

Patient or Service User Rights to Independent Advocacy

Access to Independent Advocacy is available in every NHS Health Board area and Local Authority.

It's called '**Independent Advocacy**' because the people who represent or support someone needing help are not employed by the NHS, Fife Health and Social Care Services or Fife Council.

Service user rights to Advocacy

All staff across NHS Fife (Acute and Corporate Services) and Fife's Health and Social Care Partnership should be aware of your right to advocacy representation should you choose it.

What is Independent Advocacy?

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

Fife Advocacy Strategy 2018-2021

Independent Advocacy can be defined as speaking up for, or acting on behalf of, yourself or another person. This can include helping someone to understand and look after their rights, to resolve problems or to express their views in an effective and appropriate way.

What's the role of the Independent Advocate?

- Help people to know, understand and exercise their rights;
- Discuss and explain things that the person receiving advocacy maybe doesn't understand;
- Help the person explore their options;
- Give practical help –e.g. filling in forms, writing letters, assisting people to make advance statements, make complaints, etc.
- Supporting people in meetings, consultations, assessments and tribunals; and
- Enabling people to express their views and anxieties and become involved in decisions that affect them.

Can I get help with Advocacy? (Adult Support and Protection)

There are two main reasons why someone might need an advocate:

1. To safeguard any service user in situations where they are vulnerable.
2. Speak up for and with people who want to be heard, helping them to express their own views and make their own decisions.

What types of Advocacy are there?

Advocacy services are provided by professional staff, or by people who volunteer their time and have an interest in advocacy work:

- **Individual Advocacy** – is a professional (issue-based) advocate would work with you on a one-to-one basis and has expert, specialist knowledge to help resolve a particular problem. This type of advocacy is closely associated with formal support for Mental Health Tribunals, Child Protection Conferences and other statutory functions.
- **Citizen Advocacy**- This is a person-based independent advocacy service that usually (but not always) takes place on a longer term basis. The advocate is usually a unpaid volunteer, who builds a trusting relationship with their advocacy partner.
- **Non-Instructed Advocacy** (Professional or Citizen) – happens when a person who needs an independent advocate cannot tell the advocate what they want. This may be because the person has complex communication needs or a long - term illness or disability that prevents them from forming or clearly stating their wishes and desires. This usually takes place with people who have dementia or profound and/ severe learning difficulties.
- **Group Advocacy (Collective Self –Advocacy)** – is designed to allow people with the same concerns, issues or experiences to provide support to each other and to work together to highlight issues and campaign for improvement. All groups are run by members for members, with support from a development worker.
- **Children’s Rights Service** – aims to ensure that a child’s rights are fully taken into account when decisions are being made about a child. The definition of who is considered can vary depending on the age of the child: In Scotland this is usually 16 years, however if a child is still at school this would be extended to 18 years and where the child has a disability this would then be up-to 25 years.

Where can I access Advocacy Services?

Telephone: Fife Advocacy Forum on **01592 643743**

Online: www.fifeadvocacyforum.org.uk; email: admin@fifeadvocacyfourm.org.uk

Need this information in another format?

Contact: Fife-UHB.EqualityandHumanRights@nhs.net