



How to help others speak up for themselves

A guide about Peer Advocacy



easy
read

Introduction



Surrey Disabled People's Partnership (SDPP) works to make sure disabled people can live independently and have the same chances as everyone else.

This information is about **Peer Advocacy** in health and social care.



Peer Advocacy is when someone who has the same disability as you, or has gone through the same things, gives you help and advice.



Peer Advocacy is **volunteering**.

Volunteering is when you do some work without getting paid.

The information will:

- tell you about Peer Advocacy and how to do it
- help health and social care staff to set up Peer Advocacy where they work.



How Peer Advocacy works



Peer Advocates give help and advice to **vulnerable** adults either 1 to 1 or in a group.



Vulnerable means people who might need help and support to stay safe and well.

A Peer Advocate can help you to move forward in your life and become a stronger person.



This is because they have already gone through the things that are happening to you.

Peer Advocates can:

- understand their **rights**



Rights are things you are allowed to have and do by law.



- speak up for themselves
- take control and make decisions about their own life
- find the information they need.

How Peer Advocacy can help

Peer Advocacy could help if you are using services in places like:



- care homes



- supported living - this is where you get the care and support you need to live on your own



- day centres.



Peer Advocacy can help you:

- talk to other people
- speak up for yourself
- say what's worrying you
- take control of your life
- make your own decisions



- look after your health and **wellbeing.**

Wellbeing is feeling good about yourself.



Deciding who would be a good Peer Advocate



You can decide yourself if you want to be a Peer Advocate or staff who work in health and **social care** can help you decide.



Social care is support you need to look after yourself. Social care workers include nurses, care home workers and social workers.



A good Peer Advocate:

- understands other people's feelings
- likes to take part in group events





- is interested in other people



- can speak up for themselves



- can ask for help and support when they need it.



Peer Advocates may have the same disability or have gone through the same things as the person they are helping.

Organising Peer Advocacy

Peer Advocates can be organised in different ways:

- Peer Advocacy can be helpful for a group of people that have something in common, like:



- mental health issues



- learning difficulties



- being elderly



- going through the same problems.



- Peer Advocates can support other people in 1 to 1 meetings.



- If the group and the Peer Advocate agree, it may be a good idea to have a **facilitator**.

A **facilitator** is someone who can help to organise meetings until the Peer Advocate is confident enough to do it.



- There might be more than 1 Peer Advocate so that they can also support each other.

What a facilitator does



The health or social care staff should think about whether a facilitator is needed.



It depends on whether the group and the Peer Advocate want one or need one.



The facilitator could either be a paid member of staff or another volunteer.



A facilitator helps the Peer Advocate in lots of different ways. They can:

- organise meeting times, places and who is going



- sort out any documents a group might need, like the rules and the way the group should behave



- help during the meeting



- sort out group activities, like getting to know each other and what to talk about



- make sure everyone feels included



- help when people disagree with each other.

What to think about when talking in a group



Here are some questions to think about when talking in a group:

- What are the aims of the group?



- What activities will help people to get to know each other better?



- What do people want to talk about?



- How does the group want Peer Advocacy to work?



- Do people in the group feel okay about talking in front of other people?



- What would make people feel okay about talking in front of the group?



- What things do the people in the group have in common?



- Is there anyone in the group that could be in charge of an activity?

How to act in a meeting

The Peer Advocate can use this information to help others in a meeting.



Talking to others

To get what you want and need, you need to be able to talk to others.



Vulnerable people sometimes find it hard to let others know what they think, feel, need and want.

That's why helping them to talk to others is important.



It is also important to:

- use simple words
- listen to others
- let others know when you don't understand.

Goals and time keeping



Your goals are the things you want to happen in the meeting.

If you know what they are before the meeting, there is a better chance of them happening.



Time keeping is not just being on time. It is also making sure:

- there is enough time to talk about everything you need to
- there are breaks when needed during the meeting
- people are talking about the right things so time is not wasted.



