



**ADVOCACY  
NETWORK  
NEWCASTLE**

**CODE OF PRACTICE**



## **The Code of Practice covers these relationships:**

- Advocate and partner
- Advocate and advocacy scheme/Advocacy Network Newcastle
- Advocate and organisations which provide services

Membership is open to organisations providing advocacy; providers of services who will work with advocates; purchasers of services and individuals interested. If you join the Network as an interested group you are not expected to sign up to fulfil this Code of Practice.

The Advocacy Network Newcastle Code of Practice will help to make sure everyone in Advocacy Network Newcastle agrees about what is good quality advocacy.

Individuals and organisations can join Advocacy Network Newcastle, but they must agree to work within the Code.

Advocacy Network Newcastle will review and update this Code, taking into account comments from signatories to the Code about any proposed changes. Any changes will be put to the Network for ratification at the first Annual General Meeting of the Network following.

## **SOME WORDS AND WHAT THEY MEAN**

### **ADVOCACY**

Advocacy means one person, or a group of people, speaking on behalf of someone else (or a group) or speaking up for themselves.

### **ADVOCATE AND PARTNER**

An advocate is someone who speaks on behalf of someone else. They may be speaking for a person who uses services, or a carer, or someone who might use services in the future. We will call the person they speak for The Partner.

We have used the term partner in preference to other terms (user, client, customer) to emphasise that advocacy should aim to ensure that service users, potential service users and carers are empowered to take control of their own lives, explore and express their own needs and access services and support to meet those needs. Referring to advocacy in terms of partnership recognises that everyone has a contribution to make. Advocacy is often as much about helping people express their needs, opinions and choices as it is about representing those needs, opinions and choices.

## **SOME DEFINITIONS OF ADVOCACY**

<b>Self</b>	is encouraging people to speak up for themselves.
<b>Group</b>	is when a group of people unite to campaign on issues that affect more than one person.
<b>Citizen</b>	a one-to-one long term partnership between a person who is not in a good position to speak for themselves, and a volunteer Citizen Advocate, a valued citizen who 'stands by' them.
<b>Case, or Representation</b>	provides an immediate short term response to an identified problem, event or change in someone's life. Incorporates advice, representation and negotiation with the aim of achieving the person's desired outcome.
<b>Peer</b>	refers to the situation of advocates who have used services themselves or had similar experiences. Peer advocates may also be involved in other types of advocacy.
<b>Legal</b>	refers to the activities of lawyers or other legally trained individuals who assist, or act on behalf of, people, to exercise or defend their rights.
<b>Professional</b>	refers to advocacy undertaken by a paid worker who usually works with people who need advocacy. It can also refer to the situation in which the advocacy worker is professionally trained in the law or health or social work.
<b>Class</b>	is when an individual or a group takes action on behalf of another group of people, eg: homeless or people with specific medical conditions.

## WHAT ADVOCACY NETWORK NEWCASTLE STANDS FOR:

Advocacy Network Newcastle's Code of Practice is based on these values:

- ❖ Everyone should have a say in whether they want help or not as well as what kind of help they get.
- ❖ It is important for people to have more say in things which directly affect their lives. If this happens, people feel they can have more say about everything.
- ❖ People who use services should have the opportunity to participate in the planning and delivery of those services.
- ❖ We should take steps to make sure that people who find it very hard to speak up for themselves get their rights heard too.
- ❖ Advocacy should help people have more control in their lives. This means helping people to think about what they need and helping them to let people know what they need, so they can get the help they need.
- ❖ Advocates will try and support people to speak for themselves if possible.
- ❖ Advocates should only say and do what their partner wants them to. They may have their own view on what is best for their partner and may express that view to their partner. However, once their partner has made a choice, the advocate will support their partner in making their choice heard.
- ❖ Some people do not have very high hopes for themselves. It is important to help them to expect more. At the same time they should get a realistic picture of what is likely.
- ❖ Lines of accountability must be clear, and conflicts of interest should be identified and avoided.
- ❖ If an advocate thinks it will be difficult to represent their partner (for example, because they don't feel free to say what they want), the advocate must tell their partner what the difficulty is.

