



One minute guide

Safeguarding and Advocacy

Why advocacy?

Local authorities have a duty to involve people in decisions made about them and their care and support. The ethos of making safeguarding personal means that no matter how complex a person's needs people must express their wishes, be supported in making their own decisions and have a say in what happens to them. Advocacy is part of the Care Act 2014 and brings into legislation the spirit of person-centered practice which involves and empowers service users. Advocacy helps people to:

Have their voice heard

Communicate their views and wishes

Be involved in decision making

Have their rights respected

July 2024

Who can have an advocate?

The Care Act 2014 says that the duty to provide advocacy applies to:

Adults who need care and support

Carers of adults with care and support needs and carers in transition

Children who are approaching the transition to adult care and support. Where a child's needs assessment is carried out, and when a young carer's assessment is undertaken.

However, the following conditions must also be met:

1. The person has substantial difficulty in being fully involved within assessment, care and supporting planning and review or safeguarding, and
2. There is no-one appropriate and available to support and represent their wishes

Enquiries can be sent to cwadvocacy@voiceability.org

Coventry City Council is responsible for ensuring there is sufficient provision of independent advocacy to meet its statutory obligations with access restricted to eligible individuals only. Access is referral via a designated officer

Care Act Advocate – When a person has substantial difficulty in engaging in assessment and/or safeguarding processes, and there isn't anyone (a relative or friend) appropriate who can support the person to be fully involved, an independent person must be appointed by the Local Authority (CCC). The independent advocate must not be someone who is paid to provide care or treatment for the person or an organisation that is paid by the council to carry out assessments, care and support plans or reviews.

Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) - Works closely with the person who has been subject to rape or sexual assault to help them understand the criminal justice system.
Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) - Works closely with the person to assess the level of risk, discuss protective measures and implement protection plans.

The Coventry advocacy story last year...

In 2018/19 advocates supported 301 individuals under the Care Act 2014 and as Independent Mental Capacity Advocates. The majority of work advocates undertook with individuals was safeguarding support and supporting service users at assessments and reviews. Some feedback from service users was: Can we replace with the following:

Feedback from adults who have been supported by an independent advocate during a recent safeguarding intervention.

Mr X asked the Advocate to support him when meeting with the Social Worker saying, "I feel better when you are there".

Ms X said "When I have an advocate, I feel more safe".

What an advocate should not do:

Speak on behalf of someone who can speak for themselves

Make decisions on behalf of an individual

Provide care or support to meet an individual's needs

Befriend someone or offer social support

Take over an issue and solve it on someone's behalf

Mediate or provide any type of counselling

There are different types of advocates to meet peoples' specific needs – for example, some advocates specialise in mental capacity, mental health and complaints, as well as advocates who support individuals under the general framework of the Care Act 2014.