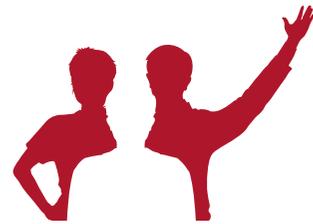


How independent advocacy has made a difference in people's lives:

Sarah has three children. She was due to attend a hearing regarding one of her children and was anxious about what might happen. Before the meeting her advocate helped her to think about what she wanted to say. She felt that she was listened to and her views were taken into account at the hearing.



Scottish
**Independent
Advocacy**
Alliance

www.siaa.org.uk



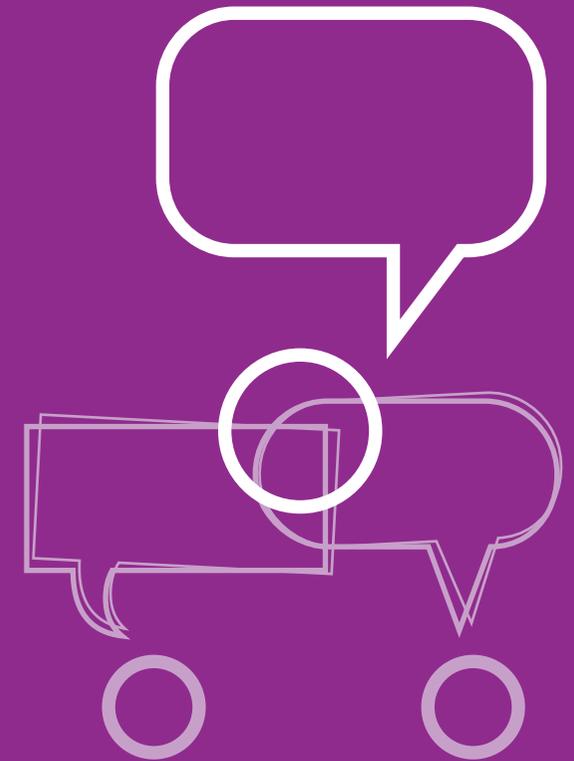
The Scottish
Government



LOTTERY FUNDED

If you would like this leaflet in a different format or further information about advocacy or about the SIAA please contact us.

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**How can an
advocate help me?**

Information for parents on
independent advocacy

What is independent advocacy?

Independent advocacy is a way to help people have a stronger voice and have as much control as possible over their own lives.

Independent advocacy organisations do not provide other types of services such as parenting support or child care. This helps to make sure that the independent advocacy organisation remains free of conflicts of interest.

The independent advocate helps the person or group to get the information they need to make real choices about their circumstances and supports the person or group to have their views and wishes heard.

An independent advocate may speak on behalf of people who are unable to do so for themselves.

An independent advocate is not a legal representative. They may help you find legal support but do not provide it themselves.

An independent advocate does not give advice, they are there just for you to help you have your say.

What could an independent advocate help me with?

- Supporting you to attend a children's hearing.
- Accessing information to explore and understand your options.
- Expressing your own needs and wishes.
- Accessing services to which you are entitled.
- Getting your rights upheld.
- Supporting you to attend a social work meeting such as a case conference or core group.
- Reading and understanding reports before and after meetings.
- Writing your own report towards a meeting. The worker will not write it themselves but will support you to write your own views.

What can an independent advocate *not* help me with?

- The advocate will not provide other support e.g. parenting or budgeting. The advocate can however signpost you on to support and help you access it.
- Solving all your problems.
- The advocate will not give you specific advice or tell you what you should do.

How do I access independent advocacy?

The SIAA website has a section called **Find an advocate**. You can use this tool to search for advocacy in your local area.

Access to independent advocacy varies across Scotland. Speak to your local independent advocacy organisation to find out what support they can provide.

