

Advonet adheres to the National Advocacy Charter which defines and promotes key advocacy principles.

These are:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Independence
- Putting people first
- Empowerment
- Equal Opportunity
- Accountability
- Accessibility
- Confidentiality
- Support for Advocates
- Clear Complaints and Compliments Policy

Advonet works in partnership with these, and other advocacy services:



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WHAT IS ADVOCACY?



Advocacy is a way of making sure that a person's voice is heard when decisions are made.

It involves looking at choices, enabling people to know their rights, helping to defend those rights and getting the person's voice heard.





This leaflet explains what advocacy is, how advocates work and clarifies some of the important things about an advocate's role.

Advocacy is for people who feel that they are not being heard or taken seriously and who fear their rights might not be respected. Formal meetings and procedures often make people feel that they need support to speak up effectively.

In Leeds, different advocacy groups have developed for different groups of people who feel they are being ignored, overlooked or treated badly. Amongst others there are services for people with learning disabilities, aspergers and autism, older people, people from black & minority ethnic groups, people with physical and sensory impairments, people in mental distress, people with dementia, and NHS complainants. Please refer to our Advocacy Services Directory or website for a full list.

Independent advocacy

Independence is vital to advocacy. It ensures that the voice of the individual is being heard. An independent advocate is accountable primarily to the person they are working with. Advocates must aim to:

- Help people to identify their interests and wishes
- Understand, respond to and represent a person's interests with commitment, as if they were their own
- Make sure the interests of a person or group are heard directly or are represented by an advocate
- Ensure that people have equal access to their full entitlement and rights to services
- Encourage self-advocacy as much as possible



Independent, not impartial

People feel more able to talk to someone who does not have any control over their care or access to services. This makes it important that advocates stay, and are seen to be, independent of those services. But advocates are not impartial. They must side with the person they are working with. This includes passing on all relevant information to that person.

The advocate as amplifier

An advocate does not represent their own views. They must represent their client's/partners views as if they were their own. When they speak they are amplifying that person's views, making sure that the client's/partners views are heard.

That's why advocates cannot try to persuade someone towards a particular point of view. If they did, whose voice would be heard?

Advocates speak on their client's instructions. Advocates do not necessarily have to agree with what they are being asked to say.

It's not about best interests

Advocates are not there to decide what is in someone's best interests. They are there to help someone have as full a say in decision making as possible. This can't be done by telling someone what they should be doing. Independent Advocacy should not be confused with befriending, advice giving, mediation or counselling. Advocacy does not replicate other services.

If you are trying to find an
advocate in Leeds,
call: 0113 244 0606
or email:
advocacy@advonet.org.uk

