

# You First Advocacy

## What is advocacy?

Advocacy is:

- Helping people to speak up for themselves
- Listening to the person and explaining to others what that person wants
- Making sure the person we are giving support to is treated with dignity and respect

Advocacy is about taking action to:

- Stand up for people's rights
- Ensure that the right people find out what the person wants
- Make sure the person we support is listened to, understands what is being said and any implications for him/her
- Help to get the services needed

What do we do?

- We help people find information
- We talk about what options might be possible and if relevant the consequences of these options
- We do what we can to help people find solutions to things that might be worrying them
- We inform our clients of our duty of care which means that if they or anyone else is 'at risk' or is a victim of abuse then we will pass that on to the relevant authorities

What else do we do?

- We can help to prepare for and go to meetings with people
- We can help make complaints
- We can speak up for people but only if we have their permission and they tell us what they want us to say
- Sometimes too we act in a safeguarding role for people who can't express their needs
- We can explain things to people that they might find hard to understand. For example a letter about a bill, Minutes from a review, care charges etc.
- We can explain what is going on at meetings, Court, Children's Panel's and more

Where do we work?

- Most people come to our office
- We also support clients who are in hospital, care homes or who can't leave their own homes
- We attend meetings in hospitals, social work offices, people's houses, local café's, Day Centres, Court, at Mental Health Tribunals, Children's Panels, Housing Department, Benefits Offices and more

Things we don't do:

- We don't give advice. Other people can give advice instead, such as family, friends and social work
- We don't discuss what clients tell us with anyone else. Unless they say it is ok to do that
- We don't charge any money for our service

We provide this service for people who have:

- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Have mental health problems
- Older people
- People who have sensory impairments
- People who have long term health conditions

Who are we?

- We are a team of people who all enjoy what we do. We have 6 paid staff and about 10 volunteers at the moment with more volunteers just completing our training.
- We are always learning from each other and from training so that we can help people achieve what they want.

What do people we advocate for expect?

- To be listened to
- Not advice but choices
- To be respected
- To get help but not always right away
- To understand things better
- To feel supported
- To feel someone is on their side

Many people volunteer with us:

- We provide extensive training
- We provide continuous support and help to our volunteers
- We value our volunteers very much and want them to enjoy working as part of our team

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