

Speakeasy Advocacy



Giving a Voice



17 New Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 7PR

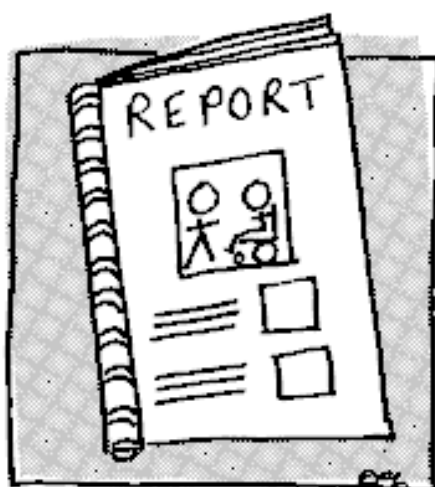


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Annual Report 2008

(June 2007 - May 2008)

Providing a Voice and Support for people with Learning Disabilities,
Autism and/or Asperger's syndrome
Registered charity number: 1108304



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Message from the chairman

"Once again I am delighted with what Speakeasy Advocacy has achieved during the last year. Our staff team and volunteers have again worked extremely hard to ensure that Speakeasy's aims are met. This means the users of our service are listened to, their opinions heard and they are supported to become part of our local community.

We continue to be respected by other agencies and because of our expertise and reputation we now work in formal partnership with other agencies and organisations in Basingstoke.

I would like to say "thank you" to our dedicated staff team and volunteers, our Trustees and Operations Group and Amanda, our Project Manager, whose hard work over the last five years has largely contributed to the success of Speakeasy. It is through everyone's joint efforts that we continue to be so successful and improve and increase the services we provide.

Thank you."

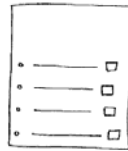
Bob Hannah, Chairman of Trustees

Message from the manager

"This has been a challenging and rewarding year. We have worked with more people this year than ever (300); the issues people come to us with are more complex than ever before; advocacy partnerships last longer as services and support are getting harder to access; long term funding is now more difficult to secure than ever.

However, we continue to make a difference in the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in Basingstoke. This is due to the skills and dedication of the staff team and volunteers, who are under a lot of pressure with an ever increasing workload. Also, our members take an active part in the running of the organisation, and help steer us in the right direction. Thank you to everyone for your hard work!"

Amanda Kent, Manager



Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisors

Name of charity: Speakeasy Advocacy

Registered charity number: 1108304

Address: 17 New Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 7PR

Trustees:

Name	Position
Bob Hannah	Chairman
Carole Over	Vice chairman
Derek Easton	Treasurer
Matthew Ansell	Secretary
Joanne French	Wicked and Wacky representative
Lisa Smith	Wicked and Wacky representative
Maureen Taylor	Advocacy representative
Colin Watts	Volunteer representative
Simon Jeffery	Virtual Friends representative
David Budd	Happy Club representative
Richard Morgans	Happy Club representative

(Other people who acted as trustee during this period were Susan Morris, Sharon Spowart, Sarah Cox and Jenny Tuddenham).

Staff team:

Project manager = Amanda Kent

Office manager = Ruth Jewell

Advocate = Lynda Awan

Self advocacy worker = Jackie Elmer

Children and young people's advocate = Debbie Ruppenthal

Advocacy worker = Sarah Hawden

Bank: Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham

Independent examiner: David Hargrave



Structure, governance and management

We are governed by a Constitution (based on the charity commission model), and are an unincorporated association.

We must have at least 3 trustees who are either users of the service or advocates - at least 1 of each.

We have decided that each of the 3 adult self advocacy groups can have 2 members who represent their group as trustees.

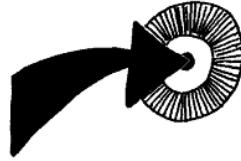
Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. All trustees receive training to do their role; trustees who are also users of the service have support from an advocate.

Trustees always make decisions about:

- What our priorities are
- Whether we do new work
- If we should employ a new member of staff

The operations group (chairman, vice chairman, treasurer and project manager) have responsibility for the day to day running of Speakeasy Advocacy. This includes putting in place systems and procedures to manage the risks that the charity is exposed to.

Speakeasy Advocacy is a member of Hampshire Advocacy Regional Group (HARG) and the National Coalition of Citizen Advocacy Schemes.



Objectives and Activities

The objects in our constitution are:

"To protect and preserve the good health of children, young people and adults with autistic spectrum disorders and/or learning disabilities".

