What is a Citizen Advocate?

A Citizen advocacy is a partnership between an individual who is vulnerable and not in a good position to exercise or defend their rights as a citizen, and a member of the community who is independent of those providing direct services. A person may be vulnerable because of disability, old age or mental health difficulties.

A Citizen Advocate is someone who volunteers their time and is recruited by a paid, trained advocate co-ordinator. The co-ordinators role is to create and support relationships between an advocate and partner (vulnerable person).

A Citizen Advocate listens to what the person has to say and will support them to get their views heard. They will always be on the side of the person they support.

A Citizen Advocate can support someone to:

- Find information so they can make choices and sort out problems
- Change services if that is what the person wants
- Understand their rights and make sure they are respected
- Make difficult decisions
- Make a complaint if they are not happy about something

Why does the service exist?

When you talk to people who have a disability, you often come across the term 'circle of support'. This means the friends and family that person has, each of whom play an important role in supporting that individual.

Citizen advocates are a great way to widen the circle of support. Because they are totally independent, they can work with somebody to find out what they really want to do, without any pre-conceived expectations or ideas. The partnership that is formed can work towards developing positive relationships with individuals, relevant groups and organisations within the wider community.
Volunteering

We may be looking for people to become Citizen Advocates in your area.

We provide all new potential Citizen Advocates with induction training, on-going training and regular updates.

We also provide support and evaluation sessions for each partnership.

If you would like to become a Citizen Advocate or would like to volunteer to become a Citizen Advocate, please take a look in our ‘in your area’ section on our website to see what opportunities are available near you. Alternatively, you can contact your local office and speak to one of our advocates.

www.voiceability.org

Who are VoiceAbility?
VoiceAbility is a registered charity which provides independent advocacy services across the UK. You can find out more on www.voiceability.org or by calling your local office.

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.