

When is the service available?

Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm, it may be possible to make an appointment outside of these hours upon request. If you telephone the office, you may be met by an answering machine if the advocate is out of the office. This system also operates outside working hours. Please leave a message including your contact number and an advocate will return your call. The answering-machine messages are picked up remotely if there is not an advocate in the office. We endeavour to get back to you, within 24hrs of you leaving a message. However, any messages left after 4pm on a Friday will not be picked up until the beginning of the next week. We are not an emergency service, but will try to respond as quickly as possible if you need support as a matter of urgency.

Where can I see an advocate?

We work with people both in hospital and in the community. You can come along to our local office or we can meet you at a place of your choice, for example a day-service or a café. If you are in hospital we can arrange to visit you there. We will do home visits for people who find it difficult to leave the house. For a home visit it is usual practice for advocates to come along in pairs. All advocates have identification badges, so for your safety please request to see them.

Does the service cost anything?

No, it is completely free. We get our funding through the local council and Primary Care Trusts

How do I comment on or complain about the service I have received?

We welcome feedback about our service. When we have completed a piece of work on your behalf, you will receive an evaluation questionnaire, which gives you the opportunity to give your

opinion about the service and any suggestions you have on how we could improve it. If you are interested, you could also come along to meetings to discuss ways to develop the service. Please ask your advocate for details. You are entitled to complain if you are dissatisfied with the service and we have a complaints procedure that explains how you go about this. Please contact the Service Manager on 01733 758278 for further details. If you would prefer to speak to a more senior manager, you can contact the Chief Executive by calling Peterborough and Fenland Mind on 01733 340602.

Contact Details:

Peterborough Office: 5 York Road,
Peterborough PE1 3BP
01733 758278

Huntingdon Office: 22a High Street,
Brampton
Huntingdon PE29 3PG
01480 454777

Fenland Office: Old School Buildings,
March PE15 8AN
01354 652445

Cambridge Office: Box 322, Therapy
Resource Centre,
Fulbourn Hospital,
Cambridge CB1 5EF
01223 218500

Email: enquiries@cias.org.uk

Community
Legal Service



The Advocacy Service has been awarded the Community Legal Service Quality Mark



Cambridgeshire Independent Advocacy Service Information Leaflet

What is Advocacy?

The Advocacy Service is here to support people with mental health problems speak up for their rights, either individually or as a group. The service is client led, which means that that you decide what level of involvement you want the advocate to have in supporting you when you need help.

What sort of help do you provide?

In brief, Advocacy can provide support to do the following:

- ✓ discuss concerns
- ✓ find information
- ✓ understand the situation
- ✓ make informed choices
- ✓ express your point of view

The above can apply to any situation, and are not restricted to matters directly relating to your health. In practical terms we can help you make telephone calls and/or write letters. We can also go along to appointments with you, if you feel the need for extra support to communicate your views.

Will the advocate give me their opinion as to what they would do if they were in my position?

No. However, we will outline clearly all of the options that are available to you, so that you can feel able to make your own choices.

What do you mean by independent?

We are independent of all statutory services such as social services and the NHS. We are managed by Peterborough and Fenland Mind, which is a local registered charity, affiliated to National Mind. We try to maintain as much independence as possible from Peterborough and Fenland Mind's other services, for example the Drop-in and Fenland Project, so that you can feel confident about accessing advocacy to support you if you need to comment on those service areas.

Can I gain support from CIAS?

The answer is yes, if you are aged 18-65, you live in Cambridgeshire and you have personal experience of mental health problems.

What do I need to do to receive support?

The process is simple; you can contact us by phone or email to make an appointment (please see contact details overleaf). If you do not feel confident enough to make the call yourself, you could always ask someone you know to phone and make the appointment for you.

How long can I use the service for?

The service is there for you to use as and when you require support, for as long or short a time as you feel you need our involvement, or until the issue you needed help with is concluded or resolved. The ultimate aim of the service is to enable you to take more control of your situation so that in the future you may feel better equipped to advocate for yourself.

Is the service confidential?

Yes. Any information you give us will be kept strictly within the Advocacy Service unless you give us your express permission to do otherwise. The exception to this is if you were to inform us that you were going to cause serious harm to yourself or others. Then we may then need to inform a third party of your intentions. We would always try to inform you before taking any such action but there might be circumstances where this is not possible. Our full confidentiality policy is available upon request.

Do I have a choice of advocate?

We try to offer as much choice as possible, as it is important that you feel comfortable with the person you are working with. However, the service only has a limited number of advocates available. Please feel free to state if you have a preference, for instance if you would prefer to see either a male or a female advocate and we will do our best to accommodate your choice.

What languages do you advocates speak?

At present only English but we can arrange interpreting services upon request.

Will you keep me informed about the work you are doing on my behalf?

Yes. You will be kept fully informed on a step-by-step basis, to ensure that you feel in control of any work we are carrying out on your behalf. The work we are doing is constantly under review. However, a more formal review can be arranged if you feel that would be helpful.

What information do you record about me?

We keep notes relating to any work that we do on your behalf. We store the details in line with data protection legislation. We keep the files for six years before they are destroyed. The notes are written in a non-judgemental client-led way and simply detail our interaction with you and any work that we do.

Can I see my file?

Yes, we do not hold any information about you that you are not allowed to see. All you need to do is book an appointment. You can also have a photocopy of your file if you wish.

What standard of service can I expect?

All advocates including volunteers are trained and work to our Code of Practice (copies available upon request). We also work to national guidelines including the Advocacy Charter that has been produced by the United Kingdom Advocacy Network. You can expect to receive a professional service. We work to equal opportunities guidance and will not discriminate against you.

What is expected of me in return?

It is important that you treat the staff of the Advocacy Service, with courtesy and respect for them to be able to work with you effectively. We will not tolerate abusive or threatening behaviour directed towards any member of staff. Serious incidents or persistently inappropriate behaviour may result in us withdrawing the service from you. For further details, please request a copy of our guidelines relating to this matter.