

Their support was really reassuring.

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.

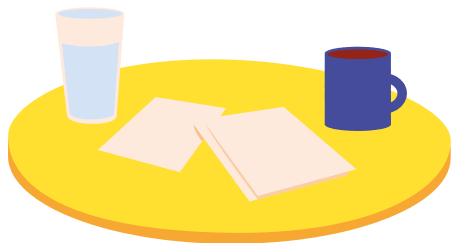
Eligibility

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

Advocacy support is available throughout the process when accessing benefits from Social Security Scotland, from the point of application, through any requests for redetermination and through to appeals. Support is also available at assessments if requested.



What do advocates do?

An advocate will work for and on behalf of the person they support.

An advocate can support and empower someone to:

- understand information about their rights, and options under Social Security Scotland
- ask questions so they can say what they want, have their voice heard and represent themselves
- complete the process from the point of application, including redetermination and any appeals

An advocate will:

- listen and be on their side
- represent people when they are not able to represent themselves

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, the advocate may need to consult or get information from others to support the person. They will only do this, if the person tells them they can, unless the person is unable to give consent.

An advocate does not:

- offer counselling or befriending
- offer legal advice
- tell people they support what decisions to make
- make any decisions about what benefits you get

How to make a referral

Online at:

voiceability.org

Freephone:

0300 303 1660

You can also request a referral form by emailing
SocialSecurityAdvocacy@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
40 years. We're an independent charity and one of the
UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement
services.