Professional advocates support people with understanding their rights, in speaking up for themselves, and in helping them to make informed choices. Professional advocates are paid and trained to provide users of the service with the information that they need to make the decisions that affect their lives. They are independent, free and can also speak on someone’s behalf in order to get their voice heard.

An advocate will always:

- Be on your side
- Listen to what you want
- Make sure people listen to you
- An advocate can work with you to:
  - Speak out at meetings or to professionals
  - Find information so you can make choices and sort out problems
  - Change your services if you want to
  - Know about your rights and make sure they are respected
  - Make difficult decisions
  - Make a complaint if you are not happy about something

Who do we work with?

Anyone who needs support to:

- Make changes and take control of their life
- Be valued and included in their community
- Be listened to and understood

A person accessing advocacy could, for example, be someone with a learning difficulty, mental health issues, someone on the autistic spectrum or an older person who has dementia.
Our work varies across the country, according to the priorities of the local authority. We also work with parents who may have a disability, carers, within prison communities, with families and young offenders.

We know the challenges and inequalities that different client groups face and we are working to highlight these to local authorities that may not currently focus on them.

Code of Ethics

VoiceAbility’s independent advocates follow a strict code of ethics. They must:

- Act in accordance with the service user’s wishes and instructions;
- Act independently, without any conflict of interest;
- Keep service users well informed of progress and setbacks;
- Maintain confidentiality;
- Offer independent information, suited to the service user’s comprehension and communication abilities and mental or physical health needs;
- Act in an anti-discriminatory, non-judgmental way;
- Act honestly and respectfully at all times.

VoiceAbility services go above and beyond the standards set out in the Department of Health commissioned report ‘Independent Specialist Advocacy in England and Wales: Recommendations for Good Practice’ (Barnes, Brandon & Webb 2002) and BILD (2007).

Find out more about our Professional Advocates on our website

www.voiceability.org

Help us improve

Want to make a comment, complaint, suggestion or compliment? Talk to any of our team members - email us on comments@voiceability.org or give us a ring on 01223 555800.