Negotiation



Negotiation is when 2 people talk to each other to come up with a result that is good for both of them.



You might have to negotiate with someone who is providing a service to try and get what you want.



It's important to remember that you might not always get what you want from a negotiation.

Some things which help in a negotiation are:



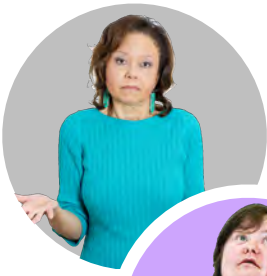
- making a list of what you need or want, with the most important at the top



- saying what could be changed or done differently



- saying what will happen to you if you don't get what you want or need



- asking questions about things that aren't clear
- thinking about whether it is okay or not if you can only get some of the things you want or need
- only agreeing if the result is right for you.



Being confident

If you are confident, you trust in what you say and do.

You should try and:



- say what you think or how you feel
- ask for what you want or need
- disagree without upsetting people
- give ideas and suggestions
- say no without feeling guilty
- speak up for others.



You should try and say what you want to say without upsetting anyone or getting upset yourself.

This is hard to do when you are saying something important that others may not agree with.

To help you do this, you should:



- practise saying what you want, how you feel, saying no and disagreeing with someone you trust



- keep what you say simple
- keep calm and remind others to keep calm



- try not to rush
- let others speak



- ask to take a break if you feel angry or upset.

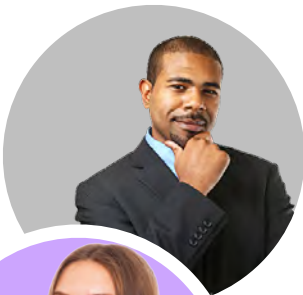
Going to a meeting about you

To be ready for a meeting you should find out:

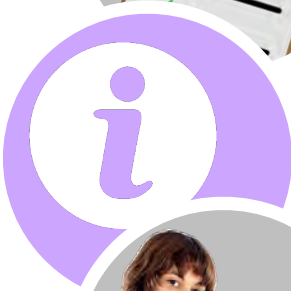


- what the meeting is for
- what will happen at the meeting
- who will be there
- how long it will last
- if you need to read any information before the meeting.

You should also:



- decide what you want from the meeting
- know what you want to say



- decide what you will and won't accept
- find out what information you need
- have notes of what you want to say
- decide whether you need someone supporting you at the meeting.



If the meeting is about you, it is your meeting.

It should be easy for you to understand:

- what is happening in the meeting
- what the result of the meeting is
- what will happen next.





How to hold your own meeting

Make sure you invite the people you need to speak to.



If someone there has upset you before, let them know.

Have someone with you to support you in case you get upset again.



You should also make sure you:

- meet where you are comfortable
- make time for breaks
- look at your notes so you know what you want to say.



Talk about the most important things that need sorting out.

Use short sentences instead of telling a long story.



How to write notes

Writing notes in a meeting is quite difficult.



If you write too much, you might not hear something else that is being said.



If you don't write enough, you might not remember something that was said.



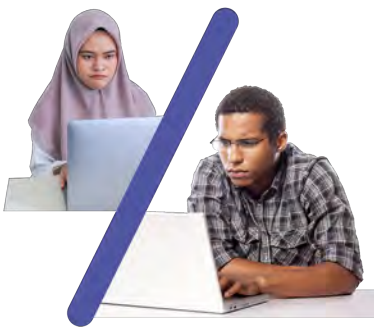
You could use headings and write in short sentences.

Think about whether you need someone else to write notes for you.



After the meeting

After the meeting, there may be things that need to be done by you or others.



These are called 'actions'. They will be sent to everyone at the meeting.

They will say:



- what the action is
- who needs to do the action
- when the action needs to be done by.

For more information

For more information contact Slough
Advocacy Referrals by:



- telephone - **01753 415 299**



- text - **07713 711 999**



- email -
info@advocacyinslough.org.uk

Easy Read by **easy-read-online.co.uk**