



Asist Strategy – January 2023 – January 2027

Mission

'Asist believes that quality advocacy is a right of all citizens and not a privilege.'

(Asist, 1997).

Asist exists to work alongside and empower those who lack the capacity or confidence and require support to express their needs and views effectively, by providing independent advocates, volunteers independent visitors, and facilitators so that people can have an equal voice in the choices and decisions that affect their lives.

Asist also works to extend the right to advocacy to groups beyond those currently covered by the Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act and Care Act; fundamentally upholding the rights of all citizens.

Vision

'Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice. It takes action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need'

(Advocacy Charter {2002} Action for Advocacy).

Our vision is to enable advocacy partners to have an equal voice in the choices and decisions that affect their lives, supported by the best quality advocacy.

Values

- **We think nationally but act locally**; delivering best practice in advocacy to benefit local people.
- **Our primary focus remains local**; Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and surrounding areas and that is where we will focus our efforts.
- **We believe providing advocacy is a privilege for the advocate.**
- **Advocacy partners have the right to receive the highest quality we can provide.**
- **We celebrate diversity and promote equality**; we believe that advocates work *with* their partners not *for* them and involve partners at every step and every stage.
- **We believe that people matter**; we respect and value people, staff, students, volunteers and stakeholders as well as advocacy partners; we believe in equal rights for all.
- **We believe in accessible advocacy** that is effective and empowering.
- **We are creative**, seeking solutions to barriers and challenges.

- **We are honest**, transparent, independent, and act with integrity and confidentiality at all times.

Aims

1. **To deliver excellent quality advocacy to all who use our services** - we will do this by:

- Continuing to deliver high quality advocacy across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and the surrounding areas.
- Continuing to maintain our accreditation via the Advocacy Quality Mark and reviewing our KPI's as required.
- Assessing opportunities to extend our statutory advocacy provision into neighbouring locations where appropriate (e.g. Cheshire East, Shropshire, Derbyshire, Walsall and Wolverhampton).
- Maintaining / expanding services to people who are hard to reach.
- Promoting student engagement through our relationships with local universities and colleges.
- Supporting self-advocacy for people of all ages and all disabilities through the Reach project and other services and co-productive working.
- Investing in the training and professional development of staff and volunteers around our services.
- Continuously reviewing our 'social value' report and quality mark.
- Working with other local agencies in the city and county to develop mutually beneficial multi-interagency partnerships that increase access to advocacy.
- Raising awareness of advocacy among health, social care and educational organisations in a proactive and reactive way.

2. **To be sustainable** - we will do this by:

- Accessing funding through contracts for statutory / non statutory advocacy to support our services.
- Expanding volunteer advocate recruitment and engagement within Asist to maximise the benefit of our organisation.
- Increasing the amount of unrestricted income received from grant making trusts, the sale of services and other income generation.
- Reviewing our costs to ensure we operate within our means and offer value for money through cost effectiveness.
- Regularly reviewing our need for premises and making economies where we can.
- Exploring the efficient and effective use of the copyright trademark and intellectual property mark on appropriate documents.
- Investing in future technology that will enable us to deliver this strategy smartly.

3. To develop new services to meet emerging and identifiable needs – we will:

- Consult with our stakeholders and partners to identify the groups that they work with or represent who need advocacy but cannot access it (i.e., gaps in service).
- Identify new stakeholders and organisations to further extend Asist's reach.
- Collect evidence/data of unmet needs from our own workload, referrals, advocacy partners, and other sources.
- Engage in local, regional and national forums to promote advocacy and extend the reach of advocacy services.
- Explore the possibility of engagement groups for inclusivity and proactive development.

NB Monitoring: The responsibility for monitoring this Strategy sits with the Chief Executive Officer in conjunction with the Senior Management Team and routinely reported to the Board.