

ADVOCACY FACT SHEET

The advocacy fact sheet has been designed to give you a better understanding of what advocacy means and how you can go about seeking an advocate should you need one in the future.

WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

An advocate is a person who can act on your behalf to support and assist in protecting your rights and responsibilities with regard to any issue or problem you may have with another person, organization or business.

What can they do?

You can choose anyone to be your advocate. That person may be a family member, friend, or an independent third party. They will listen to your concerns, give you information and speak on your behalf with your permission.

How can they help and support me?

- An advocate is a person who supports you and helps you to explain and say what you want. They help you to ensure that your views are heard, so that your problems can be sorted out and your rights met.
- They can help you to put your views and feelings across about decisions that are being made about your life.
- They can help you speak up for yourself or they can speak on your behalf if that's what you want.
- They can help you to make a complaint.
- They can give you information and advice about your rights and any worries you have as well as help you make choices about what is best for you.

Who can be an advocate?

There are two types of advocate:

- People who are specially trained as advocates
- Other person who may be able to help you such as members of your family, friends, personal advisers, mentors, etc.

Can I choose who I want to be my advocate?

YES. The Northern Carers Network staff will explain about different kinds of advocates so that you can make the best choice.

Are there any people who cannot be an advocate?

YES. Your support worker, respite worker, volunteers or manager is not allowed to be your advocate. If you have made a complaint, no one who is involved in investigating your complaint is allowed to be your advocate.

Does my advocate have to keep what I say confidential?

YES. Your advocate and the advocate service must promise to keep what you say private unless you agree to it being passed on. But they may pass on information to government departments if they think that it is necessary to protect you or someone else who is thought to be at risk.