



## Community Advocacy

### What is an advocate?

An advocate is an independent professional who can support you to have your voice heard on a particular issue. They can help you to understand a process you are going through and will try to empower you to be independent.

### What can an advocate support me with?

Some of the things our advocates can support you with are:

- **Social care**
- **Healthcare**
- **Employment**
- **Mental healthcare**
- **Housing**
- **Discrimination**

We can also support you if **Children's Services** are involved with your family. For example, if your children are on a Child Protection Plan.

### Examples of advocacy support

- We've supported people to have a care assessment with Social Services and get regular support, like a Personal Assistant (PA).
- We've worked with people who are in child protection proceedings to understand meetings and make changes so that their children can stay living with them.
- We've supported people to get safer and more accessible housing.
- We've supported people to get the mental healthcare they are entitled to, such as section 117 aftercare.

### What can an advocate do?



An advocate can:

- Represent your views and wishes if you find it hard to communicate.
- Help you to make an informed choice and come up with a plan of action.
- Attend meetings and help you to understand what is said.
- Support you to understand important documents.
- Support you to become more independent.
- Be non-judgemental and always treat you with respect.

### **Is there anything an advocate cannot do?**

An advocate cannot:

- Provide general support – advocacy must be around a particular issue.
- Make decisions for you, or tell you what to do.
- Automatically get you the outcome you want.
- Do things for you if you are able to do them yourself, with some support.
- Respond to a crisis situation.
- Work with you forever – we will agree what we are going to do together and once we've done those things then the support will come to a close.

### **How do I get an advocate?**

You can fill in our online form by going to [www.equallives.org.uk/advocacyreferral](http://www.equallives.org.uk/advocacyreferral).

If you cannot complete the form by yourself, please call us on **01508 491 210** and we will go through it with you over the phone.