consider and seek guidance as to whether other forms of communication might be appropriate such as writing things down or perhaps using Talking Mats picture symbols. IAPK will also, where appropriate, look to liaise with key people in the person's life. Observation can be key to understanding what the person needs, wants or feels.

By using different approaches, a picture of what that person's life has been like, and is like now, can be increasingly understood. By liaising with significant individuals, insight increases and serves to advise what the person's past wishes were.

Once the advocate has established an understanding of the life the advocacy partner has led, they are then able use this as a reference point for the non-instructed advocacy. However, always first and foremost is what the advocacy partner themselves is able to directly tell the advocate. The advocate will use this information to ask questions about the person's situation to provoke conversation which may lead to the best outcomes being reached for the person, because there has been wider consideration of their circumstances and wishes.

Non-instructed advocacy also has a safeguarding element that must always be exercised; we must remain mindful of the rights that a person may have, but that they are unable to realise. Here the independent advocate raises the individuals' profile to ensure someone's rights are acknowledged. These rights come from a range of different places, for example Human Rights Act and National Care Standards.

Adult Case Example 1

An advocacy partner was staying in a house with unsafe conditions, such as “shoddy electrical work” (as described by a social worker), and her mental health was greatly impacted by the disengagement of the Housing team when trying to address these issues. She was told that no fixes were needed according to the reports that they had. The independent advocate found it difficult to engage with Housing also, as the housing officer confirmed that she did not want to communicate with advocacy due to the “questioning of PKC policies”. Eventually, a meeting at the property was arranged with the advocacy partner, the independent advocate and relevant professionals. It was very quickly agreed after entering the property that the issues reported by the tenant needed addressing as soon as possible. Having all those involved participating directly gave the advocacy partner control over the conditions she was living in.

Adult Case Example 2

The advocacy partner was to be on a crisis placement for six weeks only. Fourteen months later she moved back to her house from the care home with a care package meaning she was again in her own independent space with her own freedom. Her independent advocate worked with her social worker to complain about the crisis care received. The discussion about contribution charges is ongoing.

Whilst staying at the care home a large-scale inquiry took place and IAPK supported her along with other residents to share their views about living at the care home.

Forensic Advocacy Example 1

A service user group was refreshed, revitalised and renamed at the Rohallion Clinic, now known as ‘SUG@R’ (Service User Group @ Rohallion). IAPK set this up with patients and independent advocates help to facilitate the group. There is patient representation from five wards. The group invite guest speakers and professionals from the Clinic, so participants can gain more understanding about systems and processes affecting them. This also allows for feedback exchanges which can influence positive change, more quickly. The aim of the group is to improve the quality of life on the ward for the patients who live there. The ward representative from each of the five representing wards can raise issues collectively on behalf of their fellow patients. Recent issues discussed and explored include the quality of food, portion sizes and menu choices. There have also been discussions around ward staff communication with patients regarding therapeutic meetings being cancelled at short notice with no apparent explanation.

An open day for the SUG@R group has been scheduled for 26th February 2025. This is to raise awareness of the group with the staff team, and we hope to encourage more patients to get involved and have their voice heard.

Forensic Advocacy Example 2

The advocacy partner was a patient at Rohallion Secure Clinic who was in the process of having a planned, gradual discharge from hospital into his own flat. He was able to attend the discharge plan meetings together with his independent advocate. The independent advocate was able to support the discharge over time and continue advocating when the time needed was extended. This approach suited the needs of the advocacy partner, who then wrote a letter of thanks for the decade of ongoing support he had received. Over a sustained period of time, the advocacy partner maintained his dignity through his participation in meetings about him, giving him control in his progression towards independent living and rebuilding his life outside of hospital. He was empowered through the process.

Children & Young People's Advocacy Example of Guardianship

The advocacy partner wanted to speak for herself. She explained she only felt able to share her views at her adults with incapacity case conference* if her independent advocate was with her. The advocate talked to her before the meeting, to describe and explain what to expect, along with discussing her questions and views for the meeting. As a result, she was able to advocate for how she felt and evidence that she was able to be more independent, meaning that there is now reduced involvement from statutory services. She still has a Guardianship Order, but it enables her to live as she wants to. For instance, talking more to her friends and family on the phone, whenever she wants.

* Adults with Incapacity legislation applies to 16+

Children & Young People's Advocacy Example 2

Due to mental health issues, the Young Person had become unable to attend school. IAPK supported the Young Person for the last 2 years with school meetings and contacting professionals from health and social work teams. This year a referral was made to the Children's Reporter, and a Children's Hearing was arranged. The Young Person is now receiving appropriate mental health support and feedback from the chair of the Children's Panel was: **"Had we not heard from advocacy, today's decision would have been quite different."**

Children & Young People's Advocacy Example 3

During five years in foster care, and with support from IAPK, two children (siblings) attended their hearing in November 2024. The children's views remained the same throughout the five years; that they wished to live with their dad. The children participated in their hearing and were listened to. From what was heard, discussed and considered, the Children's Panel decided that the risks had diminished, and they could all live together. IAPK attended Children's Hearings and review meetings for over five years and continued throughout to provide both children with advocacy support. The Drug & Alcohol funding for IAPK allowed both parents to also access IAPK's advocacy service to have their views heard too. The participation and engagement from both children and parents offered them the opportunities to be heard with support from IAPK who were able to explain the process and what to expect. This was important to all in the family because there were significant literacy issues to manage and consider throughout.

New Scots Example 1

An Advocacy partner had been in the country for 5 months and had not yet accessed vital legal support with his asylum claim. Advocacy supported him to explore different options for legal support and help organise meetings with the solicitor to prepare him before his asylum interview.

New Scots Case Example 2

An advocacy partner's name was used by someone else when they were picked up by police. IAPK supported them to contact Police Scotland and make them aware of the case of mistaken identity. They were able to ask what information police needed to aid them, and having this conversation reduced the stress for this person. They are now able to sleep better without the legal vulnerability that can be faced by the possible discretionary power of the police in these circumstances.

Picture of the IAPK Team taken 7th May 2025, outside our office, 90 Tay Street, Perth, PH2 8NP.

Our door is open, come visit [#WhatMattersToYou](#)

