

Advocacy: On Your Marks!

Organisational Resources Booklet 1, developed by the Standards Support Project



A Shopping List for Anyone Developing a New Advocacy Service

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Introduction

So, you are in the process of setting up a new advocacy service, or just in the very early stages? This guide is designed to support groups that are just starting out in advocacy. It should provide you with an idea of what you need – the training, policies, procedures, information systems, etc.

Don't worry if the amount of information looks a bit scary. Advocacy services take time to develop and you will not be able to do everything in one go.

For example, it would be almost impossible to be able to fully meet A4A's Quality Standards for Advocacy Schemes straight away, but this guide should help make sure that you're going in the right direction.

One aim of the guide is to help you know what you definitely need. Although we will tell you what policies you're likely to need we won't write them for you. You need to make sure that policies fit in with the way your group works. However, we will signpost you to good examples in the Good Practice Links and Templates and Forms booklets, which you can download at www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk.

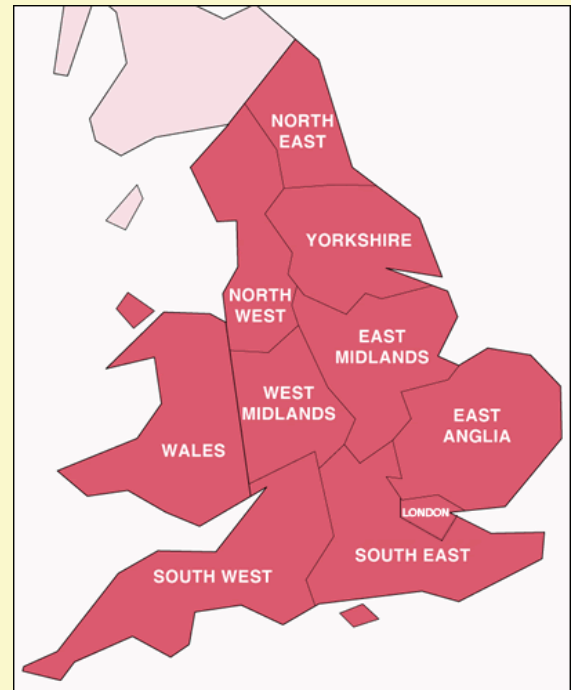
This guide won't give you all the answers, but should be a useful starting point. Once you have gone through this guide, you might like to have a closer look at Good Practice Links and the Templates and Forms booklet.

Is There a Demand for Your Service?

How do you know that an advocacy service is needed? Does a similar service exist elsewhere? How can you check? How are existing schemes funded? What problems have existing schemes faced?

Why not have a look at the Advocacy Map at www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk? Find out what other services exist locally.

Get to know other voluntary groups and services in the area, to find out what their service users have fed back



Task: Who are your local contacts?

Meet representatives of the following, to introduce yourself and the advocacy project:

- Local service user forums
- Local Carers Centre
- Other voluntary and community sector organisations
- Social Services
- Mediation services
- Counselling services
- Citizens Advice Bureau

Your local Council for Voluntary Service should have a directory of voluntary and community groups in your area.

Is there an existing service provider who could offer practical support? E.g., a place to meet, access to resources or administrative support? If you do go down this route, make sure that you set up a clear agreement with a strategy and timetable for when you plan to become an independent organisation.

What You Will Need

- Management committee
- Aims and Objectives
- Vision and Mission
- Agreement on advocacy principles
- Agreement on the advocacy model you will provide
- Operational/Development/Business Plan
- Budget
- An agreed structure
- Governing Document
- Funding
- Policies and Procedures
- Information Recording System
- Insurance
- CRB Checks
- Volunteers/Staff

Management Committee

It is vital to get a group of committed people who are willing to take responsibility for the organisation of the advocacy project. Your management committee will be responsible for deciding how your organisation is constituted. It is essential that they understand what advocacy is and why it is needed, this might require some training. Your committee will be ultimately responsible for your organisation.

A4A hold template role descriptions for Trustees. We can send these to you on request.

A4A's Quality Standards for Advocacy Schemes recommend that people who come to an advocacy service should be meaningfully involved in the management committee. Starting a new service offers a wonderful opportunity to set up structures that ensure that people *will* be involved fully.

