

Advocacy services for adults with health and social care needs

Information for the public

Published: 9 November 2022

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Making advocacy work for those who need it



People sometimes need someone to speak on their behalf when they are having health or social care. People who give this support are called advocates. They act in the person's best interest to make sure they get the care they need and their voice is heard. They can help the person express their views and wishes and stand up for their rights. They can also help them with decision making and do practical things like write letters and go to meetings with them. The information here is about advocates who are trained to do this role.

We've produced an EasyRead version of our advice. If you are using advocacy services, or thinking about using them, you may want to look at this with support from a family member, friend or carer.

[View the EasyRead version \(https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng227/resources/advocacy-services-for-adults-with-health-and-social-care-needs-easyread-version-pdf-11258615054\)](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng227/resources/advocacy-services-for-adults-with-health-and-social-care-needs-easyread-version-pdf-11258615054)

Who can have an advocate?



Some people must be offered the chance to have an advocate by law (the Mental Health Act 1983, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014). These include some people who are being treated under the Mental Health Act, some who cannot make their own decisions, and some having social care who find it difficult to understand or use information and make decisions. But advocates can help lots of other people cope with different situations in their lives too. Many people do not know they can have an advocate, or they find it hard to get help when they need it.

Making a difference to people using advocacy services



We want this guideline to make a difference to people who use advocacy services by making sure:

- people who need advocacy know about it, can access it easily and get it as early as possible, including those who are unable to ask for it themselves
- people can get relevant information about advocacy when they need it



- people can have the same advocate throughout if they want to and if this is possible
- people can meet their advocate in person
- advocates involve family members and carers, if appropriate
- the advocate respects the person's background, culture, views and needs



- people who use advocacy services are involved in planning and designing advocacy services and in designing and delivering training on advocacy.

Support for advocates



We also want this guideline to help advocates by making sure they are supported to do their role:

- advocates have training, support and supervision
- advocates have support to make sure that they and the people they are helping are safe, and know when and how to raise any concerns
- health and social care practitioners who work with advocacy services have training so they understand advocacy and the role of advocates, and they share relevant information with them.

Where can I find out more?



The [NHS website](#) has more information about advocacy. The organisations below can give you more advice and support.

- [POhWER](#), 0300 456 2370
- [Speakup](#)
- [The Advocacy People](#), 0330 440 9000
- [VoiceAbility](#), 0300 303 1660

To share an experience of care you have received, contact your local [Healthwatch](#).

NICE is not responsible for the content of these websites.

Who wrote this guideline?



We wrote this guideline with people who have been affected by advocacy and staff who support them. All the decisions are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-4783-6