



(Iver Electoral Division)

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Partnership visited **Peoples Voices**  
Representative **Barbara Poole**

Service **Advocacy**

Service:- is provided to all over the age of 18 but it should be noted that where parents are seeking advice on behalf of Children it is the parents age which will be the deciding factor and there are many occasions where the service is provided outside the laid down parameters.

Funding:- is provided on a project basis with each project having to make a separate bid and be subject to a 6 monthly review and each having its own Advocacy Support Manager. There are currently 4 such projects requiring a total of 8 reviews per year. This is extremely costly and wasteful of both effort and time. It is also impractical because the County Council do not have the resources to conduct the reviews. "PV" would prefer core funding which would give the organisation more flexibility. At present, the monitoring, if done at all, is restrictive and complex.

There are some alternative sources of funding but some of these are not worth accepting as the administrative costs would exceed the sum involved.

If there were additional funds, a better office, which would allow all 3 staff to work at the same time, and recruitment would be the priorities. This would enable the group to undertake more clients and expand the service to take in more client groups,- the 16's-18's, the less severely disabled, ie. those with learning difficulties, and ethnic minorities and more mental patients.

Staffing:- Advocates are volunteers given an initial 5 day training course with an on going programme of improvement. They are paid mileage and expenses only.

Consultancy:- The service feel valued, indeed over valued, because they are continually having to attend meetings to address our own(the County's) ever changing personnel situation by providing information as to what,when,where things can be provided. This is a source of frustration and is time consuming They are also used as a consultant by other voluntary bodies. "PV" feels that there should be a cohesive voice of all the smaller voluntary organisations in order to present a more forceful case for their particular needs, especially in funding.

Improvements:- This service is being funded as a voluntary organisation and the service is then being provided within the funding levels to all and sundry, including the County Council, free of charge. If the service were financed as a single entity and not by project the service could be sold to other bodies who in turn could budget

monitoring:- should be closely examined as there is a real danger that too much effort and resource is being used to no real purpose. i.e spend a £1000 to save £1100 or even worse spend £1100 to save £1000. There is a further case that this service should be in house acting as an initial approach point directing enquirers to the most beneficial source of aid.

*Ideally, this advocacy service should offer a one-to-one service to each client, but that is dependent on more volunteer recruits, a problem in this County ~~and~~ in the S.East generally.*

*BILL LIDGATE & PAM BACON*