Ideally, your management committee would comprise of people whose collective skills and knowledge include:

- Knowledge of advocacy
- Knowledge of the advocacy sector
- Knowledge of the local area and local contacts
- Experience of being a service user, or of the client group you support
- People who have financial management experience and skills
- People who know a bit about government policy
- Knowledge of Charity/Company law
- Experience in recruiting and managing staff and volunteers
- Communication skills
- Marketing skills
- Lobbying and campaigning skills
- Negotiation skills
- Fundraising experience
- Team working
- Variety of backgrounds
- Strategic planning skills
- Interpersonal skills—e.g., chairing meetings, leadership skills, active listening
- Recruitment procedures
- Experience of managing staff and volunteers
- Research skills

Task: Think about your current management committee.

Do you need to bring more people on board to meet this skill set?

Can you provide training for your current management committee to brush up their skills?

Aims/Objectives/Vision/Mission

One of the first tasks of the management committee will be to decide what you are trying to do, who you should be working with and how you will go about your work. Be explicit about providing independent advocacy at this point. Formally deciding what you are trying to do is a good way of making sure you are all focussed on the same goal. The aims and objectives you come up with will help form the basis of your governing documents. It is important that these and your vision and mission are agreed on as a group.

Your aim should describe the people that you want to support, and what you hope will change as a result of your group existing. The change stated in your aim, is a helpful benchmark to measure outcomes. Your aim should be possible to achieve and be broad enough to cover everything the group want to do. Try to keep it to 40 words or less.

An example of an advocacy scheme's aim "to provide free and confidential independent advocacy in Xshire for individuals over the age of 16, who need to be supported to speak up about specific issues. This, whilst not exclusive, will focus on key priority groups including those with mental ill health, learning disabilities, and older people, and with full recognition of diverse and marginalised groups"

Your mission should state why you exist. It can be used as an organisational strap-line. An example of a mission statement could be: "To support mental health service users in Xshire to have an independent voice, and to challenge service providers through independent advocacy".

Your vision looks very much at the future. You might never be able to achieve your vision, but it is something to strive towards. This helps to motivate your management committee to think about the longer term. An example of a vision statement could be, "To enable all mental health service users to voice their rights".

Your objectives are actions that you plan to achieve to meet your aim. These can include service and organisational objectives. A service objective is what you need to do for your advocacy service to run smoothly. An organisational objective is what you need to do to run your organisation. Remember that if you are planning to become a registered charity, your charitable objectives are important as they are the legal boundaries to what activities your advocacy project can carry out. Seek advice before writing your charitable objectives.

An example of an advocacy scheme's charitable objects are:

A) To promote the well-being of people who are in need by reason of mental or physical ill-health, disability, learning difficulties, age, or otherwise, in particular through the provision of an advocacy services to such people, and by facilitating self-advocacy amongst people, and by encouraging and facilitating their access to and involvement in the delivery of care services, B) To advance public education in the experiences and needs of users and care services.

Task: Take a post it note each. Write down a word that you think describes the service you plan to develop. As a group, put your post it notes together, and try to form a statement linking the words. This is a fun and helpful starting point to developing vision and mission statements.

Advocacy Principles

It is important that you and the rest of your group are clear about core advocacy principles, and how it differs from other supporting professions.

The Advocacy Charter (2002) outlines 10 key principles of advocacy as detailed below. It is important that everyone who joins your organisation is trained on the core principles of advocacy. We can send you a poster of this on request.

Advocacy is taking action to support people to say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.

Clarity of Purpose

The advocacy scheme will have clearly stated aims and objectives and be able to demonstrate how it meets the principles contained in this Charter. Advocacy schemes will ensure that people they advocate for, service providers and funding agencies have information on the scope and limitations of the schemes' role.

Independence

The advocacy scheme will be structurally independent from statutory organisations and preferably from all service provider agencies. The advocacy scheme will be as free from conflict of interest as possible both in design and operation, and actively seek to reduce conflicting interests.

Putting People First

The advocacy scheme will ensure that the wishes and interests of the people they advocate for direct advocates' work. Advocates should be non-judgmental and respectful of peoples' needs, views and experiences. Advocates will ensure that information concerning the people they advocate for is shared with these individuals.

Empowerment

The advocacy scheme will support self-advocacy and empowerment through its work. People who use the scheme should have a say in the level of involvement and style of advocacy support they want. Schemes will ensure that people who want to, can influence and be involved in the running and management of the scheme.

Equal Opportunities

The advocacy scheme will have a written equal opportunities policy that recognises the need to be pro-active in tackling all forms of inequality, discrimination and social exclusion. The scheme will have in place systems for the fair and equitable allocation of advocates' time.

Accountability

The advocacy scheme will have in place systems for the effective monitoring and evaluation of its work. All those who use the scheme will have a named advocate and a means of contacting them.

