

## Area Co-ordinators

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# What is Independent Advocacy?

## What is Advocacy?

- Speaking on behalf of people who are unable to do so for themselves.
- Empowering people who need a stronger voice by enabling them to express their needs and make decisions, where possible
- Safeguarding people who are vulnerable and discriminated against or whom services find difficult to serve.
- Enabling people to gain access to information, explore and understand their option, and to make their views and wishes heard.

## Benefits of Independent Advocacy

One of the main benefits of Independent Advocacy is the Advocate can take the issue to its logical conclusion without fear of compromise to their employment.

### The Independent Advocate will:-

- Ensure the person's rights are upheld with regard to the appropriate legislation.
- Take time to get to know the person and significant others in their lives where appropriate.
- Challenge service systems in order to promote a person centred approach.

### The Independent Advocate will not:-

- Do anything their advocacy partner does not want them to do.
- Work to their own agenda.
- Give his/her own opinion.

## Why Independent Advocacy?

Independent Advocacy is about challenging systems and decisions made by those who work within those systems. Staff may feel that they can challenge these decisions, but as the people who put the system in place are also their employer, staff members can become compromised about how far they can push the issue.

Family members and or friends may also be seen to be working to their own agenda or making decisions which they think 'is best' for the person involved, this however may not always reflect the persons own wishes or views.