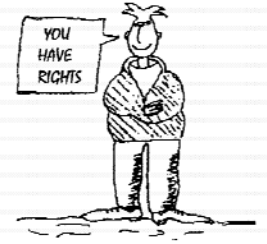


THE FORMAL ADULT ADVOCACY SERVICE



What is Mental Health Advocacy?

Having a mental health problem, or experiencing mental distress, often means that your opinions and ideas are not taken seriously, or that you are not offered the opportunities and choices you would like. Being subject to a Section of the Mental Health Act can be confusing and disempowering and exercising your right to be informed and involved in your own care and treatment can be difficult when you are distressed or when your views may be discounted as part of your 'illness'. Mental health advocacy has developed over the last twenty years as one way of challenging the discrimination faced by people experiencing mental distress, and seeks to ensure that people are able to speak out, to express their views, and defend their rights. 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.

Advocacy can be helpful in all kinds of situations where you are finding it difficult to make your views known, or to make people listen to them and take them into account. Mental health advocacy often focuses on accessing, using or complaining about mental health and community care services. They can help you to access information that you need (e.g. legal rights, details of medication and discharge plans); go with you to interviews or meetings, as a supportive presence; help you express your views in a constructive way; and speak for you in situations where you do not feel able to speak for yourself. They can be helpful in preparing for Mental Health Review Tribunals; supporting you in making your concerns known to staff; explaining the conditions and restrictions that apply to you under the Mental Health Act, including help in exercising your rights under the Act; and help you to find out about services that might be available to you when you leave hospital, including benefits, employment and education opportunities.

Advocacy is about empowerment, autonomy, citizenship and inclusion, but in its simplest form can just mean listening respectfully to someone. An advocate respects the views and wishes of the person they advocate for, without judgement, and believes in their right to access information, representation, services and opportunities. Unlike health and social care staff who have a 'duty of care' to the people they work with (which means that they cannot support you in doing things that are bad for you), an advocate is independent and will represent your wishes without judging them or putting forward their own personal opinion. An advocate's responsibility is to you, not to relatives, professionals or the statutory services, and is instructed by you.

For further information on advocacy, please refer to the 'Mind Guide to Advocacy' (link: http://www.mind.org.uk/help/rights_and_legislation/mind_guide_to_advocacy)

What do we Offer?

Colchester Mind's Formal Advocacy Service provides information, support and representation to inpatients and outpatients from the Colchester area who are subject to Sections of the Mental Health Act, on a wide range of issues. These include:

- treatment and care;
- benefit advice;
- debt advice;
- housing issues;
- employment issues;
- mental health tribunals and management hearings;
- civil and criminal court cases; and
- acting as an appropriate adult for clients in police custody

The experience of an inpatient admission, whether voluntary or under a section of the Mental Health Act, can be confusing and disempowering. Consequently, The Formal Advocacy Service seeks to promote:

- Respect for the individual
- Legal Rights
- Comprehensive information
- Informed choice regarding treatment and care
- Mutual trust
- The preserving of dignity

The Formal Advocacy Service is free, impartial and confidential.

For further information on our services, please also refer to (link to our leaflet - see attached document).

Who is Our Service Available to?

Our Service is available to people aged 16-65 who are subject to a Section of the Mental Health Act and who live in the Colchester area. Our service is available to patients at the following hospitals:

- The Lakes Mental Health Unit, Turner Road, Colchester
- Cedar and Maple Wards, Willow House, Boxted Road, Colchester
- Severalls House Complex, Boxted Road, Colchester
- The Rehabilitation Inpatient Unit, Ipswich Road, Colchester
- The Oxford Road Project, Colchester
- Anyone subjected to a Community Treatment Order under the Mental Health Act and who lives in the Colchester area
- Anyone from the Colchester area who is detained under the Mental Health Act at Runwell Hospital, Wickford

If you are young person under the age of 16, experiencing mental distress and require advocacy support, please refer to (link to Young Persons Advocacy).

If you are over 65 and experience mental distress and require advocacy support, please refer to (link to Older People's Advocacy).

Our Staff



Dennis Smith,

Adult Advocacy Manager

Contactable Monday-Friday 9am-5pm at address/telephone number below.



Carly Barham,

Adult Advocacy Administrator and Formal Advocate

Contactable Tuesday-Wednesday 9am-5pm and Thursdays 9am-2pm at address/telephone number below.

Ben Payne,

Volunteer Formal Adult Advocate

Contactable Wednesdays 12pm-4pm at address/telephone number below.

Mia Scammell, Volunteer Formal Adult Advocate

Contactable Thursdays 10am-4pm at address/telephone number below.

How to Access Our Services

People can access our services via a referral from a healthcare professional or can self-refer. To self-refer please contact us at:

Colchester Mind Adult Advocacy Services

The Lakes Mental Health Unit

Turner Road

Colchester

CO4 5JL

Tel/Fax/Voicemail: 01206 228730

Email: colmindadvocacy@btconnect.com

The easiest way to self-refer is to phone us (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or by leaving a message on our 24-hour voicemail service. The voicemail is totally secure and confidential and can only be accessed by our staff.

How to Find Us

Our office is situated next to the ECT suite on the corridor between Abberton ward (the outpatient ward) and the two inpatient wards (Gosfield and Ardleigh)/ the main reception of the Lakes Mental Health Hospital. The Lakes Mental Health Hospital is on the site of Colchester General Hospital and sits in front of it, on Turner Road. If you are traveling to the Lakes via personal transport, taxi, or via foot, take the South entrance into the General Hospital and the Lakes is on the first entrance on the left. Buses also stop at the General Hospital.

Volunteering Opportunities

Colchester Mind is always looking for volunteer advocates and welcomes applications from people who experience mental distress. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer advocate, please contact us at:

Colchester Mind Adult Advocacy Services
The Lakes Mental Health Unit
Turner Road
Colchester
CO4 5JL
Tel/Fax/Voicemail: 01206 228730
Email: colmindadvocacy@btconnect.com