

AISee Collaboratives - Principles of Good Advocacy Practice and Quality Assurance

We recognise the importance of Principles of Good Practice where all bodies delivering advocacy provisions, whether formal or informal should include an iteration of the following, inline with both international and quality mark standards.

A Governed Advocacy Code of Practice can:

- Offer guidance/support to our Clients and Advocacy Partners in their role providing clear articulation of advocacy roles and responsibilities including ethical parameters.
- Educate health, social care, third and private sector clients and advocacy partners and others about the scope of individualisation improvements.
- Incorporate continuous development via training, supervision, and support needs of staff re individualisation and improving service.
- Raise awareness of the need for and benefits of individualisation and service improvement for neurodiversity inclusion.
- Ensure accountability through a clear and objective complaints process.

General

1. Advocacy Delivery organisation will:

- a) Use transparent and evidence-based recruitment processes to effectively screen and select suitably skilled people who possess appropriate attitudes and values to enter the workforce.
- b) Ensure that appropriate quality assurance measures will be undertaken including criminal records and registers. Relevant guidance should also be followed when assessing an individual's capacity to fulfil the duties of the advocacy role.
- c) Ask for and provide accurate and appropriate references to share information relating to a person's suitability to deliver social care.
- d) Ensure legal compliance by providing clear information about roles, responsibilities, legislation, and policies appropriate to the expected role.

2. Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Put into action and monitor written policies and procedures- particularly around safeguarding, and reporting.
- b) Effectively manage and supervise personnel to promote positive practice, and good conduct. Support staff will also continuously improve their performance supporting both their fitness to work corporate capabilities.
- c) Have systems in place to listen to and consider feedback from people who use both our services and our client services, carers, and other relevant people, to shape and improvements and performance.
- d) Have systems in place for personnel to report inadequate resources or difficulties which might have a negative effect on the delivery and quality and work in partnership to address.

- e) Have systems in place to support personnel notification when they feel that working practices are inappropriate or unsafe for any reason.
- e) Support personnel to meet the standards in their Code of Practice and not require them to do anything that might prevent that from happening.

3. Advocacy Delivery Organisations will

- a) Provide personnel with good quality induction, learning and development opportunities to enable workers do their jobs effectively, and prepare for new and changing roles and responsibilities.
- b) Contribute to wider work when appropriate including effective workplace assessments and procedures.
- c) Support staff who need to be registered if required with a regulatory and or professional body to meet the conditions for registration and the requirement for continuing professional development.
- d) Ensure codes of practice are in alignment and not contradictory to existing codes prescribed elsewhere by professional bodies.
- e) Respond appropriately to stakeholder who need support because they do not feel able, or well enough prepared, to carry out their work.
- f) Provide effective, regular supervision to support them to develop and improve through reflective learning and practice.

4. Advocacy Delivery Organisation will

- a) Apply person-centred practices at all times.
- b) Respect and, where appropriate, support our clients to promote the views and wishes of people who use our clients services, and carers.
- c) Support the rights of people who use their services to have control in their lives and make informed choices about the service options.
- d) Uphold and maintain personal dignity and privacy.
- e) Promote and respect diversity in all its expressions.

5. Advocacy Delivery Organisation will

- a) Adhere to honest, transparent, and ethical practice in all interactions.
- b) Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- c) Ensure safeguards are in place to uphold confidential information. This will include publication of clear policies when relating to people who use our client's services and their carers.
- d) Always adhere to GDPR guidelines.
- e) Be reliable and dependable.
- f) Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements.
- g) Declare potential conflicts of interest to ensure judgement and/or practice remains unbiased and uncompromised.
- h) Adhere to organisational restrictions on accepting gratuities from service users and carers.

6. Advocacy Delivery Organisation will

- a) Recognise and respect service users' rights to take informed risks within their own lives.
- b) To voice concerns relating to potential consequences of self-directed decision-making where appropriate.
- c) To follow risk assessment policies and procedures to consider risk of harm to themselves or others.
- d) Work with clients to mitigate potential risks to themselves or other people.
- e) Ensure compliance with contractual and legal obligations and agencies are informed about the outcomes and implications of risk assessments.

Independence

An Advocacy delivery organisation should remain independent from statutory organisations. This will ensure service delivery is fair, objective and non-partisan. All practice will be guided by improving outcomes for users and carers.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Create structures to ensure explicit independence to mitigate against potential influence from clients, advocacy partners and/or commissioning bodies.
- b) Ensure there is a service agreement with their clients and that this outline their roles and remit as what provision will be undertaking to deliver.
- c) Adopt a holistic advocating partnership to support maximum agency on the part of clients by helping them to overcome barriers relating to skill and/or knowledge deficits.

Person Centred Approach

Advocacy Delivery organisation will work in partnership with clients, advocacy partners etc. to ensure that the wishes and interests of the people they educate, look after, care for, and/or support are person centred and non-judgmental whilst respecting needs, views, culture and the lived and living experiences of individuals.

Empowerment

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will work collaboratively and equitably with clients and advocacy partners to empower individualisation and promote individualised interventions, This can include additional input from networks of support including parent or guardian and or other professional.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Ensure individualised empowerment is at the heart of all advocacy provision.

- b) Work with clients and advocacy partners to maximise agency, choice and resilience. This will incorporate :
 - i) Promote self-awareness and suitable individualised tools/techniques that support self-resilience.
 - ii) Promoting supportive individualised decision-making.
 - iii) Promote recording of triggers, solutions, and outcomes to enable reflective learning for improved outcomes.
 - iv) Promoting the person's rights within the decision-making and planning process.
 - v) Encourage support practitioners to be able to explain to all service users their rights and options with respect to the specific decision at hand. Where client's personnel are unable to do this either due to a lack of knowledge, skills, or specific expertise they should support clients to access the most appropriate representation, advice or information e.g. via a solicitor; advice organisation; or alternative specialist service.
 - vi) Encourage and improve a client and advocacy partners access to, and referral to, an appropriate advocacy provision to support the client in having their voices and wishes heard.

