

31st August 2016

Citizen Advocacy Project for People with Disabilities – South-East

Re: Focus Group

To whom it concerns,

Following the Aras Attracta scandal in November 2014 the HSE engaged with a wide number of organisations in developing a range of responses. One of these responses recommended the development of a Citizen Advocacy process for people with disabilities informed by the Goodbody report (2004), the Scoping Study for a National Intellectual Disability Advocacy Initiative (2011) and modelled on the Sage Advocacy Service for Older People. This should be professionally led with the involvement of trained, supported and supervised volunteers.

Sage has now been asked to “undertake a scoping and planning exercise to guide the development of a citizen advocacy project for people with disabilities in the South-East CHO 5”.

This Citizen Advocacy Project aims to provide support and to advocate with and for people with intellectual disabilities across the five counties of Wexford, Waterford, Carlow, Kilkenny and Tipperary. Given the diversity of need, provision and potential within the region, we imagine that approaches will vary almost as much between areas as between individuals. We are also conscious that the commencement of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 is only a matter of months away and this will impact on people’s lives.

To ensure this Citizen Advocacy Project develops and evolves to support and assist people with disabilities to the highest standard, we wish to ensure the voice of the person with disabilities is heard, valued and respected from the beginning, along with respecting the opinions of families and service providers. As part of the initial scoping and developing of this Citizen Advocacy Project we will be holding a number of focus group meetings throughout the South-East.

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We would like to invite people with disabilities and if they wish their families to the morning focus groups and professionals and staff from services in the afternoon. Please note further events for families will be arranged in due course. We would ask if staff are attending the morning focus groups that it is in a support role.

	Location	Date	People with disabilities	Professionals & service providers
Carlow	VISUAL Centre Old Dublin Road, Carlow, Co. Carlow	Friday 16 th September	10.30am to 12.30pm	2.30pm to 4.30pm
Kilkenny	The Parade Tower, Kilkenny Castle, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny	Friday 23 rd September	10.30am to 12.30pm	2.30pm to 4.30pm
Waterford	Waterford Healing Arts Trust University Hospital Waterford, Dunmore Road, Co. Waterford	Friday 30 th September	10.30 to 12.30pm	2.30pm to 4.30pm
Wexford	The Presentation Centre, Nunnery Road, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford	Friday 7 th October	10.30am to 12.30pm	2.30pm to 4.30pm
Tipperary	Spafield Resource Centre, Old Road, Cashel, Co. Tipperary	Monday 10 th October	10.30am to 12.30 pm	2.30pm to 4.30pm

Dr Amanda Phelan, from the National Centre for the Protection of Older People (NCPOP) in UCD, which has a history of research in the area of safeguarding vulnerable adults at risk, will assist Sage in the facilitation of the above focus groups. Dr Phelan will ensure the learning from the focus groups and necessary quantitative and qualitative research will be documented in a report that will direct the development of the Citizen Advocacy Project

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We would ask that you circulate this letter, along with the easy to read version to the people who use your service, to their families and to your staff. Places for these focus groups are limited and we ask that in order to secure a place bookings would be made directly either by email to emer.meighan@sage.thirdageireland.ie or by phone on 086 1836208 no later than one week before the event date.

We understand that it may be difficult for some people to attend these meetings but should you wish to be involved in ensuring your voice is heard in this Citizen Advocacy Project I would be delighted to meet with you at a more convenient location.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Emer Meighan,
Development Worker
Citizens Advocacy Project: South – East.
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