

# **HUBB Advocacy Policy**

## **WHAT IS ADVOCACY?**

Advocacy is the process of speaking up for or acting on behalf of yourself or another person.

## **WHAT IS IT FOR?**

To ensure the person's voice is heard.

To secure services which the person requires.

To secure rights to which the person is entitled to.

## **Aims and Objectives**

To help all people who use Mental Health Services obtain their full range of human and civil rights.

To provide advocacy services in a culturally sensitive and non-discriminating manner.

## **The way we work**

Self - advocacy is both the underlying philosophy and the concrete goal of all our work: it is both our experience and belief that this is the only relevant way of working as advocates: it is also the most effective and empowering. It is a genuinely user-led process and advocates will only take action at the instruction of service users.

We never take a 'best interests' approach, unless working in a formal non-instructed capacity, and this is the key difference between mental health advocacy and other kinds of mental health work.

We take our main principles of working as those defined in the Advocacy Charter – Advocacy Across London (2003)

## **Identified Client Group**

### **Generic Mental Health Advocacy**

People who experience mental health problems in Barking, Dagenham, and Havering in both the community and at Mascalls Park Hospital. This includes people who access services within NELFT (North East London Foundation Trust), NHS Havering, NHS Barking and Dagenham (formerly Primary Care Trusts). Residents of Brentwood who are patients at Mascalls Park on the acute wards, and people living in the Periphery Houses in the Mascalls Park grounds (formerly Warley Hospital).

### **IMCA (Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy)**

For people who lack capacity, are aged over 16 years and who are unbefriended in Havering, Barking or Dagenham. Including from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 people detained under Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards who have been assessed by Local Authority as needing IMCA representation.

## **Types of Advocacy**

**Independent Advocacy** (HUBB is not connected to any other service provider)

To promote a person's cause, act as a representative, foster self-advocacy. Aimed at those people who need short-term support and information to enable them to have choice and control of their particular situation.

## **Self Advocacy**

People speaking up for themselves. This is promoted by providing support and encouragement to enable the person to feel confident enough to speak for themselves.

## **Non-Instructed Advocacy**

This is for people who lack the capacity to instruct. This starts with the same premise as self-advocacy, which is to communicate with the person, using a variety of methods, to ascertain their values and beliefs systems, to allow the advocate to forward a view that is as close to what the client would say if they had capacity. This will also include reviewing case notes, and consulting formal and informal caregivers to build up a picture of the person.

## **Operational Policy**

As the advocacy service develops it will be subject to frequent review therefore the Operational Policy is intended to be flexible.

Advocacy services will be offered to support any person who uses mental health services, in pursuit of their rights or the expression of dissatisfaction with their treatment and/or living conditions, which affects their entitlements and mental health.

In self-advocacy and instructed advocacy, intervention will only be at the client's request and only according to the clients' agenda. In non-instructed advocacy, intervention will be due to the IMCA field of instruction, or at the request of a health professional, who feels the person's rights are being ignored/devalued.

Advocates will agree goal(s) (up to three) with the client on which they will work. When goals have been achieved the contract can be renegotiated and further goals identified. This method helps the client to prioritise issues.

Representation e.g. writing letters or making phone calls will again only be at the client's request and the advocate will ensure the client is in control by checking or dictating contents, and that she/he is kept fully informed.

The advocate will always be led by what the client perceives as her/his own interests and not what others might perceive to be in that person's 'best' interest. It is the advocate's main task to ensure that the client has sufficient information and support to make an informed choice.

Advocates will not respond to requests from staff, relatives or any other third party without the clients consent.

Where the client is unable to communicate, advocacy can only ensure courses of action or decisions that are not detrimental to the client's best interest. HUBB advocates are not responsible for decisions made about the care of the client.

If at any time a client is unhappy with how the advocate is working on their behalf, they should discuss this with the advocate and, if necessary, re-negotiate the goals. If a client remains concerned, they should contact the Advocacy Manager on 0208 590 2666 who can take up any issues of concern. Also see Complaints Procedure.

### **Boundaries**

The role of the advocate needs to be clearly defined to both those who use mental health services and care providers. When the responsibility for dealing with the issue is identified as being within the duties of a statutory professional, whether in hospital or the community, the client should be referred where possible to the appropriate person. The advocate will offer support if required.

Advocates do have a responsibility to make clients aware of the different options/services available, enabling the client to make an informed choice. The choice however, must remain with the client and cannot be made by the advocate.

Although HUBB arranges and attends some evening meetings, the Advocacy Service operates Monday-Friday 9 – 5. Both the Marks Gate and Mascalls Park offices have answerphones where messages should be left if no one is available and an advocate will get back to the caller as soon as possible, usually within the next working day of the advocate.

Appointments will be made to suit the client, but HUBB is not generally able offer home visits or evening appointments. If a client cannot be seen anywhere other than home, then two advocates may visit during working hours.

Advocates will not see clients alone, in either office. Appointments in the offices must be made for when there will be two persons present. Advocates may see clients in a public place on their own providing the public place consists of a relatively safe environment e.g. shopping centre, library.

Advocates will not transport clients in their cars. Clients must be met at venues. If there is an exceptional circumstance, the Manager must be informed, and the advocate has the relevant insurance in place.

### **Relationships with clients**

HUBB recognises that a large majority of clients and their families that employees encounter in their daily work can come under the category of "Vulnerable People".

There are two main groups of people in this category: - people who are suffering from an enduring mental illness, which can cloud impairment, and the children of such clients.

