

## What do we mean by Advocacy?

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice. (NDTi 2018)

## About Advonet

Our advocacy services are **free**, **confidential** and **independent**. Our advocates work under instruction which means that we listen to what **you** want and act on your behalf at all times. Where a person lacks capacity to instruct an advocate we will work under a Non-Instructed Advocacy (NIA) framework.

Advonet provides different types of advocacy for residents in the City of Leeds. You do not need to know which type of advocacy you need as you can contact Advonet and speak to one of our team who will be able to help you.

Advonet is open 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays and you can contact us by telephone on **0113 244 0606**, fax on 0113 244 0178, by email to [office@advonet.org.uk](mailto:office@advonet.org.uk) or post to Unity Business Centre, 26 Roundhay Road, Leeds, LS7 1AB.

## The types of advocacy we provide are:

- Advocacy under the Care Act 2014
- Advocacy under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 which includes Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and Relevant Person's Representative (RPR)
- Advocacy under the Mental Health Act 1983 amended 2007
- NHS Complaints Advocacy for individuals who want to complain about their, or another person's care and treatment from NHS funded services or organisations.
- Community Advocacy
- Informal Patients Advocacy for people who are voluntarily resident in an inpatient setting and need advocacy support around their care and treatment
- Self-Advocacy for individuals or groups who want to speak up on their own behalf about issues that affect them
- Citizens Advocacy which provides longer-term advocacy for individuals with more complex needs

## How Advonet can help you.

Our advocates are here to support you in putting forward **your** point of view when you feel:

- No-one is listening to you

- You don't agree with decisions that are being made about you
- You can't get the help you need

## **Advocates can:**

- Find out information and who to contact about your issue
- Attend meetings and appointments with you
- Speak out on your behalf
- Tell you about other services that could help you
- Explore what options you have to help you make a decision

## **What advocates won't do:**

- Give you advice or tell you what to do
- Provide legal representation at appeal tribunals
- Give legal or medical advice or opinions
- Fill in legal and benefits forms
- Undertake support work

## **Advocates are not:**

- Counsellors
- Solicitors
- Support workers
- Mediators

Advocacy is not a crisis or emergency support service. If we are not the right service for what you need we will give you information on other services or refer you to the right organisation.

## **Confidentiality**

Advonet's advocacy service is confidential which means that whatever you talk to us about will not be passed onto other people outside of Advonet without your consent, except in the following circumstances:

1. If you or someone else is at risk of harm or in immediate danger
2. Where child protection issues are raised that we need to act on
3. If we have to disclose information by law, for example a court order

We would where possible talk to you about why and when we may need to break confidentiality, although sometimes this is not always possible.

Confidentiality is with the advocacy service and not an individual advocate. As part of our supervision and quality reviews we may share relevant information with line managers and colleagues, to ensure that your advocate is supported and that you receive a high quality service.

## Information and record keeping

We keep case notes to keep a record of important information that you, or other professionals have given to us, and information that we have given to you. We keep this information in your case file and on our electronic client database. This information is stored securely and is kept for **12 years** after your last appointment, unless you tell us that you do not want us to keep your information.

We may use statistical and outcomes information to inform funders about the work we do or as part of our quality performance management processes. This information is anonymous to protect your identity.

## Access to records

The Data Protection Act 2018 is the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). In accordance with the Act you have the right to request sight of your case records held by Advonet. If you would like to have a copy of your records you need to write to us to request them.

Advonet may withhold personal data or information relating to third parties if appropriate, this is called redacting information. We will give you a copy of our Client Privacy Statement which tells you how we store your information and how you can access it.

## What happens next?

If you would like to see an advocate you, or someone who knows you, can with your permission make a referral via our website or call us on **0113 244 0606**. We will tell you if there is a waiting time for an advocate.

If you need support to meet an advocate you can bring someone with you who you know and feel comfortable with. If you need information in a different format or an interpreter please tell us before any appointment.

When you see an advocate you will be able to talk about the advocacy issue you need help with. Once this work has been completed we will close your case. We do not keep any cases open when there are no advocacy issues or if we are unable to contact you. After your case had been closed if you need further advocacy help you can contact us again.

Before we close your case we will ask you for feedback on how you found our service and how advocacy helped with resolving the issue you had. Your feedback is important and tells us what we are doing well and when we need to make changes.

We will where possible, take into account who you would like to work with for example, a male or female advocate, cultural preferences or communication needs. You or someone else can tell us what you need.

# Advonet Advocacy Information Sheet



## What do we expect from you?

If you cannot attend an appointment you can let us know by calling us on our office number **0113 244 0606**.

If you miss an appointment and we cannot contact you we will write to you and if we do not hear from you within the timescale indicated in the correspondence sent we will need to close your case.

We ask that you do not attend advocacy appointments under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Physical or verbal aggression towards staff, other clients or property is not acceptable.

We ask that you tell us about any current risks, this may include restriction orders or harm to others or self. We can then talk about how we can support you. Giving us this information does not mean that we won't be able to work with, it helps us to know how we can support you.

We hope your experience of advocacy is good, however, if you are unhappy with any part of our service you should inform your advocate or the advocacy manager. If you are not happy with how they deal with your concerns you can make a formal complaint. We will give you a copy of our complaints procedure to help you with this.

We ask that you read this information and talk to Advonet or your advocate if you have any questions. Please sign below to show you have read, understood the information and agree with how we will store your details.

Print Name .....

Signed..... Dated.....(Client)

Print Name.....

Signed..... Dated.....(Advocate)

Where a person lacks capacity please write below the name of the person making the referral and their relationship to the person requiring advocacy.

Name.....

Relationship to person requiring advocacy .....