

Advocating for yourself or others

Advice

It can be scary to advocate for yourself or someone else. There may be times where the stakes are high. It's therefore important to consider the following:

Be transparent

If you're advocating for someone else, be clear about your role and your intentions. Be transparent about your relationship to the person you're advocating for. If you're a relative or friend, let others know. Don't claim to be a professional if you're not.

Have a clear goal

Decide your goal ahead of time. Perhaps you want a house that is more suitable for your need, a different medication, or more independence? Try to focus on this goal and solve one problem at a time.

Focus on their responsibilities and your rights

All businesses, statutory organisations and individuals must obey laws and regulations. Advocacy may be more effective if you are able to do some detective work and find out if they are breaking any rules. This is because such actions normally have consequences, ranging from a stern talking to from a superior to a prison sentence. People may be more willing to cooperate if you make them aware that you know they are breaking a rule. Sometimes, it helps to ask people to write down what they're telling you, or to request that they put it on their computer system. This might make it easier for you to complain. You will find some examples of relevant laws on the next page.

Stay calm and focused

Emotions can be a powerful tool. It can be helpful to make people aware of how the situation you're in negatively impacts you, including how it impacts your emotions. However, people are more likely to listen to you if you remain calm, focused, and not overly emotional. This can be difficult, especially if you feel you or someone you care about are treated unfairly. Speaking to someone outside of the situation about your issue beforehand may help with this.

Seek out support

You can reach out to local advocacy or advice organisations if you're not sure about your rights or your next steps. Advocacy can also be mentally and emotionally taxing, so it's important to seek out support, whether that's from friends, family, or organisations.

Relevant laws

When advocating for yourselves or others, it can be useful to be aware of your rights. Here are some examples of such rights:

- The Human Rights Act
 - You have a right to your personal freedom. This means you must not be imprisoned or detained without good reason.
 - You have a right to determine your sexual orientation, your lifestyle, and the way you look and dress.
 - You have the right to hold your own opinions and to express them freely without government interference.
- The Equality Act
 - It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:
 - age
 - gender reassignment
 - being married or in a civil partnership
 - [being pregnant](#) or on maternity leave
 - [disability](#)
 - race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
 - religion or belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
- GDPR
 - Organisations need to give you any information they hold about you, if you request this.
 - Organisations cannot give your information to others, unless you consent, or they need to do so in order to keep you or others safe.

You can find out more about your rights online, for example by searching: "Your rights under the Equality Act".