

Guidance to support advocates in challenging decisions or actions with or on behalf of individuals

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Project method

Where people face life-changing decisions that they do not agree with and when their voice is not being heard, supporting the person to challenge those decisions is integral to advocacy. Yet there was no comprehensive guidance to assist IMCAs, and other advocates, in this role.

Bringing together VoiceAbility staff, people who use services and experts in the field, we listened to people's experience and identified some of the barriers for advocates; from early negotiation to try and achieve a resolution informally through to knowing when to make a formal challenge. Advocates wanted a practical guide that used clear language and was easy to navigate.

We produced a "Practice guide for advocates challenging decisions or actions with or on behalf of individuals" in 2015. It provides comprehensive information to support practitioners to help individuals decide on the most appropriate route to take to challenge decisions. It lays out essential reference materials, case examples and makes reference to relevant sections within Acts and Statutory Guidance.

Project results/evaluation

The guide has been promoted widely including on SCIE's MCA Directory and Community Care Resources and has been adopted by Independent Advocacy Qualification trainers as a main resource for training on challenge. The guide has received excellent reviews from IMCAs, and health and social care professionals who are using it with their staff for Continual Professional Development.

Project area classification

Hospital care	x	Emergency care	
GP care		Dementia	x
Social care	x	Learning disability	x
Voluntary sector	x	Other mental health	x
Financial services		Palliative care	
Police		Advance planning, LPAs	
Legal	x	Commissioning	
Community health care	x	Training	x
Nursing and care home		For professionals?	x
Acute care		For public and service users?	x
Chronic care			