



Commissioning of Advocacy Services from 1st April 2014

Briefing Paper for Health and Social Care Staff in Devon and details of Drop-in / Awareness Sessions

“Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need”.

Action 4 Advocacy

New advocacy services for adults, young adults and children have recently started delivering on the 1st April 2014. These services are structurally independent of the statutory authorities and have been re-commissioned through a competitive tender.

1. Services to Children and Young People

1.1 Advocacy for Looked After Children, Children Subject to Child Protection Planning and Care Leavers.

These services are now provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS).

A referral to NYAS should be made every time a child wishes to be supported in making their views known at a meeting (for example Child in Care Review, Permanency Planning Meeting) or assisted in making a complaint or bringing a matter to the attention of the care/health provider, the local authority or the Regulatory Authority. Information on how to access the NYAS service should be provided to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity by their social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer, especially where their wishes and feelings may not be in accordance with plans being made for them.

For a child or young person subject to Child Protection Planning, their Social Worker should offer them an advocate for the Initial Child Protection Conference. If the child/young person wishes to be supported by an advocate, the Social Worker must tick section 1.1.4 on the H1 form. The Independent Reviewing Unit will make the referral to NYAS.

Children in Care and Care Leavers can self refer to NYAS or their Social Worker can do this on their behalf, giving information on the nature of their need for advocacy. Referrals to NYAS can be made either by phone on 0808 808 1001 or via on-line referral form on <http://www.nyas.net/referral>

The Local Co-ordinator is Laura Barbour. She can be contacted via email: laura.barbour@nyas.net or phone on 07436799042.

Please note:- Young people with disabilities aged 14-16 who previously received an advocacy service from Young Devon, will no longer have access to a commissioned advocacy service unless they are subject to child protection proceedings or are Looked After. This decision was based on prioritising resources to Devon County Council statutory responsibilities. Young people with disabilities aged 16 years and over and Parents of young people with disabilities can access advocacy services in their own right as carers via the Devon Advocacy Consortium – details as adults below

1.2 Independent Visiting Service

National Youth Advocacy Service, (NYAS) will also provide a separate Independent Visiting Service for **Looked After Children** where:

- There is infrequent communication between a child and his or her parent;
- There has been no contact between a child and parent for the preceding 12 months, and
- It is in the best interests of the child to make such an appointment.

A decision to appoint an Independent Visitor will usually be made by the child's social worker at the Child in Care Review, following discussion and agreement by the child.. This can be by phone on **0808 808 1001** or via the on-line referral form available at <http://www.nyas.net/referral>. The social worker will need to state this is an Independent Visitor referral in the issue section.

The Independent Visitor is a volunteer and will make regular visits to the child and maintain other contact, by telephone and letter as appropriate. The main purpose of the visits and contacts will be to befriend the child and give advice and assistance as appropriate with the aim of promoting the child's development and social, emotional, educational, religious and cultural needs.

2. Services to Vulnerable Adults (over 16 years)

These services will be provided by the Devon Advocacy Consortium (DAC). a grouping of advocacy providers who are working together to deliver an integrated Advocacy Service to vulnerable people over 16 years who have difficulty in having their voice heard..

The Consortium partners are:

- ✓ Living Options Devon - the DAC Lead Agency/Haven Advocacy service
- ✓ Age UK Devon
- ✓ Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council
- ✓ Devon Link-Up
- ✓ Vocal
- ✓ Westbank
- ✓ Rethink Mental Illness
- ✓ SEAP (Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote)
- ✓ Young Devon

Three separate but coordinated services are being provided –

A) General Advocacy and Complaints

B) Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

C) Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

A) General Advocacy and Complaints

The General Advocacy and Complaints Service will provide advocacy that is appropriate to the needs of the individual but time-limited to the particular issue(s). This will be available to

- people who are aged over 16 years and live within, or are registered with a GP practice within, or are an inmate of a prison within. the area of Devon County Council and
- are seeking advocacy support specifically in relation to their health and social care needs, including support to people eligible to make complaints about specific health and/or social care services

The Advocacy Service will be targeted towards people who are the most vulnerable and who face the most barriers in having their voice heard – regardless of their age, the nature of their disability, where they live or the category of statutory service for which they may be eligible.

This includes, but is not limited to, people who:-

- have limited capacity to make decisions about their own welfare, including young people with complex disabilities
- are parents with vulnerabilities whose children are involved in safeguarding procedures
- have protected characteristics, particularly:
 - refugees, migrant workers and the gypsy and traveller community
 - people whose first language is other than English, including British Sign Language users
 - people with communication difficulties

- people from Black And Minority Ethnic communities, including asylum seekers,
- people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender communities

Advocacy will be delivered through three Locality Hubs across Devon: Exeter and East Devon hub; South and West Devon hub and Northern and Mid Devon hub. Each Locality hub will be led by a Locality Advocacy Lead responsible for allocating referrals to the most appropriate advocacy provider.

Services can be accessed through a central Contact Centre provided by SEAP, which operates weekdays 9am-5pm with extended hours until 7pm on Thursdays.

Referrals can be made via telephone: **0300 343 5707** or Email: dac@seap.org.uk

B) Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) service

The IMCA service provides independent safeguards for people over the age of 16 who **lack the capacity to make certain decisions about their health and/or welfare** and who have no family or friends i.e. are “unbefriended”.

The service covers Devon and Torbay council areas and is delivered by the Devon Advocacy Consortium through Age UK Devon and Living Options Devon.

To contact the IMCA service, please call 0845 231 1900 or email imca.devon@nhs.net.

C) Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

The IMHA service helps people to understand their rights in relation to the Mental Health Act and to make informed decisions. It is for people over the age of 16 with **a mental illness who are subject to certain sections of the Mental Health Act and/or are being considered for Electro Convulsive Therapy.**

The service covers Devon and Torbay council areas and is delivered by the Devon Advocacy Consortium through Rethink.

To contact the IMHA service, please call **0300 343 5707** or email dac@seap.org.uk

Drop-in Events

Come and find out more from the providers at these times – you can just drop in.

Time	Date	Venue
9:45am-11:45am	10 th July 2014	Council chamber, Town Hall, Ashburton, North Street TQ13 7QQ
10am-12 noon	14 th July	Killerton Room, Larkbeare, Topsham Rd, Exeter EX2 4NG
2-4pm	14 th July	Torridge Rm, Civic Centre, North Walk, Barnstaple, EX31 1EA

All contracts will be subject to rigorous monitoring against the specification, and will include service user and carer involvement. To help us do this, we would appreciate your feedback if you have referred or used these services. Please contact us on:

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Source: Social Care Commissioning