

Care Direct
0845 1551 007

factsheet

Devon
County Council 

A guide to Advocacy

Factsheet 13 – 21 July 2010 (6 pages)

What is Advocacy?

“Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and to obtain the services they need” (*Action for Advocacy 2002*).

Our Advocacy Policy

It is our policy to support and work in partnership with advocacy services for people who currently use or want to use our services. We have a duty to make advocacy services available, if required, for anyone who is making, or wants to make a complaint.

Health and Social Care Act 2001 (Section 12) - places a duty on the Secretary of State to arrange for the provision of independent advocacy services, which should be '... independent of any person who is the subject of a relevant complaint or who is involved or who is investigating such a complaint...' It also provides for the Secretary of State to make payments to set up such arrangements.

What can an advocate do?

An advocate can:

- **help you speak up for yourself**
- **listen to what you have to say**
- **only do what you ask them to do**
- **help you communicate your concerns**
- **help you find information**
- **support you to make informed choices**
- **help make information accessible**
- **attend meetings with you**
- **write letters and make phone calls for you**
- **support you to make a complaint or access complaints services.**

What can't an advocate do?

An advocate can't:

- **make decisions for you**
- **do your shopping or cleaning**
- **work out your benefits or deal with your finances**
- **decide what you should do, or persuade you.**

You may need an advocate if you:

- **are not very confident about speaking up**
- **have difficulty communicating**
- **feel people are not listening to you**
- **feel isolated or feel disadvantaged**

- **have difficulty accessing services**
- **are unaware of your rights**
- **are unsure about services that may be available to you.**

Devon Advocacy Consortium

Advocacy services in Devon have started to work together, and in conjunction with Adult & Community Services and NHS Devon have formed Devon Advocacy Consortium. By working together Devon Advocacy can provide a more responsive, effective, high quality advocacy service and ensure that people living in the Devon County Council area can get advocacy when they need it.

For more information please look online at www.devonadvocacy.org.uk or ring 0845 3300112

Having your say

Do you have something you want to say to Adult & Community Services?

There are several ways to let us know what you think:

- **tell us yourself**
- **ask an advocate to help you**
- **ask a volunteer to tell us what you think**
- **ask a legal expert such as a solicitor or barrister. They can also speak for you at a tribunal or in court.**
- **join a group. A group can work together to support people who**

have concerns about similar things and then raise concerns at forums, meetings and committees.

- ask someone who has had a similar experience to you to tell us what you think.

You, or anyone you choose, can represent you, can phone, write or email Adult & Community Services. For further details contact Care Direct on 0845 1551 007.

See also:

Leaflet 3, *Compliments, Comments and Complaints* (includes feedback form)

Factsheet FS4, *Seeing your records*

Further factsheets can be found online at:

www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets

If you have any further questions please contact Care Direct
0845 1551 007

If you would like this factsheet in a different format such as Braille or tape, or in a different language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0845 155 1015 or email customer@devon.gov.uk.

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