

Information About Advocacy



What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is about supporting people to help put them in control of their own life. There are times, in all our lives, when we find it hard to understand what is going on and to express how we feel and what we want to happen. At these times, it often helps if we have somebody listen to us, hear what we are saying, and help us tell other people what we want.

Advocates can help to:

- Make sure that your views, wishes and feelings are heard and listened to.
- Listen to you and ask questions to understand what you want or feel.
- Help you to make sense of things, especially at difficult times in your life.
- Help you to find information and explain what might happen if you make one choice or another choice.
- Ensure your rights are protected.
- Give you time to think about your choices and support you to make your own informed choices.
- Help you to say what you want to say, and support you to be independent.
- Speak for you on your behalf if you want them to.

Whoever you choose as your advocate, you should feel able to trust them. They are often friends or family, but there are also

independent and professional advocates who are trained to support people and help them speak up.

Your advocate should understand the safeguarding process and know what options are available so they can guide you through the process. An advocate is not there to express their own opinions and they should not be pressurised by other parties. Their job is to help you find and understand information, explore your options, and make decisions about your life.

Types of Advocacy?

People are very different from each other and therefore their needs for support can be different. What advocacy is used and when, should depend on what is best suited to you.

There are a variety of advocacy types developed to recognise these differences.

- Peer advocacy – this is when you are supported by someone who has had similar experiences.
- Group advocacy – when several people support each other (although they may also have an independent advocate to empower them to do this).
- Some people require support for everyday tasks. This type of advocacy is often referred to as befriending.

Usually, when we talk about advocacy, it is crisis advocacy where someone needs one-to-one support during a difficult or potentially dangerous situation in their life.

These safeguarding situations can be difficult and distressing, advocacy can help people to be involved and in control.

Advocacy and Safeguarding

When somebody tells us they are worried about your safety, this is what we call a safeguarding concern. Your views and wishes are important to us. We need to know what you want us to do. Our job is to work with you and make sure you are safe, and then to see if there is anything we can do to make things better for you.

A safeguarding concern can be a difficult or potentially dangerous situation in your life. This is why we think it is a good idea for you to have an advocate to support you during this time while we work with you to make sure you are safe.

It is not a good idea to have an advocate who is personally involved in the safeguarding concern. If we thought this was the case, we would voice our worries over your choice.

The local authority is legally obliged to:

1. Keep you safe throughout the safeguarding concern.
2. Empower you and listen to your wishes during the process
3. Find an independent, professional advocate for you if it is necessary

The local authority and your advocate both have a duty to make sure that you are at the centre of the safeguarding process, and that your views and wishes are understood and respected at all times.

Help and Support

If you have any questions, your contact person is

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Their contact details are:

Phone

Email

They can be contacted at these times:

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Advocacy Services in Solihull

Solihull Action through Advocacy

Phone: 0121 706 4696

Web: solihulladvocacy.org.uk

Email: office@solihulladvocacy.org.uk

Age UK Solihull

Phone: 0121 704 7840

Web: ageuk.org.uk/solihull

Email: info@ageuksolihull.org.uk

Solihull Carers Centre

Phone: 0121 788 1143

Web: solihullcarers.org

Email: centre@solihullcarers.org

Useful Websites

Solihull MyLife Portal

A directory of organisations and services that can provide support and advice for people with care and support needs.

eservices.solihull.gov.uk/localinformation/MyLife

Community Advice Hubs

Age UK Solihull has a range of services that have been developed over 40 years of experience in meeting the needs of older and vulnerable people in Solihull.

ageuk.org.uk/solihull/services

Department of Health and Social Care

We support ministers in leading the nation's health and social care to help people live more independent, healthier lives for longer.

gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-health-and-social-care

Mental Capacity Act 2005 Legislation

The Mental Capacity Act (MCA) is designed to protect and empower people who may lack the mental capacity to make their own decisions about their care and treatment. It applies to people aged 16 and over.

legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/9/contents



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