

London Borough of Enfield

Health and Adult Social Care (HASC)

Advocacy Policy

Author	Matt Casey
Status	Final
Drafted	September 2025
Review	September 2029

London Borough of Enfield Health and Adult Social Care (HASC)

Advocacy Policy

1. Policy Principles

Enfield Council Health and Adult Social Care Department is committed to meeting its obligations in the way it supports adults in receipt of social care and in demonstrating an on-going commitment to person-centred and personalised outcomes for individuals by:

- ensuring individuals can access and make best use of information and resources from Prevention and Early Intervention Services, the Council, its partner agencies and broader support networks in the community
- enabling and empowering individuals to make their own lifestyle choices, in their own best interests and to determine their own preferred outcomes in relation to their support needs

This policy sets the framework for delivery of Advocacy Services in Enfield. It is intended to support adult social care and health staff in their person-centred practice and to secure personalised outcomes by helping individuals, their families, friends and/or carers to:

- speak up for, or act on behalf of, themselves or another person
- take action to say what they want, secure their rights and represent their interests
- contribute their views, opinions, ideas and feelings to inform processes for continuous service improvement

2. Scope

This policy is applicable to all departmental staff in their day-to-day practice and the people they support who are in receipt of adult health and social care support and services and in relation to best-interest decisions in respect of people who fund their own support.

This policy does not supersede advocacy policies operated by third party organisations, but may, subject to agreement, be applicable where a third-party provider does not have an advocacy policy in place and may also be used to inform and support individuals who wish to advocate for themselves or on behalf of others.

3. Definitions

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate their own interests, desires, needs and rights. It recognizes people are experts by experience and involves them in speaking out for themselves about the things that are important to them. It means that people are able to ask for what they want and need and to tell others about their thoughts and feelings.

Informal/Citizen advocacy

When an individual asks someone they know (such as a family member, friend or carer or someone who has the same disability, illness, condition or circumstances) to speak up or take action for them (also known as “peer advocacy”).

Casework/ Community Advocacy

When an individual asks a group of people or an organisation to speak up or take action for them.

Citizen Advocacy

Where a group of people with similar experiences meet together to put forward shared views.

Peer Advocacy

Where the advocate has experienced the same or similar issues to you and can draw on their own experiences to understand and empathise with you.

Independent Complaints Advocacy Service

There are also advocates who can help you specifically with an NHS complaint. The Independent Complaints Advocacy Service provides support to patients and their carers wishing to complain about their NHS treatment or care.

Therefore an advocate can be:

- An individual
- A friend, family member or carer
- A community volunteer
- A person or organisation
- A paid practitioner

Advocacy is not:

Information This is a collection of facts which helps to improve understanding of a problem.

Advice This is when someone gives their views or opinions about what could be done about a problem.

Mediation This is when someone sorts out a problem between two or more people. A mediator is a person who gives their own views or opinions to help everyone involved to agree.

4. Finding an advocate

How do I find a suitable advocate?

Advocates are used by a wide range of people. It is helpful if you can find an advocate who has experience of working with people with the same or similar issues or problems. It is important to check that they are able to provide the kind of service you need, and you may want to check that they sign up to the "Advocacy Code of Practice". Please use this link to find out more information mylife.enfield.gov.uk/Advocacy

5. Responsibilities

All members of staff are responsible for following the policy, suggesting improvements to the policy or reporting issues with the policy where an adverse effect is caused on the organisation or the people it supports.

6. Mandatory procedures

There are certain circumstances in which an advocate must be offered:

Mental Capacity

Under the Mental Health Act 2007 and the Mental Capacity Act 2005, when a person is determined to lack mental capacity (by a professional) to make a decision about serious medical treatment by an NHS body or a long-term change of accommodation by an NHS body or local authority, a referral should be made for an **Independent Mental Capacity Advocate** if there is no person whom it would be appropriate to consult, or where the matter is of an urgent nature.

When a person is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 (except short-term emergency sections and holding powers defined under sections 4, 5(2), 5(4), 135 and 136) that person has a right to an **Independent Mental Health**

Advocate who is trained to support people in understanding their rights under the Mental Health Act 2007 and to participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

Care Act 2014 Assessments, Care and Support Planning, Reviews and Safeguarding

All individuals must be made aware of their right to advocacy when they are being supported to do a self-assessment and, if requested by the individual, practitioners must refer that person to appropriate advocacy service taking into account relevant eligibility criteria. Equally at any time during contact, advocacy must be considered if it will enable a person to participate more fully in the process.

An advocate can support you if you have “substantial difficulty” taking part in assessment, planning, care review, safeguarding enquiry or safeguarding adult review where you have no appropriate individual to support you. Substantial difficulty is defined in the Care Act. ‘Substantial difficulty’ means that, without support, the person will find it very hard to do one or more of these:

- understand relevant information
- retain that information
- use or weigh up that information
- communicate their wishes and views

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

The **Relevant Person’s Paid Representative** service is appropriate when a person is deprived of their liberty under a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards authorisation and requires independent support to understand and exercise their rights. The Relevant Person’s Paid Representative will regularly visit the person, help them understand the authorisation and its impact, ensure any conditions are met, request reviews or challenge the authorisation if needed, and refer cases to the Court of Protection when necessary—all while remaining independent from care providers and local authorities, and offering the service free of charge.

Complaints

There is no duty on local authorities to provide an advocacy service to complainants under the Adult Social Care Complaints Policy. The department will, where possible, facilitate the provision of independent advocacy services to complainants, by providing information and help to identify sources of advice, including Prevention and Early Intervention Services, other local voluntary organisations, community or self-help groups or specialist organisations.