- ❖ Advocates must work within the Law. They must work within this Code and other codes which aim to protect people's rights.
- ❖ Each organisation should tell partners and advocates about this Code.
- ❖ The partner has the right to say they do not want a particular advocate and that will not be criticised.
- ❖ The Advocacy Network, Newcastle City Council, and Newcastle Primary Care Trust have accepted and endorsed this Code of Practice. We (The Advocacy Centre Manager and the Purchasing Authorities) will try to make sure that people who run services understand the job of an advocate and how they might help the advocate.

## **1 ADVOCATE AND PARTNER**

- 1.1 Wherever possible, people should be able to state preferences for the type of advocacy they want.
- 1.2 Subject to their organisation's rules about confidentiality, the advocate will keep everything about the partner confidential.  
  
The advocate will make every effort to explain to their partner the organisations' rules about confidentiality. The advocate must adhere to their organisation's rules about confidentiality.
- 1.3 The advocate will be a person's advocate only for as long as they both want that.
- 1.4 An advocate must try to find out what the partner wants them to do. (Even if someone finds it hard, most people can make it clear what they want). The advocate will find that there will be occasions when the best course of action will not be obvious. In these situations the advocate is encouraged to seek support.
- 1.5 Advocates must always try to make sure their partner gets their needs and wishes met, including the right to decide what they want, whatever other people might think.

- 1.6 An advocate will normally tell their partner everything they read, hear, write or say about the partner. If there might be a situation where the advocate may have to keep some information they get secret (perhaps because they owe a duty of confidentiality to someone else), the advocate must clearly explain to their partner.
- 1.7 A partner has the right to be there when an advocate is talking about them.  
  
The partner should have the right to talk to their advocate in private.
- 1.8 Advocates must be honest and polite to their partners. They must treat them with courtesy and respect and allow them their privacy.
- 1.9 Advocates can only hold a person's money or possessions if they write down that they are doing this, and give the person a receipt.
- 1.10 Advocates should not accept gifts, except very small, inexpensive ones. Advocates should never accept cash gifts except by way of a donation to a charitable organisation. Advocates should make sure that the partner understands the limitations on what they can give and receive.
- 1.11 Advocates must not make promises they cannot keep.
- 1.12 Advocates and partners might become friendly but neither should abuse the position of trust they hold.
- 1.13 Advocates should keep thinking about how they work to make sure they are really listening to their partners and speaking up for what their partner really wants.
- 1.14 A partner must be free to choose not to do anything which might put their safety at risk.
- 1.15 Advocacy must be free of charge to the partner.

## **2. ADVOCATE & ADVOCACY PROJECT/ADVOCACY NETWORK NEWCASTLE**

Most advocates work for an advocacy project. Individual advocates and advocacy projects can belong to Advocacy Network Newcastle. This part of the Code is about advocates and the projects they work for.

- 2.1 The advocate's main loyalty is to their partner. Therefore, it is important for the advocate to understand their partner's situation and personal experiences. This is different from being in the person's 'best interests' – which can reflect other priorities completely.

If an organisation believes that it cannot support the partnership, the only option open to the organisation is to withdraw its support for the partnership. This may mean telling the volunteer not to act as an advocate for their partner any longer, or ending its association with the volunteer.

- 2.2 Being an advocate can be stressful. Advocates should get support from their project.

- 2.3 All projects within Advocacy Network Newcastle must have:

- ❖ a written constitution
- ❖ an equal opportunities policy
- ❖ a health and safety policy
- ❖ appropriate insurance
- ❖ a clear policy about confidentiality
- ❖ a complaints procedure
- ❖ a commitment to quality

- 2.4 Each project should recruit and select advocates, train or prepare them to act as advocates, and support them once they become advocates.

- 2.5 Personal information about the advocates will be confidential.

- 2.6 The project will give their advocate written information about what is expected of them before they begin to act as advocates. This information will include a copy of this Code.

- 2.7 Advocates should stay in regular contact with the project.

