

Guidance Notes for Parent Advocacy Referrals

Eligibility Criteria

Parent advocacy is commissioned for adults aged 18 or over who are resident in Warrington and meet the following criteria:

- Learning disability diagnosis impacting on a parent's ability to understand and actively participate in a given process
- Significant learning difficulty impacting on a parent's ability to understand and actively participate in a given process
- Mental health diagnosis impacting on a parent's ability to understand and actively participate in a given process
- Neurodiversity diagnosis impacting on a parent's ability to understand and actively participate in a given process
- Acquired brain injury impacting on a parent's ability to understand and actively participate in a given process

Acceptance of a referral is based on:

- meeting the eligibility criteria
- capacity within the parent advocacy team
- consent of the parent

Advocacy is independent, free, confidential, issue based and person led.

Spot Purchase Arrangement

A referral and signed spot purchase agreement is required for:

- Parents under the age of 18
- Parents residing temporarily outside of Warrington (Family Unit, Foster Placement, Hospital)

Advocacy supports parents to:

- Understand information shared by professionals involved in child protection and family court
- Meaningfully participate within meetings
- Understand and secure their rights within the process
- Make informed choices
- Have their voice heard by supporting them to express their views and wishes
- Access legal representation when necessary
- Advocate for themselves

Advocates can support parents in the following meetings:

- Initial decision-making meetings
- Core group meetings
- Pre proceedings meetings
- Care planning meetings/IRO reviews
- Solicitor appointments

***Please note that advocates will only consider attending pre-proceedings meetings where there is a formal diagnosis of a learning disability.*

Advocates will prioritise the following court hearings:

- Initial hearing
- Issues resolutions hearing
- Final hearing
- Contested hearings but only on the day that the parent is giving evidence

***please note that if an Intermediary has been agreed within the care proceedings advocates would not attend court.*

Advocates will not:

- offer advice
- take any action without parent's consent
- make judgements
- offer their own opinions
- make decisions on behalf of parents
- sign documents on behalf of parents
- provide support in any private proceedings
- act as a Litigation Friend within Family Care Proceedings

Making a referral

Referrals can be made by professionals using the Parent Advocacy referral form.

Consent for any referral must be obtained from the parent and recorded on the referral form.

Parents can self-refer to the service using the Parent Advocacy self-referral form.

*** Please provide as much detail as possible on the referral form to inform our allocation process and advocacy work. This should include significant meeting dates, information on any access needs or communication approaches and relevant religious, cultural or gender factors.*

To ensure a parent's right to advocacy referrals must be made in a timely manner.

If you are uncertain as to whether a person is entitled to an advocate, please contact the duty advocate to discuss further. **Tel: 01925 246888**

Referrals should be completed and sent via email to: referral@advocacyhub.org.uk

The referrer will receive an immediate automated response confirming that the referral has been received.