How to make a referral

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

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 Southampton you can also make an advocacy referral for:
- people with substance use disorder
- people with learning disabilities who have housing issues to resolve

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

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

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

Advocate’s role

To support children, young people and parents to prepare for the transition to adult life, and empower young people to express their views in line with the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice

In Southampton you can also make an advocacy referral for:
- parents with a learning disability whose child is subject to child protection proceedings
- people in hospital who need support to be fully involved in the hospital discharge process

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

When to refer

Make a referral whenever a person is in any of the following situations:
- detained under the Mental Health Act (except under short term sections 4, 5, 135 and 136)
- subject to a Community Treatment Order
- subject to guardianship
- being considered for S58 treatment
- being considered for S57A treatment
- an informal patient on a mental health ward

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