



At a glance: Care Act 2014: Commissioning independent advocacy

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- The Care Act places a duty on councils to provide independent advocacy when someone has substantial difficulty being involved in the process of care and does not have an appropriate individual to support them.
- Independent advocacy is concerned with maximising people's involvement in decisions about their lives. Independent advocacy is taking action to help people understand information, express their needs and wishes, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain the care and support they need. Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.
- Local authorities will have to anticipate demand for advocacy because of the new duty under the Care Act, as well as increased demand on the system overall. This demand is likely to fluctuate, and it won't be easy to judge by how much.
- Local authorities already have to commission statutory advocacy services (independent mental capacity advocacy, independent mental health advocacy and NHS complaints advocacy), and many go beyond these minimums to enable people to access advocacy where they would benefit from it. Commissioners should look at the arrangements for these existing services and consider building on them to become compliant with the Care Act by April 2015.
- Contractual arrangements for providing Care Act advocacy must contain the flexibility to grow as demand for the service is anticipated to increase.
- Once a flexible arrangement is set up, local authorities should gather as much information as possible to feed into a more long-term solution for providing advocacy where it is needed.
- This information should feed into a thorough commissioning process, informing the analysis of demand, planning and strategy, the establishment of new contracts and the review of advocacy arrangements in every local area.
- All of these activities will be enriched and made more effective by co-producing each step with local people who use services and engaging constructively with existing and potential providers of advocacy services.

Submit comments and examples of commissioning advocacy practice to SCIE by 21 November 2014 at info@scie.org.uk
Updated version to be published January 2015.

The full version of SCIE's *Care Act 2014: Commissioning independent advocacy* can be found at www.scie.org.uk/care-act-2014/advocacy-services/

Supporting implementation of the Care Act 2014



SCIE's Care Act work is part of a suite of resources commissioned by the Department of Health in partnership with the Local Government Association, Association of Directors of Adult Social Services and the Care Providers Alliance to support those commissioning and providing care and support in implementing the Care Act 2014. Find out more, visit www.local.gov.uk/care-support-reform.

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