

What is Advocacy?

FACTSHEET #11

What is advocacy?

'Advocacy' is all about people having more control over their own lives. We help people to make their own decisions, speak up about what they want and need, and achieve their own goals. Our work includes supporting people to feel more in control of the health and social care processes they are involved in.

Who is a carer?

Carers are those who provide unpaid care for relatives or friends who are ill, frail, have a disability or who have mental health or substance misuse issues. This care could be provided 24/7, or just for a few hours a week. It might involve helping someone get washed and dressed, going shopping for someone, cooking meals if they are unable to, or making sure the person they care for is safe.

Who is a parent carer?

A parent carer is a parent who is caring for a child under 18 who has additional needs, for example the child may have autistic spectrum disorder, a physical disability, learning difficulties or mental health issues. You do not have to be living with the child to be classed as a parent carer.

I get Carer's Allowance. Can I still have an advocate?

YES! Getting Carer's Allowance still means you are an unpaid carer and can have an advocate if you have an issue you need help with.

How would I benefit from having an advocate?

Advocates will work alongside you, at your pace. They are not there to tell you what to do or make decisions for you. Advocates will listen and will help put your views across. Advocates will never do anything about you, without you!

I am a carer but I don't know my rights, can an advocate help me?

Yes. An advocate can help you to find out what your rights are and help you to access all the information you need to make your own informed decisions. You can also learn about carers' rights by watching the video below, or by visiting our Carers' Rights page.

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My partner/dad/daughter is in residential care. Do I still qualify for a carer's advocate?

Yes you do. We understand that the caring role still continues when your loved one is in a residential setting.

Is the advocacy service free?

Yes, there is no charge for advocacy support.

Would an advocate help me communicate with professionals?

Yes. An advocate would support you in communicating with health and social care professionals.

This could be face-to-face, through an email or a letter or at meetings.

Can an advocate come to meetings with me?

Yes, advocates can go to meetings with you and be there at assessments if it would help. Advocates can help you to prepare for meetings, explain what to expect and be there with you. We can prompt you if needed and talk on your behalf if necessary.

Could an advocate help me make a complaint?

An advocate would help you in making a complaint to social services and other local authority agencies. We would listen to your views and work with you in highlighting your concerns. We would support you throughout the complaints process. If you needed support to make a complaint about the NHS, we may need to refer you to another advocacy service.

My partner's care package has been reduced, could an advocate help me to fight this?

Yes. An advocate can never guarantee you getting the outcome you want but can help you to challenge decisions that have been made about the person you care for if you disagree with them.

Social services have cut the direct payments.

Can an advocate help me to fight this?

Yes they can but they cannot guarantee the outcome. An advocate would help you in challenging the cuts made and would explain the options available to you in fighting this issue, including making a formal complaint.

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What kind of things could an advocate help parent carers with?

An advocate would help parent carers with any health and social care related issues or concerns you may have. This includes support at meetings, including child protection and child in need meetings, care reviews and support at assessments.

Can an advocate help me with claiming benefits?

No, this is not something an advocate could help you with, but they can refer you to an organisation who can help you with benefits.

Can an advocate help me with legal problems?

No, as advocates have no legal training they cannot help you with legal issues, but they can help you to access the right legal support.



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