

## Appendix 2

### Recommissioning the Countywide Independent Advocacy Service

#### Feedback from Engagement Sessions

##### Views of People with lived experience and stakeholders

The council engaged with a broad range of people with Lived Experience of using or requiring advocacy services, as well as other key stakeholders including social care operational colleagues and advocacy providers to better understand what worked well, areas for improvement and what was required within any new service.

One of the key issues that arose from this engagement was that Advocacy was poorly defined and understood. Therefore, an agreed definition of advocacy was developed:

*‘An advocate is an appropriately qualified and independent person who works in a confidential manner with, or on behalf of, an individual who may require unbiased representation.*

*The activities of an advocate may include (but are not limited to): understanding and engendering expression of the individual’s views, supporting effective communication of wishes and preferences; ensuring the individual is heard; empowering the individual; maintaining the individual’s legal rights.’*

Advocacy is not:

- Someone giving you their opinion
- Someone solving your problems and making decisions for you
- Someone making decisions or choices on your behalf without permission
- Withholding or presenting information about you without your permission/knowledge

Key themes which came from the engagement are included in the tables below.

**Table 1: summary of feedback from individuals with lived experience of accessing social care or mental health services.**

<b>Current Service Feedback from People with Lived Experience</b>	<b>Key Messages for the Future Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A significant number of people did not know what advocacy was</li><li>• Many individuals had never heard of the service or how to access it</li><li>• Those that had used it found the referral process confusing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There needs to be consistency in support</li><li>• Referral route needs to be simple</li><li>• Access to specialist advocates is essential</li><li>• It must be more visible and accessible for when people need it</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many who had used the service found they were not supported by advocates with specialist knowledge of the type they needed</li> <li>• Accessibility is a huge barrier to using the service</li> <li>• There needs to be better understanding of the role of advocate</li> <li>• The criteria to access statutory advocacy is too high</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social workers need better training regarding at which stages of assessment advocacy should be offered</li> <li>• People with Lived Experience make great advocates for others</li> <li>• There needs to be more advocacy support at a peer, citizen and general level to prevent people only being able to access support when they reach crisis</li> </ul>
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**Table 2: Summary of feedback from stakeholders including social care operational colleagues**

<b>Current Service Feedback from Key Stakeholders</b>	<b>Key Messages for the Future Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are concerns about the accessibility and suitability of the referral pathway and referral method</li> <li>• There is a generally poor awareness across all of the Independent Advocacy provision</li> <li>• There is a lack of understanding about the eligibility criteria</li> <li>• Some concerns from CYP team about suitability of CYP advocacy provider(s)</li> <li>• There is a gap in advocacy support for the parents of children who are subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection assessment or plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible information and appropriate language usage</li> <li>• Communication suitable for differing groups</li> <li>• Cultural/disability awareness</li> <li>• Simple referral process/form</li> <li>• Building trust between individuals and advocates/organisation is crucial</li> <li>• Better visibility of the service required</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Summary of feedback from market engagement sessions**

<b>Current Market Feedback from Market Engagement</b>	<b>Key Messages for the Future Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Point of Access (SPA) is a good model for delivery</li> <li>• The workforce is a challenging place currently, with not enough qualified advocates</li> <li>• The unknowns in the market and legislation is making it difficult</li> <li>• Lead provider model appears to be a sensible approach for the model</li> <li>• A large single provider can lack specialism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial contingency built into contract</li> <li>• Flexible contract</li> <li>• Work together to address workforce challenges</li> <li>• Good communication</li> <li>• ECC need to support with development of services</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Market positive about amount of engagement from ECC</li></ul>	
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