

Policy & Campaigning

As discussed earlier in this report, MHA operates in a complex and challenging environment. The challenges of meeting the core needs of the organisation to adequately support service users are significant. The current financial circumstances of MHA's commissioners require that the agency must be able to demonstrate high quality outcomes measured against quality indicators driven by the requirements of Service Level Agreements and regulatory bodies such as The Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) and others. At a time when there is a direct threat to current services MHA must have a strong and well informed voice to enable it to campaign for current services as well as advocating for future innovative services.

Historically, MHA has sought to pursue a twin track approach, delivering services to meet the needs of local people and using that experience of the impact of mental health problems on people's lives to campaign and influence both locally and nationally. That twin track approach continues to enjoy the full support of the Board.

Current financial challenges facing MHA, discussed elsewhere in this report, require not only a very active process of contract

re-negotiation and of fundraising but also a concerted effort to influence key funders and other stakeholders.

It therefore appears logical at this juncture to link the issues of fundraising, policy and campaigning so that local campaigning and influencing in support of fundraising are integrated as far as possible with the national agenda.

Furthermore, the national and local agenda in relation to services promoting and

supporting mental wellbeing in its widest sense is dynamic and ever changing. Current initiatives such as NHS Scotland policy document "Delivering for Mental Health" (2006) and "Toward a Mentally Flourishing Scotland" present the opportunity to contribute to the national debate and agenda. It is essential that MHA strives to have a voice at this level, both in relation to influencing change and innovation and also to develop networks outside the local area.

The inclusion of Policy and Campaigning in the Sub-Group of the Board of Directors should allow this essential aspect of our work to achieve a higher profile.

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