

## Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

The main role of IMCA is to ensure that vulnerable people who are unable to make their own decisions are as involved as possible in decisions made about their lives. People over age 16 have a statutory right to an IMCA if they:

- Are facing decisions about accommodation, medical treatment or are subject to deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS) and
- Lack capacity to make these decisions and
- Have no appropriate family or friends to consult.

An IMCA may also be involved in safeguarding cases and some care reviews where the person is assessed to lack relevant capacity.

## Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

We provide the statutory IMHA service for people who are detained under some sections of the Mental Health Act 1983, on a Community Treatment Order, under Guardianship, or if specific treatments such as ECT or neurosurgery are being discussed. Our service includes specialist IMHA advocacy support for people with a learning disability.

## Learning Disability Advocacy

This service provides paid and volunteer advocacy support for anyone over 18 who has a learning disability, whether formally diagnosed or not. We also provide advocates with an understanding of autistic spectrum conditions for people with autism and an additional learning disability.

### Advocacy Related Support

Leeds Autism Aim—this service provides autism advocacy, information and mentoring. The service also supports the autism hub which is an information and peer support service for adults with autism/Asperger's Syndrome in Leeds.

Leep1/Leeds People First—Leep1 is a community interest company owned by Advonet. Leep1 helps people with a learning disability speak up for themselves. Leep1 run a café and many other projects.

Roma Voice—as well as providing bilingual advocacy to Roma clients, this project also provides social activities and a work club for Roma clients.

**Please contact the office for more information on any of our services or to talk about volunteering with Advonet.**

“**Advonet**  
Providing independent advocacy  
& related support”



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Advonet exists to ensure everyone can have their needs heard and their rights respected. It both delivers services directly and promotes independent advocacy provided by partners in Leeds and the surrounding area. Advonet is funded by Leeds City Council but works independently.

### **What is advocacy?**

Advocacy means taking action to help people express their views, secure their rights, have their interests represented, access information and services, and explore choices and options.

Advocacy helps people speak up – on their own or with help. It makes sure people's interests are heard directly or are represented.

We talk about independent advocacy because it is important that advocates are independent of the organisations that are providing services. Being independent helps make sure that everyone has an equal chance to make their voice heard.

Advocacy is not: befriending, counselling, an advice service, providing social support or deciding what is in a person's best interest.

### **What will an advocate do?**

- Listen to you;
- Respect your views and support your choices;
- Make sure you know your rights;
- Make sure your voice is heard;
- Help you to feel in control of your life.

### **What advocacy services do we provide?**

#### **Bilingual Advocacy**

We provide quality, competent bilingual advocacy for priority clients within Black and Minority Ethnic communities (including refugees, asylum seekers, Roma and other Eastern European communities).

#### **Care Act Advocacy**

The main purpose of the Care Act is to support people with health and care to get the outcomes that matter to them in their life. It sets out how people's needs will be assessed and addressed fairly. The act recognises that not everyone will be able to be meaningfully involved in the assessment, safeguarding processes and care and support planning and review, without advocacy support. To be entitled to an independent advocate under the

Care Act a person must meet 2 conditions:

- the person has substantial difficulty in being fully involved with their assessment, care and support planning and review or safeguarding;
- there is no one appropriate and available to support and represent their wishes.

#### **Community Mental Health Advocacy**

This service provides advocacy support for anyone over 18 who experiences mental distress.

#### **Dementia Advocacy**

This service is for anyone who has or might have dementia. You do not need a formal diagnosis to use the service as we work with people at any stage of the dementia journey. When people affected by dementia are not able to understand advocacy or tell us what they want, we can provide non-instructed advocacy.

#### **Health Complaints Advocacy**

We provide confidential independent advocacy support to people who want to make a complaint about NHS services (including hospitals, GPs, dentists, pharmacies, opticians and NHS funded care in a private setting).