Accessibility

Advocacy will be provided free of charge to eligible people. The advocacy scheme will aim to ensure that its premises, policies, procedures and publicity materials promote access for the whole community.

Supporting Advocates

The advocacy scheme will ensure advocates are prepared, trained and supported in their role and provided with opportunities to develop their skills and experience.

Confidentiality

The advocacy scheme will have a written policy on confidentiality, stating that information known about a person using the scheme is confidential to the scheme and any circumstances under which confidentiality might be breached.

Complaints

The advocacy scheme will have a written policy describing how to make complaints or give feedback about the scheme or about individual advocates. Where necessary, the scheme will enable people who use its services to access external independent support to make or pursue a complaint.

Task: Develop a leaflet with clear information about what your advocates can and cannot support people with.

Different Types of Advocacy

The advocacy world is diverse and there are a range of models. What model would best suit the people you aim to support? Here are the main ones:

Citizen advocacy	Citizen advocacy was developed in America and became formalised in the UK in the early 1980s. It is based on one to one partnerships. An unpaid advocate works with someone on a long term basis.
Professional, one-to-one, short term, issue based or crisis advocacy	When an advocate speaks up for someone about a particular issue, or speaks up for them to help them through a crisis.
Self advocacy	When someone speaks and acts for their self to present their case. Many self advocates have come together to form a collective voice on issues that impact on their lives. This is also sometimes called group advocacy.
Peer advocacy	When the advocate has something in common with the person they are advocating for. For example, the advocate might be a user of a former user of the advocacy service.
Non-instructed advocacy	<p>Taking affirmative action with or on behalf of someone who is unable to give a clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation.</p> <p>For example, this could be someone with dementia, profound learning disabilities or brain damage.</p> <p>The non-instructed advocate seeks to:</p> <p>uphold the person's rights; ensure fair and equal treatment and access to services; and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for their unique preferences and perspectives.</p>
Independent Mental Capacity Act Advocacy (IMCA)	Advocacy for people who do not have the capacity to make their own decisions or have close friends or relatives who can speak up for them. IMCAs support these people through issues around medical treatment or residential care.
Legal advocacy	This is provided by lawyers and aims to assist people to exercise or defend their legal rights. This booklet does not cover legal advocacy, as it focuses on free independent advocacy. For more information about legal advocacy, see www.legalservices.gov.uk

Ensuring Accessibility

Thanks to Gona Saeed of Westminster Advocacy Service for Senior Residents (WASSR) for providing this important chapter.

The A4A Quality Standards say it is essential that an advocacy scheme is accessible to the widest possible range of service users, regardless of differences of gender, race, religion, ability or sexual orientation. It's important to plan and develop accessibility during the outset of your project.

Your advocacy service may decide to focus on a particular client group. Your decision may be based on need, a gap in existing advocacy services in the area, or indeed on the interests and concerns of the founding members of your group. They might be based on:

Gender:	Male, female or both sexes
Age groups:	Older people, young people, children or all ages
Disability:	Mental health service users, people with learning disabilities, physical and/or sensory impairment or pan disability
Sexual orientation	Gay people, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals
Race	Serving a specific ethnic group eg the Bangladeshi community, the Kurdish community

In each case the group setting up the service will need to both clearly identify their target client group and explain the reasons for that focus in their constitution.

However for all services except those targeting a particular ethnic group, there will be an important issue of ensuring accessibility to the service for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities. Whatever the gender, sexuality, age or ability a client group represents, there will always be some people in that group who will have barriers to the service that arise from their ethnicity: they may have language issues or perhaps have extra needs because of different cultural attitudes or expectations for example. People cannot be excluded from accessing the service because of this.

Making a service accessible to BME communities means extra resources – money, for example for translation, time spent on liaison with community groups or translating publicity materials into community languages. So thinking about this from the start is important .

To make a service accessible to BME communities you need to

- Have knowledge of the different communities in your area
- Identify the languages spoken and plan how to meet their language requirements
- Include the cost in your forward plans for budget and fundraising
- Ensure your strategic thinking looks at the access needs of the BME community - do you need in house bilingual staff, outreach workers or bilingual volunteers, will you purchase community language interpreters or will you operate by working in partnership with local community organisations? Perhaps you will need elements of all 3 of these.
- Reflect this work in your staffing and organisational structure
- Include diversity training in your training budget

The good news is that making your services accessible to different communities will bring your organisation extra funding opportunities: very many funders have working with BME communities in their criteria. Include this as an area of work in all your funding bids and be aware of how doing so will shape the project .

