

About advocacy

What we do and our promises to you
We'll help you be heard



What is an advocate?

An advocate is an independent professional who is on your side. They can support you to have your say and know your rights.

- Advocates don't work for the council, the NHS, or care providers.
- You don't need to pay for an advocate.



Our promises to you

1. We will put you in control

Your advocate will help you do things for yourself and support you to make your own decisions. Your advocate will check you're happy before they do anything for you.

2. We will keep things confidential

We won't tell anyone else what you have said to us, unless you agree. There are some exceptions. Your advocate must tell someone else if you share information about:

- you or someone else breaking the law
- you or someone else being in danger

If we have to tell someone else, we will explain why.

You usually have the right to meet your advocate in private. This means you can talk to them without anyone else in the room. If there is a reason that this isn't possible, we will explain this.

3. We will ask your permission to see information about you

Your advocate may need to see your medical or care records in order to help you. We will only look at information about you if you agree. There is a form to sign if you agree.

4. We will keep information we hold about you safe. You can ask to see it.

Your advocate keeps information about you and the work you do together. We keep it safe and store it for 18 months after the last time you contact us. At any time, you can ask to see the information we store about you or ask us to delete it.

5. We will listen and respond to any feedback you give us

We will ask you for feedback and tell you how we're trying to make our service better. If you are unhappy with the work that we are doing, you can complain. You can contact your advocate to complain, or contact feedback@voiceability.org or 0300 303 1660 (freephone).

What we ask of you

1. Please treat VoiceAbility team members with respect
2. Please tell us as soon as possible if you need to cancel a meeting with your advocate.

What does an advocate do?

Your advocate will:

- listen to what you think about what's happening to you
- help you say what you want and don't want
- help you understand information about your situation
- explain your options
- plan with you about what to do next

Your advocate will not:

- offer counselling or befriending
- offer legal advice
- make decisions for you
- tell you what to do

If at any point you need support that your advocate cannot offer, they can help you find out if there is someone who can.

You can ask to stop advocacy support at any time.

**“You didn’t judge me.
I felt like I was being
heard.”**

Bea, who met with an advocate

Contact us

You can contact your advocate directly, if they have given you their details. Or, you can contact our helpline.

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

Freephone:

0300 303 1660

Email: helpline@voiceability.org

Website: voiceability.org

Please ask if you need this information in a different language or format. We have Easy Read information. We can provide interpreters. We can provide advocates qualified in British Sign Language.

About VoiceAbility

We make sure you're heard when it matters most. 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.