



ADVENT ADVOCACY AND THE NICE GUIDELINES FOR COMMISSIONING INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICES

01325 776 554

info@adventadvocacy.co.uk

[adventadvocacy.co.uk](https://www.adventadvocacy.co.uk)



All organisations offering mental health care for the NHS, Health and Social Care or the private sector, will be aware of the following legislation setting out when Independent Advocacy must be offered to individuals:

- **Care Act 2014 and the Care and Support guidance for Independent Advocates for people using social care services**
- **Mental Capacity Act 2005 and its Code of Practice for Independent Mental Capacity Advocates**
- **Mental Health Act 1983 and its Code of Practice for Independent Mental Health Advocates**

Advent Advocacy has a breadth of experience providing high quality Independent Advocacy in this sector, together with an established service model that meets the NICE Guidelines for Commissioning Independent Advocacy Services, (NG227) November 2022. Advent Advocacy also delivers the recommendations made in the Whorlton Hall Safeguarding Adult Review, commissioned by Durham Safeguarding Adults Partnerships, and published by SCIE in December 2022.

The following sections demonstrate how our service model, policies and contractual agreements already embed each of the requirements for highly effective and enhanced Independent Advocacy.

NG227 1.2 WHO ELSE MAY BENEFIT FROM INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY?

Our successful 'opt-out' approach offers person-centred Independent Advocacy to all service users. Independent Advocates visit on a regular basis, so that service users develop a relationship with them and use their support if or when required.

Not all service users in the care sector are statutorily eligible for Independent Advocacy, but without the support of an Advocate, would not be able to express their views or influence decisions likely to impact on them. In all the services where Advent Advocacy is commissioned, all service users receive Independent Advocacy delivered by trained Independent Advocates. Independent Advocates support service users to ensure their rights are upheld and their wishes and feelings are represented.

NNG227 1.3 INFORMATION ABOUT EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY AND SIGNPOSTING TO SERVICES?

It is essential that service users, their families, and staff, understand an individual's legal right to access an Independent Advocate. At Advent Advocacy our Independent Advocates introduce themselves to new services users and continue to offer support throughout their care at the service. This proactive approach ensures that the Independent Advocacy service is available to all service users and supports them to take an active role in decision making processes and their care and treatment.

All services are provided with a range of materials to promote Independent Advocacy, explaining how Independent Advocates can help and ways to access support. The materials are available and shared with service users in a format suitable to their needs, such as Easy Read versions using Widgets. Where additional resources are needed these can be provided to meet their requirements.

Service providers are also encouraged to explain the choice and availability of the Local Authority Advocacy Referral Service to service users.



NNG227 1.4 IMPROVING ACCESS TO INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

Whilst our Independent Advocates visit on a regular basis, we recognise how important it is that carers and clinicians understand the role of Independent Advocacy and support individuals to meet with an Independent Advocate. To encourage this, our service offers Advocacy Awareness Training to all staff, explaining the scope of the Independent Advocacy role, what to expect during a visit and how to access the Independent Advocate. On the days when our Independent Advocate does not visit the service, service users continue to have access to their Independent Advocate. How to make contact is included in our leaflets, posters and on our website.

As part of our Independent Advocacy service, we provide Non-Instructed Advocacy in circumstances where individuals are unable to instruct an Independent Advocate. This also includes service users who may have learning difficulties and/or autism. All our advocates are trained to meet the needs of service users cared for in the service, including methods to reflect the service user's communication barriers. For many service users, especially those with learning difficulties and/or autism, visiting regularly and on a frequent basis enables a better relationship with the Independent Advocate, building trust and familiarity.

During visits to the service, our Independent Advocates will ask staff about safeguarding, restraints, seclusion, segregation and isolation to identify priorities and vulnerable individuals. Independent Advocates who visit services with seclusion areas receive additional training.

NNG227 1.5 ENABLING AND SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

Our regular visits 'opt-out' service model ensures that individuals are aware of their entitlement to an Independent Advocate and how they can help. This includes new and existing service users, friends and family, and new members of staff. All our materials are available in accessible formats suitable to meet the needs of the individual, including digital format on our website where our accessibility tool can 'read aloud' or translate.

From the outset, our Independent Advocates will organise suitable private places to meet and talk to service users, without the worry of being overheard, considering the needs and preferences of each service user.

The Independent Advocate's role in safeguarding is integral to our service. We will ask all services to share their Safeguarding Procedures Policy with our Independent Advocates, who themselves have completed comprehensive safeguarding training with an annual refresher course and adhere to the Advent Advocacy Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. We ensure that records for monitoring safeguarding are regularly reviewed and updated, and any concerns are reported in line with our policies and procedures.

