



# Advocacy North East



Independent Advocacy  
here to give you a voice.

Client  
**Handbook**



## Our values

We put the individual first and are committed to work with integrity, confidentiality, and respect to enable individuals to have a voice and an equal opportunity to make informed choices.

### What is Advocacy?

Independent Advocacy is a way to help people have a stronger voice and to have as much control as possible over their own lives.

### Why Advocacy?

Advocacy is needed because at times it can be difficult to tell people about the things that you want, or to disagree with what someone has said.

Sometimes people don't explain the things they have said or decisions they have made and that can be confusing.

An advocate will listen to what you say and help you find information about the choices you have.

### Why Independent Advocacy?

You may already have many people in your life who speak on your behalf such as family, friends and support workers.

Having an advocate is different because we are completely independent of any other services you may be receiving; so there is never a conflict of interest.

This means that an independent advocate can freely support you to put your views across and to challenge decisions other people may have made about you, or for you.



**The Advocacy Service  
Is Free, Confidential and  
Independent**

## What the Advocate will do:

- >> The advocate can help you to find information and understand the choices that you have.
- >> The advocate will work with you to ensure that your views are heard and understood.
- >> The advocate can help you write letters or make phone calls.
- >> The advocate can help you plan for meetings.
- >> The advocate can attend meetings with you or go on your behalf if you are unable to.
- >> The advocate will support you to become more involved in decisions that affect your life.



**The advocate will make sure that you are included in any decisions being made about you in a way that you understand.**



## What the Advocate will not do:

- >> The advocate will not give you their opinion or advice.
- >> The advocate will not seek to create barriers between you and other people or services.
- >> The advocate will not deal directly with your personal finances.
- >> The advocate will not provide a befriending role.

**You can always find out more by visiting our website:  
[advocacyne.org.uk](http://advocacyne.org.uk)**





The relationship between an advocate & client is built on respect, equality, and trust.

## Confidentiality

All Advocacy North East information regarding you will be treated confidentially. The advocate will keep clear and accurate records which may include copies of reports from other professionals. These will be kept securely. This confidentiality can be broken if we believe that a serious threat exists to you or someone else. Wherever possible we will discuss this with you first.

## Working with the Advocate

- >> The advocate will contact you to discuss the matter which is concerning you.
- >> There will be an agreement on the areas to be worked on and how this will be done.
- >> The advocate will work with you on the agreed issue.

## When the work is finished

The advocate or you may stop the service if;

- >> The issue being dealt with is resolved or no further progress can be made.
- >> You decide not to continue with advocacy.
- >> The advocate believes the service can no longer assist you.
- >> The service is withdrawn on the basis of a health and safety assessment.

## You are still free to refer yourself to advocacy in the future.

### Equal opportunities

We do not discriminate against anyone, and we will not support you to discriminate against others.

## Duty of Care

Advocacy North East has a duty of care to its staff and clients. We will normally arrange for first visits to be made by an advocate and colleague. At this meeting we will talk about our service and if it is appropriate for you we will fill out the relevant forms. This will include a risk assessment identifying anything we need to be aware of to ensure that you and the advocate are kept safe.

Meetings with the advocate will usually take place in your home. We hope this will be a safe and familiar place in which you can discuss your issues with the advocate. If this is unsuitable for either you or us we will find an alternative place in which to meet.

Our advocacy staff have a right to be treated with respect as they go about their work. Advocacy North East will not accept any form of abuse being aimed directly or indirectly at our team members. We take such matters very seriously and will terminate our contact and take further action as required.

**Advocacy North East  
operates a  
non-smoking policy.**

## Consent Form

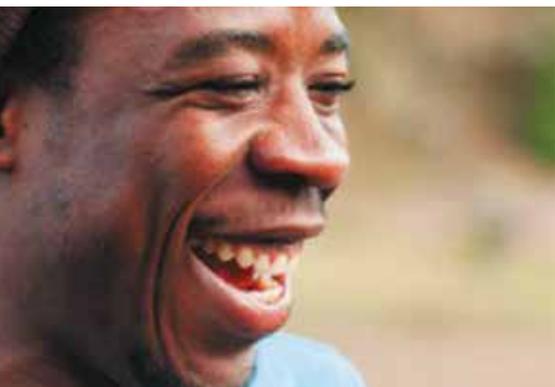
The advocate will ask you to sign a consent form. This states the issue the advocate is supporting you with and will give them your authority to speak with another person without you being present if you want them to.

## Evaluation Form

At the end of every advocacy relationship we ask our clients to fill in an evaluation form about our service. Your feedback can help us to monitor and improve the way in which we work. You can ask for an independent person to help you fill in the form.

## How to access your information

We keep a written record of our work with you and this data is retained securely in accordance with our contractual obligations and data protection requirements. You can access the information we hold about you by contacting Advocacy North East.



**It is important that you feel in control of the relationship throughout your work with the advocate**



## **Complaint Procedure**

It is our aim to make our complaint procedure quick, simple and accessible. If you want to complain about any part of our service:

**Stage 1.** You are invited to discuss any complaint informally with your advocate. If possible your advocate will try to resolve the matter.

**Stage 2.** If you are not satisfied with the response you can then refer your complaint to the Advocacy Service Coordinator who will discuss this with you and agree actions.

**Stage 3.** If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome then a formal complaint will be raised. The complaint will be handled by the Advocacy Service Coordinator who will investigate and respond to you within 30 working days of receipt.

**Stage 4.** If the matter remains unresolved you can refer your complaint to the Advocacy Service Manager. A committee representing the board of directors of Advocacy North East will review your complaint and will inform you of their decision, in writing, within 30 working days of receipt.

>> If you remain dissatisfied following the outcome of our complaint procedure, you may wish to share your concerns with NHS Grampian and the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership with whom we have a Service Level Agreement.

*It may be necessary during the investigation of a complaint to suspend provision or offer an alternative advocate. We will inform you if this is the case.*

# Advocacy North East Client complaint form

Please return to:  
Advocacy Service Coordinator  
Advocacy North East  
Unit 2, Dalfling Business Centre  
Blairdaff, Inverurie,  
Aberdeenshire, AB51 5LA  
admin@advocacyne.org.uk



Name:



Telephone number:



Address:



Nature of complaint:

I consent to my details being accessed by authorised and relevant personnel during the investigation of my complaint.

Signed:

Date:



Please let us know if you need a copy of this leaflet in another language or format.



Your advocate is:

**Post**

Unit 2  
Dalfling Business Centre  
Blairdaff, Inverurie,  
Aberdeenshire, AB51 5LA

**Phone**

01467 651 604

**Email**

admin@advocacyne.org.uk

Our services are available Monday - Friday. Any unanswered calls will be picked up by an answering machine.



[advocacyne.org.uk](http://advocacyne.org.uk)

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