- 2.8 The advocate can choose not to do anything which might put their safety at risk.
- 2.9 When a partnership ends, ensure all parties involved are aware it has finished.

### **3. ADVOCATE & ORGANISATIONS WHICH PROVIDE SERVICES**

Most people who have an advocate are receiving services – they might go to a day centre, live in a residential care home, or have the support of a social worker. It is important that managers and staff of these services help people get the most out of having an advocate. This part of the Code is about how they should do that.

Support, information and advice in advocacy is available from Newcastle Advocacy Centre.

- 3.1 An advocate should be able to see and be in touch with their partner for as long as the partner wishes. Service providers will do what they can to enable this to happen.
- 3.2 Advocates should respect the Service Provider's arrangements for gaining access to, and leaving the building (in order to comply with Health and Safety Regulations, Fire Regulations etc).
- 3.3 Staff and managers should help people to contact their advocate if they want to, if such help is needed.
- 3.4 Staff should be aware of the Confidentiality Policy the advocate is working to.
- 3.5 Staff and managers should recognise that the advocate's role is to act for their partner and that they must keep information about the partner confidential.

- 3.6 Staff should tell people who receive services about advocacy schemes.
- 3.7 Staff and managers should make sure advocates and advocacy projects can get in touch with people who receive services.
- 3.8 Service providers should acknowledge advocates as having the same rights as their partner to information about complaints procedures, to files about their partner, and to other papers about the service which can affect their partner.
- 3.9 When someone has an advocate they should be included in any discussions about the person.

## 4. PROBLEMS, CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 If a partner is concerned about the way an advocate is behaving, they can speak to the advocate, or contact the project or Advocacy Network Newcastle. Each organisation will have their own complaints procedure and this should be used if necessary.
- 4.2 If staff or managers of a service are worried that the advocate is not helping the partner, they should speak to the advocate. If this does not make things better, they should contact the project or Advocacy Network Newcastle.

Date Code of Practice agreed: **November 2002**

**Please sign the Code of Practice to show that you have read and agreed to abide by it and return the form opposite to Newcastle Advocacy Centre.**



**NEWCASTLE  
COUNCIL FOR  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE**

**Advocacy Network Newcastle  
Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service  
MEA House, Ellison Place,  
Newcastle NE1 8XS  
Tel: 0191 232 7445  
Fax: 0191 230 5640  
email: [advocacy@cvsnewcastle.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@cvsnewcastle.org.uk)**

**Registered Charity No: 226263**



## **Aims of the Network**

- Improve the quality of advocacy to people in Newcastle by encouraging use of the Code of Practice and by supplying information and training to advocates.
- Provide advocacy more efficiently and effectively by those with different specialisms working together.
- Raise awareness among the public of what advocacy is and how to access it if they need it.
- Create a climate among people providing services in the City so that advocacy can be effective.
- Identify gaps in the provision of advocacy and work to fill them.

## **Why join the Network?**

- Membership is free.
- Training events are run regularly.
- Members receive 'Network News' four times a year and invitations to Network meetings and events.

## **How do I join?**

- Full membership is open to people and organisations based in, or working in, Newcastle
- Signing up to the Code of Practice (in so far as it applies to you or your organisation) is the only condition of membership
- Complete and return the form overleaf.



## ADVOCACY NETWORK NEWCASTLE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name: .....

Title: .....

Organisation: .....

Address: .....

.....

Post Code: ..... Tel no: .....

### Please tick the appropriate box for you:

Purchaser of services

Advocate

Service provider

Individual interested in advocacy

Provider of advocacy

*if so, please describe what type of advocacy you provide  
and who it is aimed at?*

.....

I/We have read and agree to abide by the Advocacy Network Newcastle Code of Practice.

Signed:

Date:

Please return to Centre Manager, Advocacy Centre, NCVS, MEA House, Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8XS

In order to work with you, your name, address and telephone number have been recorded on the NCVS database, solely for the purpose of communicating with you.

**Is this acceptable to you? YES / NO**

*(No information from our database is given or sold to any outside organisation for any purpose whatsoever. However, it is available to all projects based in NCVS.)*