

Independent Advocacy and Alcohol & Drugs

Information about and how to access independent advocacy for people, their families and friends

Developed by:

Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance

Healthcare Improvement Scotland



Introduction

According to Medical Assistant Treatment (MAT) standard 8 all people have access to independent advocacy and support for housing, welfare and income needs. This guidance will explain what independent advocacy is, how it can support people and how to refer yourself or another person to independent advocacy.



See an Easy Read version of the MAT standard 8: information about and how to access independent advocacy.



What is independent advocacy

Independent advocacy is about speaking up for an individual or a group. It helps individuals to have a stronger voice and as much control as possible over their own lives. Independent advocates or advocacy workers are there to support the person by providing information and to voice views and wishes.

An independent advocate is independent from other services and is not influenced by other parties. This means that they will not need to follow what doctors, nurses, family or social workers say. They are there solely to support you. Independent advocacy is confidential and will only speak of what you wish them to speak of.

The following videos provide more information about what independent advocacy is. Click on the image or the link to view the video.



SIAA Opening Doors English
Subtitled video:

short video showing how independent advocacy can help an individual and why an individual might turn to independent advocacy instead of other services first.



A Voice to Trust:

a video sharing testimonials of using independent advocacy services.

How can independent advocacy help you?

- Help you find out about treatment options
- Explain how health/addiction services work and support in finding the right option
- Speaking to people involved in your care and treatment or represent you at meetings or reviews
- Put forward and support your life choices and views
- Promote and ensure your human rights are recognised and upheld
- Try and support you getting the services you need

Independent advocate will not:

- ☒ Provide therapy, counselling or befriending
- ☒ Give advice
- ☒ Do care or support work
- ☒ Make decisions for you
- ☒ Speak for you if you do not want them to
- ☒ Address the non relevant problems

How can you refer yourself or your loved one to independent advocacy

You can contact your local independent advocacy organisation via telephone, email or by filling a form on their website.

They will ask you the following information:

- Name of the person who needs an independent advocate,
- contact details,
- address,
- what issues are you or the person struggling with,
- what you want to gain from independent advocacy.

To find your local independent advocacy organisation you can use SIAA's [Find an Advocate](#) tool. You can search for the organisation by using your local authority area or by the type of support you require.

You can ask your GP or alcohol and drug services about your local independent advocacy organisation.

Sometimes independent advocacy organisations have drop-in sessions that you can attend to learn more and get to know the local independent advocate.

Find and Advocate

Thank you!

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