

Advocacy Policy & Procedure

Statement & Purpose of Policy

Serenta Homecare believes that Clients should be enabled to express their views as clearly and candidly as they wish. The 2014 Care Act set out that Local authorities must involve people in decisions made about them and their care and support. No matter how complex a person's needs, local authorities are required to help people express their wishes and feelings, support them in weighing up their options, and assist them in making their own decisions.

Advocacy in all its forms seeks to ensure that people, particularly those who are most vulnerable in society, can:

- Have their voice heard on issues that are important to them.
- Defend and safeguard their rights.
- Have their views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made about their lives.

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to:

- Express their views and concerns.
- Access information and services.
- Defend and promote their rights and responsibilities.
- Explore choices and options

An advocate is someone who provides advocacy support when a person needs it. An advocate might write letters on a person's behalf or speak for them in situations where they are unable to speak for themselves. As a provider of homecare Serenta Homecare recognises its responsibility to support its clients to:

- self-advocate,
- use family, friends, and informal carers as informal advocates
- or access and gain support from independent advocates.

Self- Advocacy

Self-advocacy is the ability to speak-up of the individual to speak up about the things that are important to them. Self-advocacy means that they are able to ask for what they need and want and tell people about their thoughts and feelings. The goal of self-advocacy is for the Client to decide what they want, and for Serenta Homecare to work in partnership with them to develop and carry out a plan to help them to get it. It is a key tool in delivering care plans which are personalised to the individual.

Serenta Homecare will encourage self-advocacy by ensuring wherever possible the individual is able to make their own choices about their care. To achieve this, we will ensure that those undertaking care plans have the time and space to work with the individuals and ask open questions to understand how the person feels. Once the care plan is developed the carers will be trained and encouraged to ensure that they ask the person questions about their care at every visit and not make assumptions i.e. 'what would you like to drink?' rather than 'I have made you a cup of tea'.

We will also use tools such as Client feedback forms to gain feedback on how well we are meeting the needs of client.

Informal Advocacy

Informal advocacy is advocacy on behalf of the Client by someone they know i.e., a friend or relative. This type of advocacy is often used when the Client has difficulties communicating their needs and wishes, and a friend or relative who knows them well helps. It can also be used when an individual would feel more confident with someone else representing their views. It can be a powerful way of gaining insight into the individual's wants and needs. However, Serenta Homecare staff must ensure they support the Client to self-advocate if they are able and wish to, challenging any domination of clients even if it is delivered in a protective manner by relatives and friends.

Independent Advocate Services

More formal advocate services can be used wherever the Client feels they need additional support to have their voice heard. This could be because they have no informal advocates, disagree with their friends and family speaking for them, or are dealing with a complex issue such as a complaint. Serenta Homecare will support clients to access independent advocates to ensure we give all clients a voice. Below are links to local advocacy services

Services available include:

Sheffield Advocacy hub <https://sheffieldadvocacyhub.org.uk>

Disabled Sheffield <https://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk/advocacy-services>

The above providers offer free of charge advocacy for those that need it, their services are confidential.

Legal Advocacy Requirements

There are several statutory areas where the offer of independent advocacy is required legally when the person has difficulty being involved in their care and have no informal advocates. As a homecare provider Serenta Homecare will meet Clients who fall into these situations, where a client is funded through local authority but it is the local authority who are required to provide the advocates. We will always encourage advocacy internally, to ensure the Client remains the key focus of our personalised delivery.

The legal requirements fall under:

- Care Act 2014, which introduced new statutory advocacy from April 2015. Advocacy under the Care Act is for people who have substantial difficulty in being involved with the assessment of their needs, or with their care planning or care reviews, and who have no one else able or appropriate to support their involvement.
- Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLs), which introduced Independent Mental Capacity Advocates (IMCAs).
- Mental Health Act 1981 (as amended 2007) which introduced the right for people detained under the Mental Health Act for assessment and treatment, to have access to an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA).

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