As an advocacy project our aim is to:

- Make sure people are listened to
- Empower people to take control of their lives, making their own decisions and choices so that they become as independent as possible
- Support people to become part of their local communities and prevent social exclusion

Summary of our activities this year:

- 1:1 advocacy partnerships for adults
- Working with learning disabled parents
- 3 self advocacy groups for adults
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Coffee mornings
- Working with children with autism/Asperger's syndrome and their parents
- Friday Network project in partnership with Hampshire County Council
- Wednesday Network project in partnership with Hampshire County Council
- Loddon Alliance user involvement project
- Hot Gossip newsletter
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service
- Local and national networking



What we did this year



1:1 advocacy partnerships

During the year we have had **92** new referrals for advocacy. Most of our referrals have come from either the person who wants the advocate or their carer. The main reasons that people have wanted an advocate for has been:

- Day opportunities or joining groups
- Issues around where the person lives
- People leaving care/school /college (transition)
- Learning disabled parents
- People wanting person centred plans

We have worked in **110** 1:1 partnerships this year. Most of these partnerships are new, but some have been going on for years when people need continued advocacy support.

Examples of people helped by advocacy include:

- ✓ Gaining the confidence to take part in a care review, and as a result the person started doing things he wanted to do, and stopped doing activities others wanted him to do
- ✓ Support to make a complaint against a member of staff
- ✓ Someone who didn't leave his bedroom before coming to the group now takes part in discussions and has made new friends
- ✓ 10 people have been able to access support to help them keep their tenancy and remain in their home



Working with learning disabled parents (funded by Lloyds TSB Trust)

Speakeasy has continued to work with parents that have learning disabilities. Lynda has worked with **15** parents this year, all of whom have been told by Children's Social Services that there are concerns about them being able to look after their children.

This can be a very distressing and confusing time for parents. Lynda has worked with the parents to try and ensure that they:

- Understand the roles of the different people who have come into their lives
- Have access to legal help
- Understand what is being said in the reports written about them
- Are appropriately supported at court so that they know what is happening
- Are prepared for meetings so that they can express their opinions
- Are listened to and their wishes are taken into account

The lengthy process can be very distressing and having an advocate does not usually change the outcome. However it does mean that the parents are able to understand what is happening, have some control and that professionals listen to what they have to say.

"Having someone with me to help me understand and make sure I was able to have my say stopped me being so angry. I didn't feel that I was on my own anymore."





3 self advocacy groups for adults: Wicked and Wacky



The group have welcomed 5 new members this year and an average of 12 people attend each session.



The group have been taking part in consultations including direct payments, personalisation and self directed support.



1 member continues to attend a group that works on making information accessible for everyone. Another member attends the Local Implementation Group for the Hampshire Partnership Board, and with support from a volunteer she addresses the meeting on different issues.



The group have their summer agenda which is giving them the opportunity to put their self advocacy skills into practice out in the community.

"I like it when we tell other people what we want, I can't write but that doesn't matter."

"When I go to the meetings I listen to what the people say and sometimes I join in."



Happy Club



Happy Club have welcomed 2 new members and have an average of 13 people attending every Friday. This group is for



people who want to find new friends and join in activities while learning self advocacy skills.



The group have an agenda that they follow and they spend some weeks in the group room and other weeks in the local area doing activities like bowling, eating out and sport in the local park.

"Friday is when I meet my friends."

"I like Happy Club - we make a noise and no one says stop, you can't do that."



Virtual Friends



Virtual Friends re launched in January and have new members as well existing ones, with an average of 6 people attending each week.



They have written their group rules, agreed on how they want the group to run and have recently produced an agenda which sees them meeting at different venues.

The group went for their first visit to the cinema and everyone agreed they had a good time without any problems; their next evening out will be bowling.

The group have bonded really well and look forward to meeting up each week.

"I just like to be able to chat with the others. I don't usually find that very easy to do but I do here."

"I would like to go swimming now I have someone to go with and that feels good."





Recruitment of volunteers

During the year we had a total of **49** volunteers:

- **15** trustees
- **18** advocates (20 partnerships)
- **5** with the groups
- **7** with Internet Explorers
- **4** doing admin, IT or maintenance work

We have held 2 volunteer evenings this year which gave people the chance to meet with other volunteers and share their experiences. We also produced newsletters to keep volunteers informed about issues that affect volunteering at Speakeasy Advocacy, including national developments in advocacy or for people with learning disabilities.

Thank you to all our volunteers who have given over **2,000 hours** of their time over the year. The average pay in 2007 for Basingstoke and Deane was £14.93 per hour. This means that we have received the equivalent of £29,860.00 worth of volunteering at Speakeasy!



Coffee mornings

We continue to run coffee mornings on the 1st Saturday of the month from 10am - 1pm, with the help of volunteers.

"For people on their own, it gives you a reason to go out. It is nice to get together."

"I enjoy coming. I am pleased to have somewhere to go on a Saturday."





Children and young people's advocate

Debbie works with children and young people with autism and/or Asperger's syndrome, as well as offering support to their parents. We received confirmation of 3 years funding from Children in Need in March 2008, so this part of the project is secure until March 2011!

Internet Explorers - self-advocacy group for 11-16's with Asperger's syndrome

A year of transitions - 2 of the older boys were supported to move on to Virtual Friends, a similar group for young adults. A new young person has joined the group and is enjoying coming along.

Social activities, such as going to the pictures and the swimming pool continue to be popular with the young people. They are all growing up and facing new challenges but still enjoy coming along to the group every Tuesday.

"People understand me here."



1:1 advocacy

We have had **61** referrals this year. There have been **35** new 1:1 partnerships as well as **26** existing partnerships. This represents more than 100 people who have accessed our service - a total of **56** adults and **52** children that Debbie has worked with.

Working with families - what have we achieved?

- Supporting parents to gain educational statements and fight appeals



- Making sure families affected by Autistic Spectrum Disorders have their voices listened to and their rights respected by schools, social services and other official bodies
- Supporting young people to be heard in schools, with youth justice, police and care providers.
- Bringing together a number of local girls who have Asperger's Syndrome so they can meet up and not feel so isolated

How parents feel about the support Speakeasy provides:

"Thank you so much for your support which has been a lifeline. Your quotes from the 'code of practice' were really helpful."



"You have been very supportive and I do not think I would have got this far without your help. "



Work with Parent groups

The parent support group - the Basingstoke Branch of the National Autistic Society - launched in October. They have been supported by us to run regular parent meetings and talks and have also set up a regular activity club for children and young people from the ages of 8 - 14.

Links have also been forged with groups in Alton, Aldershot, Fleet, Eastleigh and Portsmouth so people can be supported in other areas of the county.



Friday Network

This is a project we run in partnership with the local day services. An average of 35 - 40 people attend the Network each week with many people coming in to access the self advocacy sessions, meet with a broker for community activity ideas, see a care manager, find out about supported employment or just meet with their friends for a chat and a drink. Jackie and Sarah support the group, along with a day service officer and a broker.

"I like coming to the network as I get to meet new people."



The group have completed a course on work preparation. The Health Team have run sessions on healthy eating, hygiene, exercise and communication. 2 relationship groups are being run by the Health Team until September.



The Network also runs a person centred planning group which has been meeting each week since December 2007. An average of 9 people attend each week - some already have plans that are changing their lives. The group decided to name themselves the My Choices group and say they like this group because "it helps people". The group looks forward to using the Network's new computer, typing plans in their own words and using pictures. They also decided to take a photo which they will use to advertise their group.

"I wanted to go swimming for ages - I had a meeting and now I go swimming".





Members applied for voluntary jobs within the Network, they were interviewed and some now support the running of the Network by doing jobs which include reception, café, self advocacy helper, and cashier.

A committee made up of members meet once a month and make decisions about how the Network should run.

The group were given a grant for equipment from Four Lanes Trust and they are going to produce a film about the Network and a newsletter.

"I enjoy the group sessions."
"I like having access to a care manager."



Wednesday Network

This is a new group we are running in partnership with the day services. It is for up to 15 people who go to the day services at the moment, but need an opportunity to become more independent and develop their skills. The group will be supported by Jackie and Sarah, and 2 day service workers.

We hope that after a year, group members will:

- develop at least 3 new life skills
- have a Person Centred Plan that works
- take part in an exhibition at the Willis Museum
- try 1 new activity in the local community

"We know that self advocacy works and people's lives change for the better - this is an exciting opportunity for people with higher support needs to change their lives too!" Amanda





Loddon Alliance user involvement project

Ken and Paul have been employed as Project Facilitators with Loddon Alliance for the past 9 months. They are supported by Lynda to attend Management Meetings and Quality Action Meetings. They have also used their experience to work on individual projects:

- Paul has played an active role in interviewing senior staff
- Ken has helped in making documents easier for people to read



Loddon Alliance staff have listened to what Paul and Ken have to say and have commented on the benefits of hearing about their experience of receiving support.



