



I knew my advocate and I had a plan in place

Ethan's story

About

Ethan is 40 years old and lives in Warrington. Ethan has a mental health condition which has impacted on his role as a parent. Ethan's children have been known to children social care for some time and he has had intermittent engagement with mental health services. Ethan has the support of his family but at times can find it difficult to express himself to them when he is in crisis. During periods of crisis, Ethan accessed a local mental health respite placement and worked with the mental health user engagement worker from Speak Up.

Ethan historically accessed the advocacy service under parent advocacy regarding the family's involvement with children's social care. This included support to understand the process, prepare for and support within the local authority meetings.

Since this time Ethan's mental health deteriorated significantly and court ordered that the children be removed from his care and placed with family members. As a result of the deterioration in Ethan's mental health, he agreed to a voluntary admission to a psychiatric hospital.

Whilst in hospital, Ethan's mental health continued to decline and he was subsequently sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

Advocacy need

Ethan was referred for advocacy support as an informal patient when he was first admitted onto the ward. As Ethan has previous experience of accessing advocacy, he was familiar with the role and the service. Ethan also self-referred for advocacy support under parent advocacy in regards to the family care proceedings process.

Later in the advocacy process Ethan accessed Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) support.

How we helped

The advocate explained their role and Ethan's rights. Ethan had the support of his family within ward rounds but benefited from advocacy support in preparing for these meetings. When Ethan was detained under the Mental Health Act the advocate supported him to both understand the process and section and enabled him to participate within the meeting.

In addition, the advocate supported Ethan within the family care proceedings process. As Ethan was in hospital the advocate liaised with ward staff and arranged for private rooms to be made available on the ward in order for the solicitor appointments to take place on the ward with the support of his advocate.

Outcome

Ethan's right to access legal representation throughout the care proceedings whilst detained under the Mental Health Act was upheld. In addition, the advocate held a meeting with the ward staff and Ethan to put together a support plan that identified the times in the legal process that may significantly impact on his mental health. This plan was shared with the solicitor and reasonable adjustments adhered to ensure that Ethan remained safe and cared for whilst upholding his right to access information.

Ethan had the support of an advocate who knew him well and who was able to support him through each process.