



Using independent professional advocates in assessments

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Find out more about how you can use independent professional advocates to support assessments

The role of independent professional advocates Part 10 Code of Practice for the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Professional independent advocacy services can help people when they're having conversations and making decisions about their care and support. These services can include representing the individual.

The [Part 10 Code of Practice for the Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#) (the Act) defines advocacy as follows in paragraph 27:

Advocacy is one of several forms of support available for people who need assistance in working through life issues

"Advocacy supports and enables people who have difficulty representing their interests, to exercise their rights, express their views, explore and make informed choices. Independent Advocacy supports the person regardless of the demands and concerns of others. It challenges the causes and effects of injustice, oppression and abuse and upholds human rights."(Older People's Advocacy Alliance National Forum, 2008)

"Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure

their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice." (Action for Advocacy, 2002)

The Code above says in paragraph 41 that independent professional advocacy must be made available from "the moment of first contact" and in paragraph 37:

Advocacy services are fundamental to supporting people to engage actively and participate in development of their own well-being outcomes.

There is clear guidance available in the Code to help understand when people's need for advocacy must be assessed and when independent advocacy must be provided:

Case study: how Bill used an independent professional advocate to express his wishes

Bill was being assessed for support following a stroke.

His speech had become slower and less distinct since the stroke.

His daughter, Abbie, wanted to help but tended to speak over her father and tell people what she thought was best for him.

Bill knew that Abbie would offer to carry out his personal care needs at the formal assessment. However, he wanted a male support worker; not a woman and certainly not his daughter.

Prior to the assessment, Bill asked for an advocate to accompany him during the assessment.

A trained advocate from a local charity was identified to support Bill.

They met before the assessment so that Bill could convey what he wanted without the pressure of his daughter or a social worker being present.

On the day of the assessment, the advocate accompanied Bill and ensured his wishes were articulated as part of the assessment.

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