

Good practice checklist

Consider the following questions when determining whether advocacy support should be prioritised for a client within a court setting. Each case should be assessed on an individual basis and discussed with the service manager.

If both parents are eligible for advocacy in their own right two advocates should be allocated when in proceedings.

- Does the client lack capacity?
- Does the client have a learning difficulty that impacts on processing of information, understanding and ability to communicate views?
- Does the client have a mental health issue that impacts on processing of information, understanding and ability to communicate views?
- Does the client have issues with substance misuse that impacts on processing of information, understanding and ability to communicate views?
- Is there any other appropriate family support available?
- Is there conflict within the family that could impact negatively on client?
- Can the client be supported in a different way?
For example:
 - Can the solicitors practice provide alternative practical support?
 - Can the client's self advocacy skills be supported through pre prepared questions?
 - Have reasonable adjustments been put in place by other professionals?
- How positive is the relationship between the client and solicitor/barrister? Do they put in place necessary reasonable adjustments?
- Where is the hearing taking place?
- What type of court hearing is taking place? Priority should be given to initial, final and contested hearings.
- Are there any significant risks and/or personal safety issues for the client that would impact on their ability to participate if advocacy support was not available?