Information NOW
Information for people in Newcastle upon Tyne

Advocacy support to get your voice heard

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is free, independent support to help you to get your voice heard. Advocacy services pair you up with an independent advocate who is on your side if you need support. They can:

- Help you to find information
- Talk things through with you to find out what you want
- Support you to get your views across at appointments and meetings
- Help you to understand your rights

What can an Advocate help with?

- **Accessing services such as Health, Housing,** and **Adult Social CarePoint**.
- **Personal budgets**
- **Protecting you from abuse**
- Writing important letters
- **Making complaints**

When to use an Advocate

It can be helpful to use an advocate when you:

- Want things in your life to change but don't know where to start
- Feel that you are not being listened to
- Feel like you are on your own
- Need help to speak up for yourself

Types of advocacy available in Newcastle

Care and support

Community

Mental Health

Dementia

Care and support advocacy

Independent advocacy is for people who have difficulty in understanding or taking part in decisions about their care and support including:

- Carers assessments
- Safeguarding enquiries or processes
- Social care: assessments, reviews or support plans

Adult Social CarePoint at Newcastle City Council can arrange for an independent advocate if there is no one else to support you, for example a friend or family member. The advocate will support you with understanding the discussions and expressing your views. For example, they may support you through your **needs assessment** so the Council can work out what support you need to help you stay independent.

Young people who are moving from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care can get help to get their views heard. Until you are 18 years old your parents and carers are involved in your assessment. Your parents and carers can still be involved when you are 18 years old, if you want them to be.

Your Voice Counts is commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide this service in Newcastle.

Community advocacy

Connected Voice Advocacy provide advocacy services to help you to get your voice heard. An Advocate will help you speak up for yourself, find out about your rights, explore your options, make decisions and choices or get services or support:

Health and care advocacy: They help adults in Newcastle and Gateshead who need support with health and care issues and/or are in vulnerable circumstances. This includes people who are:

- LGBTQIA+
- Ethnically marginalised
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Over 55 years old
- Discriminated or treated unfairly
- Experiencing financial crisis and hardship
- Affected by racism

And people who have:

- Mental health needs
- A learned disability
- A physical disability

- Acquired brain injury

And who:

- Require support to make their views and feelings known
- Have inappropriate support, or lack support from services or family
- Have no-one independent with their interests at heart
- Are aged 18 and over

They also support people who have been targeted because of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity who live in the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner area (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear) who has:

- Experienced a hate crime
- Is at risk of a hate crime
- Perceives themselves to be at risk of a hate crime
- Is affected by hate crime

Also available is their:

Help through crisis project: Connected Voice Advocacy also deliver advocacy support as part of th**e** Help through crisis project in partnership with North East Law Centre. The project helps individuals in Newcastle who are experiencing crisis and hardship.

DIY Advocate®: DIY Advocate® is an online tool to work through problems. It helps organise your problem step by step, think about your options, make decisions, get more information and make an action plan. It gives you tools to make your voice heard and have your rights upheld. It can help you get the services you need.

You can refer yourself or someone else to Connected Voice Advocacy on their website.

Connected Voice also offer training resources for professionals, which you can read more information about here.

Mental Health advocacy

The following statutory services are provided by **Your Voice Counts** in Newcastle:

- **Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)**
- **Independent Mental Health Act Advocacy (IMHA)**
- **Independent Care Act Advocate (ICAA)**
- **Relevant Persons Representative (RPR)**

Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) Service

The IMCA Service is for people who lack mental capacity and have no one to support them or represent their views. An IMCA is appointed by a professional to support and represent you to make important decisions about:

- Serious medical treatment
- Long-term change of residence. For example moving into a hospital or care home
- Deprivation of liberty

You may lack capacity because of dementia, a brain injury, a learning disability or mental health needs. An IMCA can be involved if you've been abused or neglected, or accused of abusing someone else.

What happens when an IMCA is appointed

The IMCA:

- Meets you and others involved in your care so you can speak up about your wishes, feelings, beliefs and values
- Submits a report to the decision maker highlighting all of the things that are important about the decision
- Can challenge the decision maker on your behalf if needed
- Can help with care reviews in certain cases

How to use the IMCA Service

You can be referred to this service by a health professional, a social worker or Adult Social CarePoint. If a person lacks capacity, then they are entitled to an IMCA to represent them throughout the safeguarding adults process whether or not they have someone to represent them.

Full details of how to make a referral are on **Your Voice Counts website.**

Your Voice Counts is commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide the IMCA service in Newcastle.

Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)

IMHA help people who have no one to support them or represent their views. This includes people who are:

- Setained or 'sectioned' under the Mental Health Act also known as 'subject to the Mental Health Act'
- On supervised community treatment or guardianship orders
- Conditionally discharged from hospital

IMHAs can help you to:

- Understand the information you are given about your care or treatment
- Talk to the medical or social work team about your care or treatment
- Access information about how the Mental Health Act applies to them
- ?Attend meetings with you or stand in for you if you prefer
- Help with applications to Tribunals and Managers reviews
- Support you to participate in decisions

How to use the IMHA Service

You can self refer to this service if you are eligible or you can be referred to this service by a health professional, a social worker or **Adult Social CarePoint.** Full details of how to make a referral are on **Your Voice Counts website.**

Your Voice Counts is commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide the IMHA service in Newcastle.

Relevant Persons Representative (RPR)

Under Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS), if a person living in a care home, or staying in hospital, is assessed as lacking in capacity to choose where they will live then, in order to receive care or treatment, this may mean that the council will need to carry out additional assessments to determine if the person is deprived of their liberty. Following assessment, if the DoLS authorisation is granted, then a representative called the 'relevant person's representative' is appointed. Often this is a family member or friend. If the person doesn't have a relative or friend who is able to take on this role, or it is felt that they may not be appropriate, the council must appoint a paid representative.

The paid representative is a professional who is trained and experienced in these matters, who will act for the person in relation to the DOLS. The job of the representative is to stay in regular contact with the person. They should consider whether the person's care arrangements need to change, be given access to documents about decisions, and if necessary ask for a review of an assessment decision. The representative can also appeal against the DoLS authorisation, and should do so where the person under DoLS disagrees with it, even if they themselves do not.

If you are eligible for this service your social worker can refer you. **Your Voice Counts** is commissioned by Newcastle City Council to provide the RPR service in Newcastle.

NHS health care complaints advocacy

NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICA) can help you if you feel you have not had the service you expect from the National Health Service (NHS) and want to make a complaint. Your Voice Counts is commissioned to provide this service.

An NHS complaint might include something that happened during care or treatment at:

- The hospital
- Your general practitioner (GP)
- The dentist

- The pharmacist
- The optician
- An NHS-funded care home
- Any other **NHS-funded service**, even if delivered in the private sector

You can watch a video in British Sign Language (BSL) about your rights to make a NHS health complaint:

Dementia advocacy

Silverline Memories runs a Dementia Advocacy and Care Navigation Service. They can help people with a diagnosis of Dementia, their carers and families to navigating health and social care system and to get your voice heard.

Other useful information

Below are links to some resources that may help those who are affected by issues listed on this page:

- **Making Decisions (Mental Capacity)**
- **Looking After Someone**
- **Citizens Advice Newcastle** provide free, independent and confidential advice to help with any issue, including debt, benefits, housing, employment, consumer issues, relationships, family matters, health, education, discrimination, immigration and the law.
- **Being heard; a guide to self advocacy for carers** free guide from Carers UK

Last updated: October 5, 2026

Useful Organisations

Citizens Advice Newcastle (CAN)

Email: citycab@newcastlecab.org.uk

Website: http://citizensadvice-newcastle.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 223 1133

Address: 4th Floor, City Library, NE1 8AX

Connected Voice Advocacy

Email: advocacy@connectedvoice.org.uk

Website: http://www.connectedvoice.org.uk/services/advocacy

Telephone: 0191 235 7013

Address: One Strawberry Lane, NE1 4BX

Newcastle NHS Independent Complaints Advocacy (NHS ICA)

Email: nhsadvocacy@yvc.org.uk

Website: https://www.yvc.org.uk/nhsica

Telephone: 0191 478 6472

Address: NHS Complaints Advocacy (Your Voice Counts), NE8 1PQ

Solicitors for the Elderly

Email: admin@sfe.legal

Website: www.sfe.legal

Telephone: 0844 567 6173

Address: Studio 209, MillStudio Business Centre, SG12 9PY

Connected Voice Haref

Email: haref@connectedvoice.org.uk

Website: https://connectedvoice.org.uk/services/haref

Telephone: 0191 235 7022

Address: One Strawberry Lane, NE1 4BX

Your Voice Counts

Email: mail@yvc.org.uk

Website: www.yvc.org.uk

Telephone: 0191 478 6472

Address: Your Voice Counts, NE3 3PF

West End Women and Girls Centre

Email: info@westendwomenandgirls.co.uk

Website: www.westendwomenandgirls.co.uk

Telephone: 0191 273 4942

Address: The Stephenson Building, NE4 6SQ

Silverline Memories

Email: hello@silverlinememories.com

Website: www.silverlinememories.com

Telephone: 0191 603 0095

Address: Dementia Activity Centre, NE3 3BE

Related Articles

How to make a complaint about Adult Social Care services

How to complain about health services

Having your say about health and care services

Advance Decisions

Age discrimination and ageing well

Disability Rights

Racial Discrimination

Making decisions and your mental capacity

Where to get legal advice

Lasting Power of Attorney and Deputyship

Adult abuse

Immigration and Asylum

Thinking about moving home?

How to make a good complaint

Introduction to Adult Social Care

Managing someone else’s affairs

Moving from Childrens to Adults Social Care