Tasks:

1. What do you know about the BME communities in the area **you** serve - percentages of the population in different ethnic groups, the range of languages spoken for example?
2. Identify 3 community groups in your area that will help you ensure accessibility and explain how.
3. Identify 3 key points in a strategy for ensuring accessibility for the BME community in **your** scheme.

First Year Operational Plan

Before looking for funding, it is important to set out an operational plan. Get an agreement amongst your committee about how your aims, objectives, vision and mission relate to a practical operational plan, with specific tasks allocated to particular people.

Task: Answer the following questions. Once you have answered these, you are on your way to an operational plan.

Can you sum up the organisation's purpose and key values in no more than forty words?

What background information about the advocacy service and the rest of the organisation (if applicable) do funders need to know?

What are your main successes so far?

What are the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to developing your advocacy service?

What will your advocacy scheme's future environment look like? This should include the profile of people you support, trends, and opportunities.

What assumptions are you making about the future? What will be the organisation's main direction for the next period?

What are the core aims for your advocacy scheme as a whole? (maximum six)
What objectives will help you to meet each aim?

What will you do differently to meet these objectives?

What changes in how your advocacy scheme currently works will have to be managed?

How will your first year of operation be funded? How will the next three to four years of operation be funded?

What are your financial projections and estimates?

Who will do what and when to meet the plan? Try and put this into a user-friendly table.

Budget

What will your financial year be? Most organisations have their financial year from 1 April—31st March and their annual accounts cover all financial transactions within this financial year.

Task: Recap: What are your objectives are for your first year of operation? How much will it cost to meet these objectives? If you do not know, do some research. Be accurate and realistic, and consider all costs. Fill out the table below, and add any budget lines that you think should also be included.

Item	Cost
Salaries including National insurance	
Contributions to employees' superannuation or pension funds	
Recruitment costs	
Office equipment (furniture, computers, printers, etc)	
Office rent and council tax	
Electricity, water rates	
Training for trustees, staff and volunteers	
Day to day travel expenses for trustees, staff and volunteers	
Visits to organisations who have developed good models of practice	
Accountancy and auditing	
Consultancy fees	
External supervision	
Insurance (see page 21)	
Meeting costs	
Bank Charges	
Publicity	
Total	

Now do the same for your second and third years of operation.

Structure



The structure of your organisation is very important. Advocacy schemes need a structure to receive funding and each type of structure carries certain legal responsibilities and implications. It is especially important for advocacy to remain operationally independent from umbrella bodies and other services. If you are setting up a new advocacy project within an existing organisation, you might not necessarily develop a new

identity or structure immediately. You might decide the best option is to develop an advisory group and terms of reference for your advocacy project.

Under English and Welsh law, charitable status is determined by an organisation's purposes rather than its constitutional form. A number of different legal structures are acceptable provided that all the basic conditions for charitable status are met.

The appropriate legal structure for your advocacy service will depend very much on your proposed activities and operations. Factors to consider are:

- Number of staff you plan to employ
- Whether you plan to hold property
- Number and size of contracts you hope to take on
- Whether you plan to have a membership

It is best to take advice at an early stage as to the appropriate structure.

For more information about organisational structures, visit: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk, who have guidance on the pros and cons of different legal structures for voluntary groups. Your local CVS should also be able to provide advice on the legal structure that would be best for your advocacy service.

For more information, see:

Charity Commission: CC21 - Registering as a Charity

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc21.asp>

Charity Commission: Registration Application Pack

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/regpack.asp>

Companies House: responsible for company registration in Great Britain

<http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk/infoAndGuide/companyRegistration.shtml>

Governing Documents

Whatever you decide about your structure, if your organisation is to receive money directly, you will need to formally constitute your organisation. You will need to have a set of governing documents. It is important to highlight the independence of your advocacy service in the governing document.

Your governing document lays out the rules about how you will be structured, how the committee will be elected, and how the membership (if you have one) will have a say in the running of the organisation. It also gives a framework for receiving, controlling and using money.

Have a look at existing governing documents, rather than reinventing the wheel. Examples can be found on the Charity Commission website.

If you are registering as a company limited by guarantee, the governing document—Memorandum and Articles of Association—is not provided by Companies House, but can be purchased from a Legal Stationer.

Your objects must be exclusively charitable in the legal sense of the word and wide enough to cover present and future activities. Your administrative provisions must comply with charity law and be both comprehensive and flexible.

