

A PARTNER'S STORY

"I used to wish I had someone to tell my hopes and dreams to but no-one wanted to listen

Now I have my own "special" friend, she is called my advocate. She always listens to me and makes sure my voice is heard

I really look forward to seeing her every other Thursday, sometimes we go shopping, sometimes swimming and sometimes just have a coffee and talk

Having my own "special" friend has made a big difference for me!"

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

Our advocates are volunteers who have a 1-1 relationship (partnership) with someone who has a learning disability (the 'partner')

The aim of the relationship is to help the partner:

- decide what they want
- say what they want
- be heard

The advocate is an unconditional ally for an individual who is vulnerable; someone to be 'on the side' of their partner

AN ADVOCATE'S STORY

"I was introduced to David about a year ago. He was quiet at first, and I wasn't sure if he'd take to me. But gradually, as we got to know each other, he became more confident.

I enjoy seeing him. We've been to the cinema and to burger bars together, and I've been to parties at the hostel where he lives. He's been over to our house too.

I was glad to be invited to David's last review. His carers are first class, and I think they were pleased when I made a couple of suggestions on his behalf. It's good to know that professionals respect my role.

As an advocate, I've learned a lot from David and I'm still learning."

WHO NEEDS ADVOCACY?

People who:

- are being rejected by others because they have a learning disability
- may be excluded from the life of their community
- cannot safeguard their legal and human rights, making them vulnerable
- have no-one able and willing to stand with them and speak for them

Advocacy helps people who have a learning disability to gain confidence, friends and better services

What do we expect of an Advocate?

- that you are honest and loyal
- that you are able to commit to seeing your partner fortnightly
- that you listen
- that you help your partner speak up for what they want

COULD YOU BE AN ADVOCATE?

You do not need to have specialist skills, experience or knowledge to be considered as an advocate.

We will:

- prepare you for your role
- provide ongoing support
- provide information and training
- organise regular group sessions to share experiences
- organise regular social and fund-raising events for partnerships to enjoy

To get involved please contact:

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Community
Legal Service



dorset
advocacy

'SPEAKING UP FOR RIGHTS
AND CHOICES'



MEETING



SPEAKING

Could You
Volunteer
to Support
Someone...

LISTENING

SUPPORT



...with a
learning disability