

Advocacy during Safeguarding Enquiries

Helpsheet for Families and Friends

How an advocate can support someone you care about to be safe

If the council think someone you know has been hurt, they may want to find out what happened. The council will also want to know how they can make sure they are safe.

This is sometimes called 'Safeguarding'.

The council may want to speak to anyone that has been hurt, or knows what has happened, to find out what they can do to keep people safe and to help them.

Some people will have a right to an advocate to help them when speaking to the council or to get what the person would like.

This information sheet

This information will help you understand the safeguarding process. And how an advocate can help your friend or relative with it.

The Safeguarding Process

The council will try to find out what has happened and what they need to do to help people. This is called an “enquiry”. They may try speak to your friend or relative before they do anything. But if someone else is being hurt they may have to do something without speaking to them first. The council might even ask another organisation, like the NHS, to do the “enquiry” for them.

The council will speak to your friend or relative about what has happened. Your friend or relative can ask questions about what has happened. They can also ask to see any information about them and information about what has happened.

The council will ask your friend or relative:

- whether they want them to look into what has happened
- what they want to happen now
- what they need to be safe.

You friend or relative may say they do not want what has happened to be looked into, or that they do not want a plan to keep them safe. The council may still have to look into it if:

1. Other people may be hurt, or at risk of being harmed, or
2. The council think that your friend or relative is in danger but your friend or relative does not understand that.

The council will ask your friend or relative about who they want to know about what has happened.

Please tell the council if you think that your friend or relative is not safe. Or if they say they do not feel safe.

The council may also want to speak to you if they believe that you may know something about what has happened or if you may know what you friend or family member may want.

Getting an Independent Advocate

Your friend or relative can have an independent advocate if they:

- Find it hard to talk to the council about the safeguarding concerns
- Are not happy about what's happening
- Do not understand what's happening

AND

- You do not feel able to support your friend or relative at meetings or to understand what is happening.

OR

- Where your friend or relative would rather be supported by an advocate rather than someone that knows them well. Sometimes, people can find it easier to be supported through some difficult problems by someone that they do not have a personal relationship with.

How having an advocate can help

Having an advocate will mean that your friend or relative will have support to understand what is happening and why it is happening.

An advocate can help your friend or relative to understand their rights and to challenge the council, or other professionals, about any issues that your friend or relative is unhappy about.

It will also mean that there is someone to make sure their views are listened to.

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What an advocate will do

- ✓ The advocate will explain what they can and cannot do.
- ✓ Ask your friend or relative what support they want and what they want to happen as a result of the enquiry.
- ✓ Help your friend or relative to understand why people are worried about them.
- ✓ Help your friend or relative to understand good and bad things about any plans that are suggested to keep them safe.
- ✓ Support your friend or relative to get information about what has happened, the enquiry and what different professionals are doing.
- ✓ Support your friend or relative to understand what is happening. And what might happen next.
- ✓ Find out what your friend or relative would like to happen.
- ✓ Find out if your friend or relative is happy for the council to look into what has happened. The council may have to look into it even if your friend or relative is not happy for them to do so. An advocate can help them to understand why the council may do this.
- ✓ Make sure that if your friend or relative has questions or worries that the council knows about them.
- ✓ Support your friend or relative to get ready for any meetings.
- ✓ Go to meetings with your friend or relative if they want them to.

Find out more

If you would like to find out more information about safeguarding and how advocacy works, please do contact us:



0300 222 5948



careadvocacy@voiceability.org

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