



Advocacy North East



**INDEPENDENT  
ADVOCACY FOR  
CHILDREN & YOUNG  
PEOPLE**  
here to give you a voice.



## What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent advocacy helps you to have a stronger voice and to have as much control as possible over your own life.

Independent advocacy will support you to have your say when other people are making decisions which affect you.

Independent advocacy organisations are not part of health, social work, social care or education services.

An Independent Advocate is there to listen to you, to protect your rights and to help you understand all of your options so that you can make your own choices. The Independent Advocate will then support you to tell people what you want and why.

An Independent Advocate works just for you and makes sure your views are listened to and your voice is heard.

## Who is it for?

Advocacy North East provides independent advocacy for children and young people from Aberdeenshire who are aged 12-18 years and are receiving (or likely to receive) services under the Mental Health Act.

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



## ➤➤ How could an Independent Advocate help me?

They will listen to you and help you to think about what you want to know and what you want to ask.

They can talk through what might happen at a meeting to help make sure you are involved in the discussions and any decisions made about you.

They can support you to

speak at meetings or talk to professionals involved in your care and treatment.

They can speak on your behalf if you feel unable to do it yourself.

They can help you find out about other forms of help or services you might want.

## ➤➤ Why Independent Advocacy?

Because your advocate is independent of other services. This means they will not be influenced by the views of others nor persuade you to do what other people want you to do.

This is important because other people involved in your care and treatment, such as family, friends and health & social work professionals, may have their own and different views about what is best for you.

You may not agree with the views of others and an independent advocate will always be on your side to help you to speak up about the things that matter to you.

They will remind others that you have a right to have a say in decisions which affect you and that their role is to support you to be able to do this.

Independent advocacy organisations provide no other services to young people apart from advocacy.



Sometimes people don't explain the things they have said or decisions they have made, and that can make us feel confused.

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Sometimes it can be difficult to tell people about the things you want, or to disagree with what someone has said.



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Your advocate can talk to you before meetings and help you prepare what you would like to say or help you to write it down in a personal statement.

Your advocate can also go to meetings with you if you would like them to.

Your advocate will do their best to make sure that your views are heard and understood.





Your advocate will only say the things that you want people to know, unless you say something that would put you or others at risk of harm.

Your advocate will make sure that you are respected, included, listened to and understood.



Your advocate will not tell you what to do, give you their opinion or make decisions on your behalf.



**Your advocate will find out what is important to you and help you to tell others**



Your advocate will always do their best to ensure that decisions are explained to you in a way that you can understand.

Although your advocate will try and help you it might not be possible to change things.



**You can find out more  
about independent  
advocacy on our website  
[www.advocacyne.org.uk](http://www.advocacyne.org.uk)**





# Your Referral

The Mental Health Act gives young people the right to independent advocacy. Your health, social work or educational professional will have referred you to us as they feel you may benefit from advocacy.

The advocacy service is free, confidential and independent.



Advocacy North East is a full member of the Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance. We are committed to working in line with the SIAA Principles, Standards and Code of Best Practice for Independent Advocacy organisations.



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



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

Phone  
01467 651 604

Email  
[admin@advocacyne.org.uk](mailto: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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