

Their support was really reassuring.

Advocacy: A guide for professionals in Bolton



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 are unsure about eligibility, or have questions about advocacy types, contact us.



Children's advocacy	Child Protection advocacy	Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)	Care Act advocacy	Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)
<p>When to refer Make a referral for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● young people who are leaving care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aged 16-25 - either relevant or formerly relevant for support under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 ● looked after children who have asked for advocacy support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 18 - in Bolton or who are the responsibility of Bolton but who are placed out of borough ● any child or young person who wants to make a formal complaint about social care services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 18 ● disabled children and young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - up to and including the age of 19 - accessing social care or services from the children with disabilities team 	<p>When to refer Make a referral when a child or young person is subject to a Child Protection Plan.</p> <p>These referrals must come via Bolton's Head of Service Child Protection and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).</p>	<p>When to refer Make a referral whenever a person is in any of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● detained under the Mental Health Act (even if on leave of absence from the hospital) but excluding people under short term sections 4, 5, 135 and 136 ● a conditionally discharged patient ● subject to a Community Treatment Order (CTO) ● subject to guardianship ● being considered for S58A treatment (including informal patients and people under 18) ● being considered for S57 treatment (including informal patients) 	<p>When to refer Make a referral when all three conditions apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. one of these processes is taking place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● social care needs assessment ● carer's assessment ● care planning ● care review ● S42 safeguarding investigation 2. without support, the person will have substantial difficulty being involved 3. there are no appropriate, able and willing family or friends to support the person's active involvement* <p>*There are some exceptions: see voiceability.org/care-act</p> <p>'Substantial difficulty' means that, without support, the person will find it very hard to do one or more of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand relevant information ● retain that information ● use or weigh up that information ● communicate their wishes and views 	<p>When to refer Make a referral when both conditions apply:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the person is assessed to lack capacity in relation to a decision about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● serious medical treatment ● long-term accommodation ● also section 39a, 39c, 39d (Mental Capacity Act, DoLS referrals, including RPR and 1.2 Reps) 2. there are no family or friends considered appropriate to consult about the decision <p>'Lack capacity' means the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 <p>You must also make a referral:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● for a person being assessed under DoLS, when there is no one appropriate to consult ● when there is a gap between appointment of Relevant Person's Representative (RPR) ● if a person has an unpaid RPR, and the person or the RPR, asks for an advocate or the Supervisory Body recommends it
<p>Advocate's role To support the child or young person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand their rights and options ● say what they think ● have their views and wishes heard in decisions about their care and where they live ● raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care ● to make informed decisions/to contribute to their care plans ● to support in any relevant meetings such as Statutory review meetings ● to attend on behalf of the CYP to represent their wishes and feelings 	<p>Advocate's role To support the child or young person by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● meeting them before the conference to talk about their wishes and feelings ● explaining to them about the meeting, their rights and what will happen ● supporting them to communicate how they feel ● coming to the conference with them, if they want to go, or attending on their behalf to explain their wishes and feelings if they do not want to go ● helping them to understand what decisions are made about their life ● helping them to make positive contributions to their Child protection plans 	<p>Advocate's role To support the person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand their rights and options ● understand decisions about treatment ● understand the parts of the Mental Health Act which apply to them ● 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 	<p>Advocate's role To support the person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand their rights under the Care Act ● be fully involved in the assessment, review or planning process 	<p>Advocate's role As far as possible, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 ● uphold the person's rights in relation to that decision

We also offer litigation friend and NHS Complaints.

How to make a referral

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

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

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

Freephone:

0300 303 1660

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Website: voiceability.org



About VoiceAbility

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

What do advocates do?

An advocate can support someone to:

- communicate their views and wishes
- understand their rights
- understand any processes and decisions they are subject to
- understand the options they have
- make their own choices
- challenge a decision

Even when someone can't tell their advocate what they want, our advocates will use a range of approaches to establish their views and wishes as far as possible and secure their rights.

In some circumstances, an advocate has the right to access medical or care records on behalf of the person they are supporting. An advocate may write a report that must be taken into consideration by professionals.

An advocate does not:

- offer counselling or befriending
- offer legal advice
- tell people they support what decisions to make
- tell health or social care professionals what decisions to make