

coramVoice
getting young voices heard

Your voice, your choice

You have the right to be heard

What is advocacy?

Advocacy means helping you speak up and be heard. It helps make sure your feelings and wishes are listened to, and your rights are respected. In some situations, you have a legal right to be supported by an advocate.

An advocate is someone who:

- Talks with you about what is happening
- Helps you decide what you want
- Explains things in a way that's easy to understand
- Makes sure you know your options and rights
- Helps you tell the people in charge what you want, or can speak up for you if you want
- Makes sure your views are heard, even if they are different from what adults think

An advocate is there to help you, not the adults around you.

You can tell them anything without being judged. They keep your information private unless you say it is okay to share or it is about keeping you or someone else safe.

An advocate also helps you learn how to speak up for yourself, so you can use your own voice even when they aren't there.







Do I need an advocate?

Ask yourself:

- Am I in care or leaving care, and confused or upset about what is happening?
- Are people making big decisions about me, but not listening to what I want?
- Do I feel worried or confused about meetings or plans for me?
- Have I asked for help or to change something, but nothing changed?
- Is it hard for me to say how I feel or ask questions when adults are around?
- Do I have problems with people looking after me, like a social worker or carer, and don't know how to fix them?
- Do I want to complain but don't know how or feel too scared to do it on my own?

If you answered "yes" to any of these, an advocate might be able to help you.

"I found having an advocate gave me confidence to speak out and say what I think."

What Does an advocate Do?

An advocate can:

- Listen and talk with you about things you're worried about
- Explain things so you understand
- Help you get the information you need
- Help you decide what to do next
- Support you to make a plan and take action

An advocate does not:

- Work for your school, hospital, or council
- Judge you or tell you what to do
- Share what you say unless you say it is okay, or if it is about safety

"Getting an advocate was the best thing ever. They had my back and helped me to understand and exercise my rights as a young person in the care system."

If you want help from an advocate or just want to find out more, contact Coram Voice:

Phone: 0808 800 5792
This number is free to phone and does not show up on telephone bills (we do not record conversations).

WhatsApp: (0)7758 670 369
If you are aged 16 or over, add us to your contacts and send us a message free with WiFi.

Text: 07758 670369
Just send a text to this number and ask for someone to call you back. Texts to this number are at your standard rate for sending texts (8p-12p, and calls to this number cannot be answered).

Email: help@coramvoice.org.uk

Website: www.coramvoice.org.uk
You can ask for an advocate for yourself or an adult can help you ask.