7. The Advocacy Charter

The Advocacy Charter was developed by the National Development Team for Inclusion following conversations with the advocacy sector and was published in 2018 to reflect changes in legislation and policy. It is widely accepted throughout England as a charter for advocacy providers which defines key principles of advocacy. The charter includes the following key principles;

- **Independence**
Advocates will operate independently from the council and statutory organisations, ensuring they are free from conflict of interest and influence, so they can fully represent the individuals they support.
- **Confidentiality**
Information held by the service provider will be kept confidential in line with legislation, with clear policies on when it may be shared, how breaches are handled, and advocates will ensure individuals are informed unless exceptional safeguarding circumstances require otherwise.
- **Person-led**
The provider and advocates will prioritise the individuals they support, ensuring their actions are guided by the person's wishes and interests, while remaining nonjudgemental and respectful of their needs, views, culture, and experiences.
- **Empowerment**
The provider will enable individuals to self-advocate wherever possible, offering personalised support that empowers choice and control, involves people in decisions and organisational activities.
- **Equality and Diversity**
The provider will proactively address inequality and exclusion through an up-to-date equality and diversity policy, ensuring fair treatment, equitable allocation of advocates' time, reasonable adjustments for engagement, and skilled support for individuals with severely impaired communication.
- **Accessibility**
Advocacy will be free for eligible individuals, with the provider ensuring full accessibility through inclusive premises, policies, and materials, and advocates using clear, understandable language tailored to each person.
- **Accountability**
The provider will maintain strong governance and legal compliance, ensure individuals have direct access to a named advocate, monitor and evaluate

service impact, respond to feedback and complaints, and address systemic issues in health and social care.

- **Safeguarding**

The provider will uphold safeguarding responsibilities through clear policies and procedures, ensuring advocates support individuals in recognising abuse, maintaining confidentiality, and taking appropriate action when someone is at risk.

- **Supporting Advocates**

Advocates will be suitably trained, supported, and supervised, with opportunities to develop their skills and access legal advice when needed.

Please use this link for further information www.ndti.org.uk/resource/advocacy-charter/NDTi

8. Useful Contacts

Voluntary and Community Sector

Enfield's Prevention and Early Intervention Services are designed to support you to maintain independence and improve well-being, and these services are delivered in partnership with Enfield's voluntary and community sector.

One of these services is the **Local Enfield Advocacy Partnership (LEAP)** – Led by **Mind in Enfield and Barnet**

LEAP is a partnership made up of several local organisations including;

- Mind in Enfield and Barnet
- Citizens Advice Enfield
- Precious Moments and Health
- Enfield Carers Centre
- Enfield Voluntary Action
- One to One (Enfield)
- Middlesex Association for the Blind.

LEAP can support you to;

- Understand your rights
- Make informed decisions about your health, care and wellbeing

- Appeal welfare benefit decisions
- Navigate services

The **Local Enfield Advocacy Partnership (LEAP)** provides independent advocacy, enabling you to express your views, understand your rights, and participate in decisions. The partnership provides one-to-one, peer and group advocacy. The service is inclusive and works closely with Enfield's Adult Social Care Partnership Boards to ensure local residents' voices are heard in shaping local policy and services. The service empowers people to self-advocate and promotes equality, dignity, and social justice.

Telephone Number: 0208 906 7505

Email: enquiries@leapadvocacy.org.uk

Website: <https://www.mindeb.org.uk/services-for-individuals/advocacy/community-advocacy/>

Healthwatch Enfield provides top tips and further information on who to contact to make a complaint, timescales and next steps if the complaint hasn't been resolved to your satisfaction.

T. 020 8373 6283

Address: Community House, 311 Fore St, Edmonton, London, N9 0PZ

Email: admin@healthwatchenfield.co.uk

Web: www.healthwatchenfield.co.uk

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service support any patients, service users, residents, their family, carer or representative with a complaint or grievance related to any aspect of healthcare as described in the Health and Social Care Act 2012, including that which falls under the remit of the Health Service Ombudsman, such as complaints about poor treatment or service provided through health services in England.

Address: PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB

T 0300 456 2370

Email: nhscomplaints@pohwer.net

Web: www.pohwer.net/Enfield

Independent Care Act Advocacy Service work with people when their care and support is being assessed or reviewed or when they may be subject to

safeguarding concerns. This service can arrange an independent advocate when the person has substantial difficulty in being involved in the in the process and has no one suitable to help them.

Address: PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB

T 0300 456 2370

Email: careact@pohwer.net

Web: www.pohwer.net/Enfield

Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service work with people who have been assessed as lacking capacity and who do not have family or friends who are appropriate to speak up for them. This work is always about decisions around serious medical treatment or changes in long term accommodation. An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate can also support where there are concerns regarding Safeguarding or care reviews.

Address: PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB

T 0300 456 2370

Email: imca@pohwer.net

Web: www.pohwer.net/Enfield

Independent Mental Health Advocacy Service offer statutory advocacy to adults lacking the mental capacity to make decisions on complex health or social care issues. Referrals are made by the local authority or NHS professionals.

Address: - PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB

T 0300 456 2370

Email: imha@pohwer.net

Web: <https://www.pohwer.net/Enfield>

Relevant Person's Paid Representative works with a person is deprived of their liberty under a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards authorisation and requires independent support to understand and exercise their rights.

Address: - PO Box 17943, Birmingham, B9 9PB

T 0300 456 2370

Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

Web: <https://www.pohwer.net/Enfield>

End