

Guidance Notes for Parent Advocacy Referrals

Advocacy is available for parents with learning difficulties, learning disabilities, autism and mental health issues who are going through child protection and family court proceedings.

Speak Up Advocacy Hub provides independent, qualified and experienced advocates who specialise in working with parents with additional needs and mental health issues.

Advocacy is free and confidential. Advocates work under the instruction of the parent and will not offer any advice or take any action without consent. They will not make judgements, offer their own opinions, or make decisions on behalf of parents.

Advocates help parents to:

- Understand information being shared by a range of professionals involved in the child protection and family court process
- Meaningfully participate within meetings
- Understand and secure their rights within the process
- Make informed choices
- Have their voice heard by supporting them to express their views and wishes
- Access legal representation when necessary
- Advocate for themselves

In addition to providing 1:1 advocacy support advocates can attend and support within a range of different meetings. These include child protection conferences, core group meetings, family group meetings, care planning meetings, solicitor appointments and court hearings. As our aim is always to support parents to self-advocate attendance at meetings will vary depending on the needs of individual parents.

Where both parents (Mother and Father) are requesting advocacy support and meet the eligibility criteria we will allocate if possible two advocates in order to avoid any conflict of interest.

Advocates will also signpost parents to other appropriate sources of support and information if needed

Advocates are not support workers, counsellors or befrienders and will not give any legal advice or legal support.

A range of self-help resources are available to enable people to have the confidence to advocate for themselves, these can be downloaded via the website

www.warringtonspeakup.org.uk

Making a referral

Referrals can be made by professionals, with the consent of the parent by using the Parent Advocacy referral form. It is essential that all relevant information in relation to consent is completed on the referral forms. In addition parents can self-refer to the service.

If you are uncertain as to whether a person is entitled to an advocate please contact the duty advocate on 01925 246 888 to discuss further.

Referrals should be completed and sent via email (password protected) to referral@advocacyhub.org.uk