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/hampshire

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

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

Phone: 0300 303 1660

Email: helpline@voiceability.org
Twitter: @VoiceAbility
Website: voiceability.org

About VoiceAbility

We’ve been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for over 30 years. We’re an independent charity and one of the UK’s largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.
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

Advocacy is a statutory right for eligible people. The Mental Capacity Act and Care 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 have questions about eligibility or advocacy types, contact us.

In Hampshire, you can also make an advocacy referral for:
- adults with support needs that mean they would benefit from advocacy, but who do not fall into the criteria for other forms of advocacy
- anyone with a mental health issue who is in hospital, or who is eligible to access community mental health services
- anyone who wants to make a complaint about an NHS service

**Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)**

**When to refer**

Make a referral when both conditions apply:
1. The person is assessed to lack capacity to make a best-interest decision about:
   - serious medical treatment
   - long-term accommodation
2. There are no family or friends considered appropriate to consult about the decision

‘Lack capacity’ means the person:
- has an impairment or disturbance that affects the way their mind or brain works (e.g. a brain injury, dementia, autism, learning disabilities, mental health problems) AND
- the impairment or disturbance means that they are unable to make a specific decision at the time it needs to be made

Advocate’s role

As far as possible, to:
- Make sure that the person’s views and wishes are taken into account in the best-interests decision.
- Support the person to be involved in the decision, or to represent them if necessary.
- Also, if the person may be deprived of liberty under DoLs, to provide support.
- During an assessment under DoLs.
- Between the appointment of Relevant Person’s Representatives (RPRs) when an authorisation is in place.
- To the person, RPR or both when the authorisation is in place.

**Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)**

**When to refer**

Make a referral whenever a person is in any of the following situations:
- Detained under the Mental Health Act (except sections 4, 5, 135 and 136)
- Subject to a Community Treatment Order
- Subject to guardianship
- Being considered for S68 treatment
- Being considered for S57A treatment
- Being considered for Electro-Convulsive Therapy
- An informal patient on a mental health ward

‘Lack capacity’ means the person:
- Has an impairment or disturbance that affects how they understand relevant information.
- Has an impairment or disturbance that affects how they retain that information.
- Has an impairment or disturbance that affects how they use or weigh up that information.
- Has an impairment or disturbance that affects how they understand relevant information.
- Has an impairment or disturbance that affects how they communicate their wishes and views.

Advocate’s role

To support the person to:
- Understand their rights and options.
- Have their views and wishes heard in decisions about their care or treatment.
- Raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care or treatment.

**Care Act Advocacy**

**When to refer**

Make a referral whenever all three conditions apply:
1. One of these processes is taking place:
   - Social care needs assessment.
   - Care assessment.
   - Care planning.
   - Care review.
   - S42 safeguarding investigation.
2. Without support, the person will have substantial difficulty being involved.
3. There are no appropriate, able and willing family or friends to support the person’s active involvement.

‘Substantial difficulty’ means the person will find it very hard to:
- Understand relevant information.
- Retain that information.
- Use or weigh up that information.
- Communicate their wishes and views.

Advocate’s role

To support the person to:
- Understand their rights under the Care Act.
- Be fully involved in the assessment, review or planning process.
- Raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care.

**Children’s Statutory Advocacy (also known as Looked After Children’s Advocacy)**

**When to refer**

The following groups are eligible:
- Looked After Children (including in secure children’s homes).
- Care Leavers.
- Children with special educational needs or disabilities.

These groups can self-refer, and you should make a referral yourself when an eligible child or young person asks you to, or when you know they want to.
- Get help to understand their rights and options.
- Say what they think.
- Make a complaint about their care.

**When to refer**

Make a referral whenever all three conditions apply:
1. Make a complaint about their care.
2. They have their views and wishes heard in decisions about their care and where they live.
3. Raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care.

Advocate’s role

To support the child or young person to:
- 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.

Advocate’s role

To support the child or young person to:
- 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.

Advocate’s role

To support the child or young person to:
- 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.