

## 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

## How to make a referral

Go online to find services near you and make a referral [voiceability.org/make-a-referral](https://voiceability.org/make-a-referral)

You can also request a referral form by emailing [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

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

Freephone:

**0300 303 1660**

Email: [helpline@voiceability.org](mailto:helpline@voiceability.org)

Website: [voiceability.org](https://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.

VoiceAbility

**Their support was really reassuring.**

Children's advocacy: A guide for professionals in Bolton

VA08/Mar2021

Registered charity 1076630. Limited company 3798884.



# 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
<p><b>When to refer</b></p> <p>Make a referral for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>young people who are leaving care</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- aged 16-25</li> <li>- either relevant or formerly relevant for support under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>looked after children who have asked for advocacy support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to and including the age of 18</li> <li>- in Bolton or who are the responsibility of Bolton but who are placed out of borough</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>any child or young person who wants to make a formal complaint about social care services, up to and including the age of 18</b></li> <li>● <b>disabled children and young people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- up to and including the age of 19</li> <li>- accessing social care/services from the children with disabilities team</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>When to refer</b></p> <p>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><b>Advocate's role</b></p> <p>To support the child or young person to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● understand their rights and options</li> <li>● say what they think</li> <li>● have their views and wishes heard in decisions about their care and where they live</li> <li>● raise anything they are unhappy with relating to their care</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocate's role</b></p> <p>To support the child or young person by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● meeting them before the conference to talk about their wishes and feelings</li> <li>● explaining to them about the meeting, their rights and what will happen</li> <li>● supporting them to communicate how they feel</li> <li>● 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</li> <li>● helping them to understand what decisions are made about their life</li> </ul>

For these services, you can refer children and young people up and including the age of 18, or up to the age of 25 if they have a learning disability.