HUBB recognises the POVA (Protection of Vulnerable Adult) legislation, the Sex Offences Act 2004, and the recommendations from the London Child Protection Procedures 2004. As such:-

- (i) All HUBB employees will be subject to a Police CRB check for their suitability to work with vulnerable people (POVA guidelines)
- (ii) All HUBB employees, and students on placement, will receive induction and training to gain sensitivity and insight into the possibility of abuse and neglect (POVA, London Child Procedures)
- (iii) No employee will work as a HUBB advocate with any member of his or her family, or anyone they have a close relationship with.

(For reporting procedures see Vulnerable Person Policy)

### **Giving and receiving of money / gifts**

Advocates are unable to accept personal gifts.

Advocates will not lend money to clients. Advocates will not hold clients' valuables, money or personal possessions.

### **Supervision**

The HUBB Advocacy Manager is responsible for line management supervision of the advocates and can be contacted by them at any time.

All advocates will have one hour per month with an external supervisor (someone trained in counselling from outside the organisation). If there is a special need, additional time can be arranged via the HUBB Manager.

Advocates will participate in Peer Supervision Groups every two months to discuss working methods, exchange information, share work experiences etc.

Advocates contribute to bi-monthly staff meetings with the whole HUBB staff team.

### **Record Keeping**

Contact sheets for each client are kept to record the minimum amount of information necessary for effectiveness.

Information includes, for statistical purposes: -

Age range, Gender, Ethnicity, Faith/religion, disability, sexual orientation

Written information held by advocates is for monitoring progress and information. The client has access and ownership to any records relating to their case.

The statistical information is only reported in numerical format.

HUBB is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998, which now includes written information as well as data held on computer. Clients will be asked to sign that they consent to this information being held confidentially for the purposes of the work.

Client files can be accessed by the client and are the property of the client

Client records are archived for five years before being shredded.

### **Outcomes**

Generic Advocacy Clients will be sent a Client Outcomes Survey at the end of the quarter in which their goals were achieved, with a reply paid envelope. The aim of the survey is to find out how helpful the HUBB Advocacy Service has been to clients, how the advocacy intervention affected the client, and to highlight any areas where our service can be improved. Completion of this survey is anonymous.

For IMCA the evaluation form is completed by the decision maker  
Equal Opportunities

HUBB is open to all members of the community who have mental health needs, or care for someone who has.

HUBB is aware of the discrimination that people with mental health needs are subjected to and aims to promote a better understanding of mental health issues to the wider community and actively combat discrimination when it occurs, or is suspected.

HUBB will not discriminate against employees, members or clients on account of their gender, race, ethnic origin, marital status, sexuality, creed, disability, age, politics or personal belief.

HUBB aims to respond positively to the specialist needs of individuals and recognises that actively combating such discrimination can help prevent ill health.

### **Confidentiality**

No personal information will be revealed without the client's permission, to any other person or through any public medium except to those to whom advocates are directly accountable, or on whom advocates rely for support/supervision. In non-instructed advocacy, the only disclosure is through the IMCA report.

In circumstances, where there is serious risk of harm to the client or others, the advocate will tell the client who else must be informed and why. This information covers institutional abuse, significant self-harm/neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, neglect and acts of omission, discriminatory abuse and psychological abuse.

The other exceptions to confidentiality are in accordance to the London Child Care Procedures and the Safeguarding Adults legislation.

Under the Child Care Procedures if a client divulges any information which would affect the well being of a child, the advocate must inform the service user that the information will be disclosed to the HUBB Director or Advocacy Manager. The Director/Advocacy Manager will then contact the relevant Child and Families department of Social Services and report the information the same day, and follow up with a written report within two days.

In the case of vulnerable adults who do not have the capacity to make an informed choice in relation to confidentiality, the sharing of information is usually considered legitimate if it is intended to safeguard the vulnerable adult's well being.

Disclosure will be by the advocate to the HUBB Director/Advocacy Manager, who will then contact the relevant Adult Protection Person or seek advice from the Police. If a criminal act has been committed the Police have an overriding duty to investigate.

### **Health & Safety**

Advocates acquaint themselves with all the relevant Health & Safety requirements in the various venues in which they may work. The HUBB Health and Safety Policy is contained in the Policies folder at both Mascalls

Park Office and Rose Lane. Policies are renewed as necessary, and at least annually.

### **Complaints Procedure**

If you have a concern or a complaint:

Contact Jenny Gray, HUBB Director in person, or in writing. Written complaints will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt. The Director will arrange to discuss the matter with you in confidence within 10 working days of receiving the letter. In the absence of the Director, or should you prefer, you can address your complaint to the HUBB Chair.

The Director (or Chair) may ask for time to investigate the complaint. A full response, in writing will be sent to you within one month of receiving your complaint.

If you are unhappy with the response, you may ask for an independent review. HUBB has a reciprocal arrangement with an advocacy provider from a neighbouring London borough, who will review your complaint, and the way that it has been investigated, and HUBB's response. That person will then offer an impartial view as to whether the complaint has been dealt with efficiently.

**ADVOCATES MISSION STATEMENT**

As a HUBB advocate I will work independently on your behalf.

- I will arrange an appointment to give you time to explain what you want help with
- Work to achieve jointly agreed goal(s)

That might include:

- Supporting you in speaking up for yourself
- Seeing that you get the information that you need, to make informed choices
- Attend meetings or draft letters with you
- Help you to assert your rights

At all times, I will:

- Avoid doing anything that harms you or other people or breaks the law
- Fight any discrimination and unfair treatment
- Refuse to tell anyone your business without your permission to do so, UNLESS there is serious risk to yourself or others, in which case I will explain to you who I need to tell and why.