The biggest problem that both Ken and Paul have experienced is trying to understand the long difficult words (jargon) and abbreviations that Loddon Alliance use at meetings and in documents.

"I really like my job and enjoy going to the meetings and seeing different people." Paul



Hot Gossip

We have produced 2 editions of Hot Gossip this year, giving news and views from Speakeasy.

"I like seeing our pictures on the front I was very excited when I saw myself at the Christmas party."



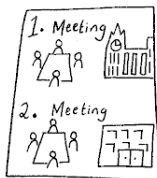
"It is good for parents and carers to read as they find out more about what happens at Speakeasy."



Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

This service is hosted by Speakeasy on behalf of Hampshire Advocacy Regional Group (HARG). The service celebrated its 1st anniversary in April 2008, and so far has supported over 60 people in Hampshire to be part of important decisions in their lives. Amanda co-ordinates the service, and she and Lynda have worked with 5 people in the area.

"I know my involvement has made a difference - professionals have listened and taken my client's wishes into account."



Local and national networks

We have been involved with the following this year:

- National Coalition of Citizen Advocacy Schemes
- Hampshire County Council review of advocacy
- Hampshire Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Local Implementation Group for North Hampshire
- Hampshire Advocacy Regional Group (HARG)
- Basingstoke Voluntary Sector Forum

"As a result of our involvement with HARG, I helped to write part of the new National Advocacy Qualification along with 2 colleagues from projects in Hampshire. We felt it was important for experienced advocates to be part of this exciting new development." Amanda





Financial Report

Accounts - Year ended 31st May 2008 **Financial Report by Treasurer Derek Easton**

We started the year knowing that we would not be receiving funding from the Lottery. Since the majority of our funding had come from the Lottery in the past it was necessary to look at other sources of funding so that the future of Speakeasy would be more assured.

Throughout this year, in addition to the core funding from the Local Authority, we have received funding for 11 different projects amounting to £137,863. This has been possible due to the growing reputation of Speakeasy in delivering excellent person centred quality services to meet the needs of our clients and groups. Many thanks for the superb work done by the Team who have been so excellently led by Amanda.

This year our income was £179,538 and Expenditure was £114,085 leaving a surplus for the year of £65,453. Added to the funds brought forward from last year we will carry forward to next year funds of £158,010. This means that we have sufficient funding to carry out our work on current projects next year and we are reasonably confident that we can secure further funding for future projects.

Derek Easton - Treasurer



Accounts - Year ended 31st May 2008

Statement of Financial Activities

	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2008	Total 2007
Grant Income	137,863	36,355	174,218	92,459
Other Income		5,320	5,320	1,372
Total Income	137,863	41,675	179,538	93,831
Salaries & NIC	61,108	23,170	84,278	73,745
Premises Costs	9,112	8,265	17,377	14,778
Other Expenditure	7,498	4,932	12,430	13,325
Total Expenditure	77,718	36,367	114,085	101,848
Balance of Funds for Year	60,145	5,308	65,453	-8,017
Balance of Funds Bfwd	56,068	36,489	92,557	100,574
Balance of Funds C/Fwd	116,213	41,797	158,010	92,557



Balance Sheet

	2008		2007	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Office Equipment	2,534		434	
Furniture & Fittings	465		606	
Equipment for Groups	202		35	
		3,201		1,075
Current Assets				
Debtors	42,800		1,854	
Petty Cash	157		120	
Bank Deposit Account	64,161		62,943	
Bank Current Account	52,199		31,049	
		159,317		95,966
Current Liabilities				
Creditors - Short Term	344		1,266	
Taxation	4,164		3,218	
		4,508		4,484
Current Assets Less Liabilities		154,809		91,482
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities		158,010		92,557



Balance of Funds	Restricted	Unrestricted		
B/Forward	56,069	36,488	92,557	100,574
This Year	60,145	5,308	65,453	-8,017
C/Forward	116,214	41,796	158,010	92,557

The accounts were independently examined on 25 June 2008 by David Hargrave, a fellow of the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants.



What we will do next year



Funding

This will always be a priority for the operations group and the rest of the trustees. We will spend the year making sure that all parts of the organisation are funded for the next few years.



Equipment

We will be reviewing our computers and telephones to make sure they meet the staff team's needs.



Vulnerable adults

We will be looking at how we work with people who don't get support either because services won't work with them, or they find it hard to work with professionals. In particular, we need to think about how we work with male advocacy partners as we don't have a male member of staff at the moment.



This report was approved by the trustees on 30 July 2008