

Advocates don't give advice, but can help you to think about all the choices you could make.

Advocates can also help you to get information, but **at all times in the advocacy relationship it is YOU who makes the decisions** (not the advocate).

Many of us act as **informal advocates** for our children, our parents, our friends, or our clients (depending on our work). Helping people to speak up for themselves is a simple and natural thing to do.

Independent advocacy is provided by trained advocates and organisations that work with specific principles and standards. It is always **FREE** and **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Advocacy Action is working to strengthen and develop advocacy work across the District.

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Advocacy Action

Developing Advocacy in Wakefield District

1. What is Independent Advocacy?

When important decisions are being made about someone's life it can help them to have support. Most people need someone to help them speak up for themselves at some point in their life.

Advocacy is about speaking up, or being helped to speak up. It is about making sure that people have the skills, confidence, and support to stand up for themselves.

Independent Advocacy is FREE and CONFIDENTIAL

Advocacy is particularly useful when:

- Others have more say in your life than you.
- Others are making decisions for you.
- You cannot get what you want.
- Things seem out of control.
- You are not able to speak for yourself for any reason.

Advocates can:

- Talk to you about your problem and help you plan what you want to say and do.
- Support you in speaking up for yourself, or say what you want to say for you.
- Go with you to meetings.
- Help make sure that people listen to what you say.
- Help you make a complaint and follow it through.
- Help you to access other agencies, such as housing or legal services.

Advocacy support should help you to:

- Have more choices.
- Get more or better services.
- Be treated fairly and equally.
- Solve problems.
- Get stronger, so you can help yourself.
- Get to know more people and find it easier to make friends.