

(people from black and minority ethnic communities)

Criteria and Advocacy Pathway

Asist provides a free and confidential generic advocacy service to people from ethnic and minority groups in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

The service can provide support to people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or mental health conditions. The service is available to adults who are from an ethnic or minority background and aged 18 years or over. There is no upper age limit.

Advocates are allocated to work alongside people who are referred to the service and where there is a specific issue, or issues, that the person feels they need advocacy support to resolve. Generally, although not exclusively, advocates provide support to people who need assistance to understand their options and assert their views, choices and opinions in relation to services they are receiving regarding health issues.

An advocate can support people to:

- find information about their options
- discuss and understand their situation and the choices available to them
- speak up; by supporting them at meetings and reviews, including those with health services, and helping people to write letters or make calls.

Non-Instructed Advocacy

In some circumstances, as a result of their condition, it is not possible for the advocate to communicate with the person about their views, choices and opinions. In this situation, our advocate can still work with the person using non-instructed advocacy techniques. These involves testing any proposed decision against a defined set of quality-of-life principles. Asist is a leading practitioner in non-instructed advocacy and its Watching Brief policy is one of the nationally recognised approaches.

Anyone can make a referral to the service. Often people are referred by professionals in health and social care, however, we will happily accept referrals from carers, family or friends, and direct from the person who needs an advocate if they wish to self-refer. Please note, however, that advocacy is a partnership with the person being supported and, where their condition allows, the person being referred must know about the referral and want to work with an advocate.

Criteria

- Adults who are from an ethnic or minority background and aged 18 years or over
- People with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or mental health conditions

Enquiry

- An enquiry can be made by telephone, email, fax, letter, website or in person at our office
- An advocate will provide information, signpost and confirm eligibility for advocacy services
- Some advocates speak a range of languages and use language line to aid communication

Referral

- Referrals can be made by telephoning the Stoke-on-Trent number 01782 845584 or a central telephone number (local rates) if calling from outside the area 0300 800 1000
- Referrers can use the online button 'I want an advocate' via the asist website to request an advocacy referral: www.asist.co.uk

Allocation

- Referrals are allocated to an advocate within 2 working days, there is no waiting list
- Allocated referrals are confirmed by the advocate with the advocacy partner / referrer
- All referral / contact details are instantly recorded on a secure online data system

Meeting

- The advocate meets with the Advocacy Partner to explain the advocacy role / remit
- Interpretation services/aids are utilised if required
- Current issues are discussed and advocacy tasks identified
- Non instructed advocacy (watching brief policy) is pursued if required

Engage

- An advocacy plan is agreed with the Advocacy Partner and advocacy tasks are taken forward by the advocate regarding the identified advocacy issues

Review

- Progress is discussed with the Advocacy Partner
- the existing tasks redefined or completed
- Instructed / Non instructed advocacy is reviewed during advocacy supervision

Feedback

- Feedback is reported to the appropriate individual / organisation re advocacy work
- The Advocacy Partner is asked for feedback re the quality of the advocacy work
- Feedback re the advocacy process is sought from the Advocacy Partner and others

Close

- The advocacy work is finalised and advocacy records are stored using a secure online data system re the Data Protection Act 1998



Recognising quality
in independent advocacy