

# Preparing for your first meeting with an Advocate



We have worked with people with learning disabilities and autism for nearly 30 years.



Our Advocates will work with you in the way you want.



If you want support from an Advocate, somebody will need to contact us to make a referral.



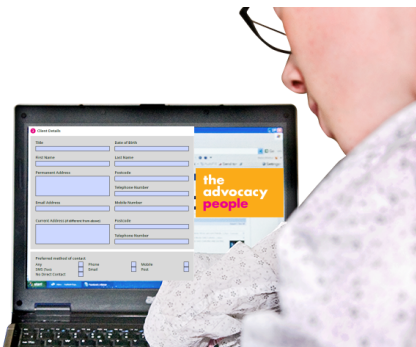
A referral can be made by a professional, like a social worker



A referral can be made by a family member, a friend, or a carer



... or you can make a referral yourself.



Somebody can make a referral by filling in a form on our website



... or by telephoning us



... or by typing messages in Webchat on our website.



When someone makes a referral, we ask:

- why you want an Advocate, so we can say if we are able to help.



- how you like to be contacted and how you like to communicate.



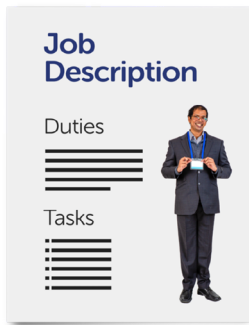
- how you like to receive information.



- if there is anything we must know, to meet your needs.



If we are able to give you the support you want, your Advocate will contact the person who made the referral.



The Advocate will explain what their job is, and check if you are happy for them to support you.



They will ask:

- about how to support you best, and everything you need to take part in a meeting.



- if you want someone else to be there.



- where you would like the meeting to take place



... or if you want to have an online meeting.



- what video system you like (if you want to meet online).



The Advocate will also ask:

- what day is best for you.



- what time of day is best for you.



- if there is anything that might upset you, that they should know about.



When you are working with an Advocate, **you** will decide:

- what you want to happen.
- how you want them to help you.



The first meeting will help your Advocate understand your wishes and feelings.



If you made the advocacy referral yourself, it is OK if you want to tell your Advocate what you think, and how you feel, *before* having a meeting.



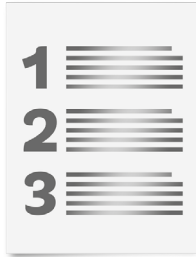
Your Advocate will write down everything you tell them.



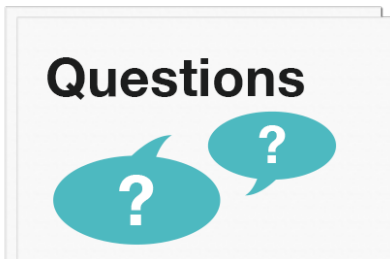
You will agree next steps with your Advocate before they do anything else.



Before the meeting, your Advocate will send you information, in the way you said you like to receive it, including:



- a list of things you will talk about



- questions they might ask you.



- details about where the meeting will take place (if you need to travel).



- a web link to the meeting (if the meeting will be online)



- their photograph, so you know what your Advocate looks like.



If you did not make the advocacy referral yourself, your Advocate must make sure somebody has:

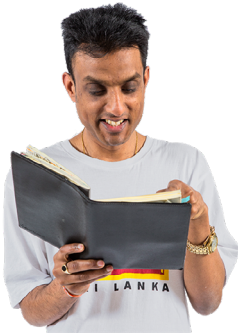
- told you what an Advocate's job is.
- explained why an Advocate wants to meet you.
- asked if you want to be supported by an Advocate.
- given you, and explained, all the information your Advocate provided.
- checked that nothing has been missed, that you will need to attend a meeting.
- asked if you are happy with the meeting arrangements.

That person must call back, to tell the Advocate when they have done this.





Your Advocate will need to know that you are happy with the arrangements and feel prepared for having a meeting with them.



You, and anybody supporting you to attend the meeting, will have plenty of time to get ready.



If the meeting is online, your Advocate will check:



- if you need someone to help you get ready for the meeting, and if you will want cameras on or off.



- that you can talk in a place where nobody else can hear you, if you want the meeting to be private.



If there are any changes to the arrangements, your Advocate will tell you before your meeting takes place.



They will explain what the changes are and make sure you feel OK about them.



There should not be anything that you do not expect when your meeting takes place.



If you would like to know more about our Advocacy services, please contact us using any of the methods below



0330 440 9000



[info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk](mailto:info@theadvocacypeople.org.uk)



The Advocacy People  
PO Box 375  
Hastings  
TN34 9HU



Text PEOPLE to 80800  
followed by your message



[www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk](http://www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk)