

Their support was really reassuring

Children's advocacy: A guide for professionals
in Wakefield



What is an advocate?

Advocates are independent professionals who work with people to help them understand their options, know their rights and say what they want.

This helps to make sure that people are involved as much as possible in decisions about their health and care.

Your duty to refer

Your duty to refer: Advocacy is a statutory right for eligible people. The Mental Capacity Act, Care Act, and Children Act state that you must refer eligible people for advocacy. The Mental Health Act states that you must make eligible people aware of how to access advocacy.

Who is eligible?

Use the grid in this leaflet to find out who you must refer.

If you are unsure about eligibility, or have questions about advocacy types, contact us.



Children & Young People	Independent Visitor
<p>When to refer</p> <p>Make a referral for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● young people who are leaving care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aged 16-25 - either relevant or formerly relevant for support under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 ● looked after children who have asked for advocacy support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 18 - in Wakefield or who are the responsibility of Wakefield but who are placed out of borough ● any child or young person who wants to make a formal complaint about social care services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 18 ● disabled children and young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 19 - accessing social care or services from the children with disabilities team, and accessing short break care ● Children in Care (CIC), Care Leavers and Young People in Custody ● children and young people aged 5–17 who are due to be discussed at Child Protection Case conferences or are supported by a Child Protection Plan ● 16 and 17-year-old young people determined to be homeless or at risk of homelessness 	<p>When to refer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● when a child or young person is living in the care of the local authority ● when an Independent Visitor has been identified as part of the child/young persons care plan ● for care leavers up to the age of 21 or 25 ● when a looked after child or young person lacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a positive and consistent relationship with an adult - is placed out of the borough and is potentially more isolated - social skills and experiences - emotional development <p>You must make a referral: For any looked after child or young person.</p>
<p>Advocate's role</p> <p>To support the child or young person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand their rights and options ● say what they think ● have their views and wishes heard in decisions about their care and where they live ● raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care ● to make informed decisions/to contribute to their care plans ● to support in any relevant meetings such as Statutory review meetings ● to attend on behalf of the CYP to represent their wishes and feelings 	<p>Independent Visitors Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to befriend and visit a child/young person who is looked after by a local authority ● to support the child/young person in engaging in social activities and experiences that contribute to their social, emotional and educational development ● to establish a consistent, positive adult-child relationship ● to establish appropriate activities for the age and individual needs of the child/young person ● to help the child/young person to have fun whilst learning and engaging with an adult

What do advocates do?

An advocate can support someone to:

- communicate their views and wishes
- understand their rights
- understand any processes and decisions they are subject to
- understand the options they have
- make their own choices
- challenge a decision

Even when someone can't tell their advocate what they want, our advocates will use a range of approaches to establish their views and wishes as far as possible and secure their rights.

In some circumstances, an advocate has the right to access medical or care records on behalf of the person they are supporting. An advocate may write a report that must be taken into consideration by professionals.

An advocate does not:

- offer counselling or befriending
- offer legal advice
- tell people they support what decisions to make
- tell health or social care professionals what decisions to make

How to make a referral

Go online to find services near you and make a referral
voiceability.org/make-a-referral

You can also request a referral form by emailing
helpline@voiceability.org

If you have questions about eligibility or advocacy types, contact us.

Freephone:

0300 303 1660

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Website: voiceability.org



About VoiceAbility

We've been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for over 40 years. We're an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.