Our Independent Advocates maintain detailed case notes of requests made by individuals, which are kept in line with GDPR protocols, and use these to report issues to care providers, recording any actions taken to remedy situations. All outcomes are shared with individuals to reassure them that their views are being taken into account.

NNG227 1.6 EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY

All our Independent Advocates are trained to deliver a 'person-centred' service. Visiting on a regular basis helps the Independent Advocates to better understand the service user and develop a trusting relationship. Finding ways to understand the service user is essential to fully represent their best interests and demonstrate that their wants and wishes are being communicated, using materials, such as, Talking Mats and Easy Read where appropriate.

To maintain continuity with service users, there are times when a face-to-face service is not possible. In these circumstances we provide a remote Independent Advocacy service, which is adaptable to service user's needs with the agreement of the site management, who are sometimes needed to facilitate accessing equipment. Independent Advocates use a range of video apps to contact service users. Conference calls are also used to attend professionals' meetings and to discuss changes and updates regarding service users known to the Independent Advocate and new admissions.

Cultural diversity is central to the relationship between a service user and their Independent Advocate. Working alongside other Independent Advocacy organisations, we have developed training materials and networking facilities to share best practice across our company. All our Independent Advocates receive regular supervision and reflective practice sessions developing their cultural competence.

NNG227 1.7 PARTNERSHIP WORKING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND CARERS, COMMISSIONERS AND PROVIDERS

Our Independent Advocates are skilled at supporting service users, knowing when and how to liaise with family members and carers. Consent will be sought prior to such communication, where this is not possible, the Independent Advocate will consider if it is in the service user's best interest for this to go ahead, as part of Non-Instructed Advocacy.

“THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE FOR MY SON, IT'S GOOD TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE LOOKING OUT FOR HIM.”

MOTHER - AUTISM, LEARNING DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX NEEDS

“THANK YOU FOR CALLING ME, I REALLY APPRECIATED THAT YOU WILL RAISE THE ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO ME.”

SISTER OF PATIENT AT IN-PATIENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR MEN AND WOMEN INCLUDING SPECIALIST DEAF SERVICES AND CAHMNS PROVISION FOR ADOLESCENTS

ADVOCACY QUALITY PERFORMANCE MARK (QPM)

Advent Advocacy is an accredited holder of the Quality Performance Mark (QPM) as awarded by the National Development Team for Inclusion. The QPM is based on the principles contained in the Advocacy Charter and the Advocacy Code of Practice, enabling providers to demonstrate how they are meeting the different standards. In conferring the award on Advent Advocacy, independent assessors stated that the service had excellent continuing professional development, support and supervision and accountability systems. They confirmed that the Independent Advocacy service supported recovery, self-determination and was person-centred. Independent Advocates had a comprehensive knowledge of the role of the IMHA, as stated within the Mental Health Act Code of Practice.

“ADVOCATES HAVE AN EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING OF ADVOCACY PRACTICE AND CLEARLY APPLY THIS IN THEIR WORK. ADVOCATES AND MANAGERS ARE EXPERIENCED, SKILLED, AND KNOWLEDGEABLE. THIS WAS SUPPORTED BY COMMENTS FROM THE PEOPLE THAT HAD USED THE SERVICE AND EXTERNAL PROFESSIONALS. ADVOCATES HAVE AN EXCELLENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE TYPE OF ADVOCACY THEY PROVIDE”.

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM FOR INCLUSION.

PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR SERVICE

“THE ORGANISATION (ADVENT ADVOCACY) ITSELF IS INDEPENDENT FROM ANY OTHER PROVISION, AND APPROPRIATELY CONSTITUTED TO MAINTAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE. RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMISSIONERS AND ‘HOST’ SETTINGS ARE POSITIVE AND IN NO WAY ENCROACH ON THE ABILITY OF ADVOCATES TO ACT IN THEIR INDEPENDENT ROLE. ADVOCATES COULD DESCRIBE HOW THEY MAINTAINED A CLEAR, VISIBLE BOUNDARY FROM THE WARD STAFF TO ENSURE CLIENTS COULD SEE THERE WERE INDEPENDENT.”

THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM FOR INCLUSION



EMAIL & TELEPHONE

01325 776 554
info@adventadvocacy.co.uk



HEAD OFFICE

Suite 2:7 Business Central
2 Union Square
Central Park
Darlington
DL1 1GL