

Support for disabled people accessing benefits.

Social security benefits advocacy:
A guide for professionals in Scotland



What is an advocate?

Advocates are independent professionals who support people to have their say, be heard, and understand their rights. They do not work for Social Security Scotland, or the Scottish government and they have no role in assessing or deciding people's benefits.

Eligibility

Any person who self identifies as disabled is eligible for advocacy support when accessing benefits from Social Security Scotland. Support is also available for parents, guardians, or carers who are accessing benefits for a disabled child. Or for parents, guardians, or carers who are disabled and want support to access social security benefits for their child.

When to refer

Referral can be made at any time when accessing benefits from Social Security Scotland. From the point of application to any requests for redetermination and through to appeals. Support is also available at assessments if requested.



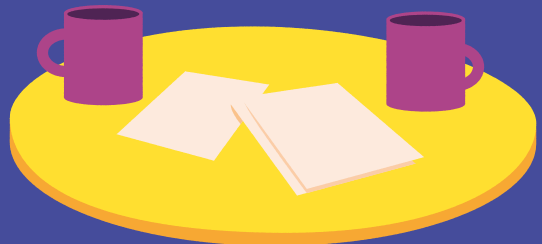
What do advocates do?

An advocate can support someone to:

- understand information about their rights and options
- ask questions so they can say what they want
- have their voice heard and represent themselves
- be fully involved in decisions about their benefits
- complete the process from the point of application, including reviews and any appeals they want to make

An advocate will:

- listen to and be on the person's side
- talk with the person about their options
- plan with them and help them decide what they want to do
- represent the person they support, if they are not able to represent themselves
- use a range of approaches to understand the persons views and wishes



How to make a referral

Online at:

voiceability.org

Freephone:

0300 303 1660



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

You can also contact Social Security Scotland about advocacy for free on **0800 182 2222**.

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

We're open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.
We're closed on Bank Holidays.

About VoiceAbility

We've been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for over 40 years. We're an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.