



Advocacy support

Guidance for parents and children receiving a social work service

Introduction

Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW) wants to make sure that parents and children receiving a social work service and taking part in social work meetings can get their views heard and be involved in making decisions.

To make sure of this, CSSW encourages parents and children to use an advocate.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is someone who is independent of Camden who can attend meetings with you to support you and help you to have your say or speak up on your behalf if you prefer this.

Why have an advocate?

Sometimes, you may find it difficult to give speak out and express your views in meetings or you might feel that people aren't listening to you or taking your views into account. You may disagree with decisions, or be unhappy about the services being provided to support you. It's important that you feel able to speak out at meetings and you may find it easier if you have someone such as a relative, friend or professional who can act as an advocate to support you.

Who can be an advocate?

Anyone that you trust to help you can be an advocate. It can be a family member or friend, or a professional who works with you. If you don't know anyone who can be your advocate, your social worker will be able to help you get in touch with an advocacy service that's right for you.

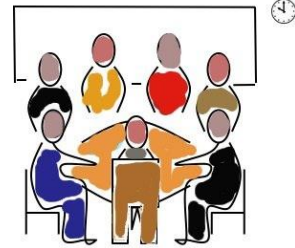
How can an advocate help?

An advocate can:

- Help you to prepare for meetings with social workers
- Represent your views and speak up for you at meetings to those who make decisions about your child

- Remind you what was said at the meeting to help you plan what to do next
- Give you information and advice about your rights
- Support you to make a complaint.

If you are a parent or child and would like an advocate to support you at a Child in Need review meeting, child protection case conference or a Looked After Children review meeting, speak to your social worker about putting you in touch with someone.



Advocacy support in Camden

Parents

Parents can access an advocate from the Camden Family Group Conference Service (FGC) Independent Coordinators. For more information speak to your social worker or contact Tim Fisher, Family Group Co-ordinator, on **020 7974 1051** or Lynn McCabe on **020 7974 2784** or email: tim.fisher@camden.gov.uk
lynn.mccabe@camden.gov.uk

If you are experiencing **mental health difficulties** and feel you need advocacy support, you can contact Camden Rethink on 0300 500 0927 or visit <https://www.rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice>

If you are **experiencing domestic abuse** and would like advocacy support, you can contact Women's Aid on **0808 200 0247** or visit www.womensaid.org.uk

For more information on advocacy for parents, visit the Family Rights Group website. <https://www.frg.org.uk/need-help-or-advice/parents/advocacy-for-parents> or call their advice line **0808 801 0366**.

Children and young people

Children and young people can speak to their social worker about getting an advocate from Coram Voice or can contact Coram Voice on **0808 800 5792**

If you are looked after you can also ask your Independent Reviewing Officer to be your advocate.

If you have a disability you can ask for advocacy support from WAC Arts Advocacy Service; contact Jo Yeoman on **020 7692 5800** or email jo.yeoman@WacArts.co.uk

