



Gateshead Advocacy  
Information Network

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# Independent Advocacy

**Advocacy is when a person or a group of people speak up for themselves or others.**

**It is about supporting and sometimes representing peoples' needs, opinions and choices.**

**An Independent Advocate can support you to speak up for yourself to make sure your views and wishes are heard and help you secure your rights.**

## What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is about helping you to make sure that your views and wishes are heard; and that you have all the information you need to help you make choices and decisions. It is also about having someone on your side.

If you find that it is not always easy to get your views and wishes across, an advocate can help you to make sure your voice is heard. Your advocate's only concern is with what you want to say, and if you ask your advocate to speak for you, they will put forward your views as if they were their own. Your advocate may, if you wish, talk to the people closest to you, but at the end of the day, your advocate's only concern is to make sure your views are heard.

Your advocate's job is also to make sure you understand the information which is being given to you, and that you have all the information you need so that you can decide, for example, what sort of care you want; and how you would like your care to be managed.

Advocacy is provided free of charge, by projects which are paid for either by the Council or the Primary Care Trust (PCT) or Trust Funds.

### Supports people with learning difficulties:

#### **Gateshead People**

Tel: 0191 478 6472

E-mail: [gatesheadpeople@yvc.org.uk](mailto:gatesheadpeople@yvc.org.uk)

### Supports carers of adults with learning disabilities:

#### **Gateshead Carers Association**

Tel: 0191 4900121

Fax 0191 4900128

Email: [paul.forster@gatesheadcarers.com](mailto:paul.forster@gatesheadcarers.com)

GAIN (Gateshead Advocacy & Information Network) supports the advocacy projects in Gateshead, as well as working with the Council and other service providers and funders to promote advocacy.

GAIN does not provide advocacy services, but if you need more information about advocacy please contact GAIN – contact details are on the back of this leaflet.

All advocacy projects in Gateshead work to the Gateshead Independent Advocacy Code of Practice, copies of which are available from GAIN.

**For people (including young people) with sensory loss:**

**North Regional Association for Sensory Support (NRASS)**

Tel: 0191 492 2035

Fax: 0191 492 2143

E-mail: [office@northregions.org.uk](mailto:office@northregions.org.uk)

**For people with any form of dementia:**

**Alzheimer's Society - Gateshead**

Tel: 0191 477 7490

Fax: 0191 478 3131

E-mail: [julie.mcalpine@alzheimersgateshead.org.uk](mailto:julie.mcalpine@alzheimersgateshead.org.uk)

**For Older People (50+) Age Concern also provides mental health advocacy for those aged 65 or over:**

**Age Concern Gateshead Advocacy Partners**

Tel: 0191 477 3559

Fax: 0191 478 5307

E-mail: [advocacy@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@ageconcerngateshead.org.uk)

**For those 16 or over lacking capacity to make decisions about medical treatment or accommodation, without friends or family to speak for them:**

**Gateshead Independent Mental Capacity Advocate Service**

Tel: 0191 281 7322

E-mail: [imca@skillsforpeople.org.uk](mailto:imca@skillsforpeople.org.uk)

## What your advocate will do?

Your advocate will only do what you want them to do. This might include:

- Talking to you to find out what you think and what you want
- Explaining things to you so that you can make choices
- Helping you to get a Personal Budget and understand Direct Payments
- Being with you when you meet with social care staff
- Speaking up for you, if you want them to
- Asking questions and getting information you need so that you know all the options open to you
- Telling you everything anyone has told them about you

If you need support to challenge a decision about your care, or to make a complaint, your advocate can help you through the procedure.

## What your advocate will not do:

- Your advocate will not give you advice, or tell you what they think you should do
- Your advocate will not make decisions about what they think is in your best interests
- Your advocate will not talk to anyone about you without your permission
- Your advocate will not withhold information from you
- Your advocate will not tell anyone anything about you without your permission
- Your advocate will not speak for you unless you ask them to

## Advocacy Projects in Gateshead:

### For people (including young people) with learning difficulties:

#### **Your Voice Counts**

Tel: 0191 478 6472

Fax: 0191 477 8559

E-mail: [mail@yvc.org.uk](mailto:mail@yvc.org.uk)

### For people (including young people aged 16+) with mental health needs:

#### **Pathways Advocacy**

Tel: 0191 477 7380

Fax: 0191 490 0568

E-mail: [pathwaysadvocacy@mentalhealthmatters.co.uk](mailto:pathwaysadvocacy@mentalhealthmatters.co.uk)

### For disabled people (including young people):

#### **Gateshead Access Panel**

Tel: 0191 433 0058

Fax: 0191 487 7298

E-mail: [admin@access-gateshead.org.uk](mailto:admin@access-gateshead.org.uk)

### For people (including young people) with visual impairments:

#### **Sight Service**

Tel: 0191 478 5959

Fax: 0191 478 3901

E-mail: [contactus@sightservice.co.uk](mailto:contactus@sightservice.co.uk)