Equal Opportunity

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will work with in a fair and equitable in alignment with stakeholders existing equal opportunities policies and will:

- a) Work to support clients and advocacy partners to meet the needs of the population they serve and where this is compromised, e.g. due to lack of resources, to note gaps in provision and these gaps within service providers.
- b) Work with, clients and advocacy partners to improve where required via reflective learning and individualisation, client organisation's equal opportunities policy.
- c) Work with advocacy partners and clients to ensure adherence to legislative and policy requirements that that promote personalisation and person centred care and support:
 - (i) This may mean advocacy delivery organisation signposting to other organisations for more specific/in-depth knowledge and guidance (with potential added cost to client).
 - (ii) Referring for legal advice or guidance (with potential added cost to client and or advocacy partner).

Confidentiality

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will comply with general data protection regulation, and no information will be shared without explicit prior consent with exception in the circumstances of a child or adult safeguarding alert.

Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Work with clients to ensure data held by Advocacy Delivery Organisation is an absolute minimum and only directly related to the commissioned piece of work.
- b) Only store individual identifying data for the duration of a specific project plus 3 months.
- c) After three months the identifiable data will be removed and only an overview piece of the work commissioned will be retained.
- d) Ensure case studies if produced are non-identifiable to the individual - for example by changing names, gender if appropriate, and expanding age group.
- e) Observe and respect the rights and remits of confidentiality for clients and their service users within the policy of the organisation.
- f) Will operate in line with best practice - this will generally mean:
 - (i) Being honest with the client about the level of confidentiality they can realistically guarantee.
 - (ii) Explaining any conditions under which confidentiality may be breached (e.g. harm/abuse to self or others) and the means by which this may occur.
 - (iii) Safeguarding concerns override confidentiality in the interest of safety and wellbeing.

Safeguarding

Advocacy Delivery Organisation responsibility to have Clear policies and procedures in place to ensure safeguarding issues are identified and acted upon. Their team are supported to understand the different forms of abuse and neglect, issues relating to confidentiality, and what to do if they suspect a risk that raises safeguarding concerns. Delivery Organisation has in place a procedure to follow in such circumstances.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation to take their own safeguarding seriously. All team members, whether they be employed, an associate, a sub consultant, are members of an appropriate vetting scheme, i.e. PVG Scheme. Where, and on occasion, we do use a partner organisation for a specific project they will be requested to provide updated PVG Statements or appropriate enhanced CRB/DBS Checks.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Have suitable safeguarding policies and procedures in place that enable Delivery Organisation personnel to make a safeguarding alert.

- b) Personnel will be trained in, and knowledgeable about the different forms in which abuse and neglect can take place, including but not limited to, physical; emotional; and financial abuse.
- c) Will be aware of the appropriate action to take if safeguarding issues are identified.
- d) Will support client's personnel to be aware of their organisations whistleblowing policy and procedures and be supported to make use of these where appropriate.
- e) Have links with local safeguarding agencies if alerts need to be raised.
- f) Will, if they raise the issue, ensure that any alerts are followed up and outcomes recorded if shared and clients guided to appropriate additional staff skill enhancements where appropriate.

Accountability

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will have an evaluation and monitoring system of its work including identification of outcomes, and opportunities for reflective learning for quality and skill enhancement improvements. All those who access Delivery Organisation services will have a named contact and a direct means of contacting them.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- a) Operate within the law at all times.
- b) Ensure our personnel are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities under employment law and our contract with clients.
- c) Ensure our personnel are aware of their statutory duties with regards to human rights legislation and safeguards where either delivery organisation or our clients are funding from a statutory body.
- d) Ensure we are accountable on different levels, including to their organisation and the client. In practice this means that we:
 - (i) Keep accurate, up to date written records of actions taken and progress made with their work.
 - (ii) Keep clients informed of and involved in all aspects of contracted services especially if this involves their service users.
 - (iii) Comply with the client data collection and Data Protection Legislation.
 - (iv) Will not hold money or possessions belonging to a client or a service user- except in highly exceptional circumstances and full records will be kept, with said being handed over at earliest practicable opportunity.
 - (v) Not accept gifts either form from clients or their service users.
 - (vi) Not make promises to clients, or their service users which we may not be able to fulfil.
 - (vii) Conduct ourselves in a professional and responsible manner in all dealings with clients, their service users, carers and other professionals.

- (viii) Will refer any disputes that may arise to the line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Complaints

Advocacy Delivery organisation will have a written policy describing how individuals, including relevant stakeholders, can make complaints, or give feedback about a service or about individual advocates. Where necessary, the organisation will enable people who use its services to access external independent support to make or pursue a complaint.

Advocacy Delivery Organisation will:

- (i) Ensure that complaints are dealt with in a timely manner, and in accordance with the organisations policies and procedures
- (ii) Ensure their staff should be fully conversant with their organisations complaints and be able to explain it in straight forward language to both clients and other relevant stakeholders.
- (iii) Practitioners will ensure that clients are made aware of their right to make a complaint about the advocate or delivery organisation. This may involve giving clients a copy of the delivery organisations complaints leaflet; explaining the various stages of the complaints process at the start and during the course of the relationship; and being open to criticism and suggestions without being defensive.
- (iv) Ensure that the same high standards of professional conduct should apply with all complaints whether from another professional (e.g. educator; social worker; care home manager etc) or a relative of the client.
- (v) All complaints received by a practitioner should be passed to their line manager at the earliest opportunity.