7 minute briefing

Safeguarding ENFIELD

Key resources for advocacy:

You can find more detailed Practice Guidance around Advocacy in safeguarding for ASC staff here.

IMCAs in Enfield are provided via PohWER who you can learn about here - Enfield | Home | POhWER.

There are a lot of different forms of advocacy which are described in the guidance but you can find out more about different services in Enfield here.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy empowers people to express their views, wishes, and feelings, and to be fully involved in decisions about their care and support. Independent advocates help individuals explore their options, speak up for themselves, or speak on their behalf, especially when facing barriers like mental ill health, learning disabilities, or communication difficulties.

This can be especially important in safeguarding, where stressful circumstances may be overwhelming even to adults with mental capacity.

The Legal Framework.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities must provide an Independent Advocate if:

- The adult has substantial difficulty being involved in the safeguarding process.
- There is no appropriate person (e.g. friend or family) to support them.

This applies to:

- Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries
- Section 44 Safeguarding Adults Reviews (SARs)
- And other care and support planning processes

Learning from cases:

- Where advocates haven't been involved, there is a risk that the adult's view is not heard and included in planning.
- Advocates can improve inter-agency communication and raise issues.
- Advocacy is a Care Act responsibility and vital for empowering adults at risk.



The Role of the Advocate

An advocate helps the adult:

- Understand the safeguarding process
- Express their views and preferences
- Participate in decisions about protective actions
- Challenge decisions if needed.

Advocacy is a key part of Making Safeguarding Personal.

Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs)

IMCAS must be involved in certain safeguarding cases where decisions are being made about protective measures for a person who lacks capacity, and where there is no one else appropriate to consult.

They would also be involved if serious medical treatment is proposed, accommodation decisions are being made, they are in hospital for more than 28 days or in a care home for more than 8 weeks.

An IMCA may also be involved in care reviews for someone who lacks capacity, even if family or friends are involved, if no one else is available to be consulted.

IMCAs provide a written report to support work with the adult.

Where Family or Friends are advocating or supporting the adult:

Family and friends can often offer advocacy and support to their loved one. This is excellent as they know them and their needs very well. However, it is important to be clear that:

- The proposed representative isn't implicated in the abuse or neglect.
- They are able to express their own views (which are also important) but also highlight the adult's own views (where these are different)
- Their own needs are being respected through the process and they are able to take on this task.