



City of Westminster

Advocacy Services

Speaking up for you

Information about advocates and advocacy services

The Care Act puts into law for the first time a duty on your Council to ensure that in certain circumstances you have the support of an advocate when talking to professionals.

[What is an advocate? Who can be my advocate?](#)

An advocate is someone who can speak on your behalf. They can help you get your views and needs across about things that are important to you. This could be the care or medical treatment you receive or the management of your finances.

A family member or friend can be your advocate if you are happy for them to represent you and speak on your behalf. We call this person an 'appropriate individual'.

If there is no appropriate individual to support you, then your council will arrange an independent advocate for you.

[Who isn't allowed to be my advocate?](#)

The council will not consider these people as an 'appropriate individual':

- someone who you do not want to support you
- someone who is providing care or treatment to you on a professional or paid basis
- someone who is unlikely to be able to, or available to, properly support you to express your views
- someone who has previously been found to have abused or neglected you, or has previously failed to stop other people abusing or neglecting you.

[Who can have an advocate?](#)

If you have 'substantial difficulty' in expressing your views and wishes, and do not have an appropriate individual to represent you, the council will arrange an independent advocate for you.

'Substantial difficulty' means that you find it difficult to

- understand information – this information could be about your assessment or your care review, and you might need it explained more clearly
- remember information – you might need a copy of information to think about your options and make a decision later
- know what options you have and understand your choices
- express your views, wishes or feelings

This includes people from the following groups

- people with learning disabilities
- people with mental health problems
- people with autism
- people with a brain injury
- people with physical disabilities
- people with sensory impairments (sight and hearing problems)
- older people
- people with dementia
- people with a long-term illness

What will an advocate help with?

- An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) supports people who are over 16 years old and who have been assessed as 'lacking capacity' to make a decision about serious medical treatment, a change of accommodation, safeguarding from abuse, and care reviews
- A Relevant Person's Paid Representative (RPPR) ensures deprivation of liberty safeguards (DoLS)/ Liberty Protection Safeguards are lawful, reasonable and in the persons best interests
- An advocate within community advocacy can help with speaking up for yourself or giving your views to issues that are important to you, getting people to listen to you, accessing services to support your health, wellbeing, or independence
- Under Care Act advocacy, advocates can help with making a needs assessment, a carers assessment, making or reviewing a care and support plan, having a safeguarding enquiry or arranging a safeguarding adults review
- The Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) can help you to make a complaint about care you, or someone you care about is receiving or has received

Who provides advocacy services in my borough?

The following local organisations can provide an independent advocate as well as other advocacy services. These providers currently deliver our commissioned services.

POhWER

Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

Call: 0300 456 2370 (charged at standard network rate)

Text: send the word 'pohwer' with your name and phone number to 81025

The Advocacy Project

Email: info@advocacyproject.org.uk or referrals@advocacyproject.org.uk

Call: 0203 960 7920

Post: The Advocacy Project, SEIDs Hub, Empire Way, Wembley, HA9 0RJ

Other organisations providing Advocacy services in the borough include:

OPAAL

Older People's Advocacy - [Resources for Individuals – OPAAL UK](#)

Email: colette.isaaks@opaal.org.uk

Age UK Westminster

Complex Needs Support Service - Information, Advice, Advocacy and Support for older people and their carers

Call: 02030045610

Email: Odette.messiah@ageukwestminster.org.uk

Please [click here](#) for a full list of organisations providing advocacy services in the borough. These include supporting those within mental health services, minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities, older people, asylum seekers and other vulnerable people.

Think you qualify for an advocate and want support from advocacy services?

We have linked referral forms to apply for an advocate's support below.

[Westminster | Home | POhWER](#)

[Get support from an advocate - The Advocacy Project](#)

If you're still not sure about whether you qualify for an advocate's support, and want to find out more, please contact POhWER on 0300 456 2370 or The Advocacy Project on 0203 960 7920.

[Finding out more](#)

There are several ways (see below) in which you can find out more about recent changes under the Care Act, about how to access care and support, and about the care and support options which are available to you.

[Online help and leaflets](#)

The Government has produced a series of factsheets which explain the aims of the Care Act and how the changes may affect you. Visit www.gov.uk and search 'care act'.

They have also produced a series of leaflets in formats for people with learning disabilities. Search for 'care act easy read' on www.gov.uk

To find out more about the changes to care and support, visit www.gov.uk/careandsupport

For further information on advocacy, please contact:

Westminster Adult Social Care

Call: 020 7641 2500

Email: adultsocialcare@westminster.gov.uk

For more information about our services and publications view them on

www.westminster.gov.uk or www.peoplefirstinfo.org.uk