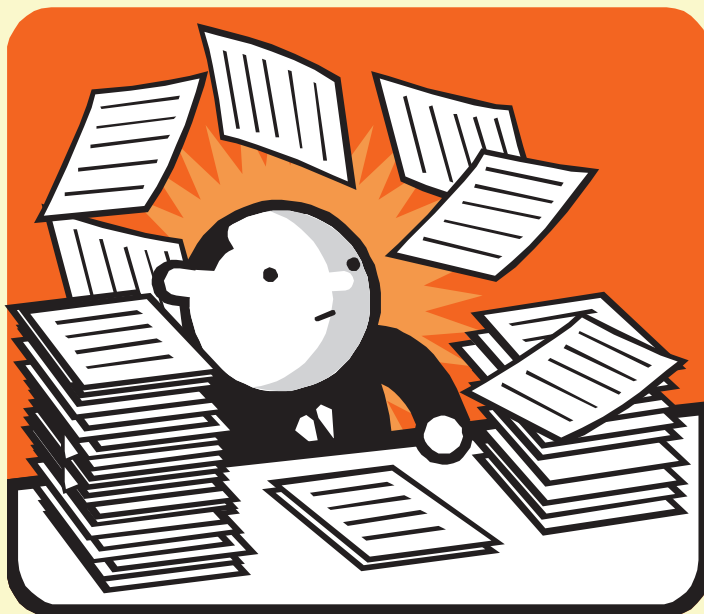
Links to relevant resources can be found below. Press Ctrl and click to follow the links;

Charity Commission: CC22 - Choosing and Preparing a Governing Document (Version December 2003)

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc22.asp>

Charity Commission: CC36 - Amending Charities' Governing Documents: Orders and Schemes (Version February 2004)

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc36.asp>



Funding

Now that you are almost ready to start your advocacy service, what about funding?

Find out about how your local primary care trust and social services commission new services. You may have to campaign to make sure that advocacy is included.

Our Good Practice Links booklet has some further funding guidance and links.

Task: Answer the following questions. Once you have answered these, you will be on your way to developing a funding proposal.

Is there a need for your service? What research and statistics do you have to back this up? Are there examples of similar services elsewhere? (see page 4)

Who will you be supporting? It is a specific client group or location? (see pages 4 and 10)

What are your aims and objectives? (see page 7)

What are your objectives for the first year of the advocacy project? Who will deliver each objective? (see page 7)

What outcomes do you expect your service to provide to the people being supported? Check that these are in line with your aim. (see page 19)

How will you make sure your service is accessible? (see the accessibility section of the Quality Standards for more information)

Where will you be located?

How will you monitor and evaluate your service? What format will your monitoring information be in? (see page 19)

What is your organisational structure? (see pages 14-15)

What quality standards are you working towards (we can send you a copy of the A4A Quality Standards for Advocacy Schemes on request)

What are the skills on your management committee? (see page 6)

Do you plan to employ staff? How many? What are your recruitment procedures? (see page 20)

What are supervision arrangements for staff? (see page 20 and Templates and Forms booklets)

How much will your service cost? (see page 12)

How will your spending be managed and monitored? (see page 19)

What funding do you already have for this project?

Do you have an exit strategy? That is, what would happen if your funding runs out.?

Policy Checklist

This is a list of some of the policies and procedures you will need to develop.

Task: Use the tick boxes below to find out which policies and procedure you have, and which you should develop.

case closing procedure			individual work plans	
case review procedures			leave and sickness policy	
code of practice for advocates (We can send you copies of the A4A version)			monitoring and evaluation/ record keeping procedures (see next page)	
complaints policy			policy on receiving gifts	
confidentiality policy			recruitment policy	
conflict of interests			referral policy	
contracts of employment			risk assessment policy	
data protection policy			role descriptions (for staff, volunteers and management committee members)	
development and training policy			supervision and appraisal procedures	
development/business plan (see page 12)			terms of reference	
disciplinary and grievance procedures			training policy	
engagement protocols with service providers			volunteers policy	
equal opportunities policy			whistle blowing policy	
governing document			withdrawal of service protocol	
health and safety policy				

The list might look a bit daunting, but remember you don't have to develop everything from scratch, or do them all at once. Ask other groups if you can see their policies, it could be a good way of starting a dialogue with local advocacy providers. Also remember that A4A has produced two publications – **Good Practice Links** and **Templates and Forms** – which point out things to consider when developing policies and gives examples and links to other resources. These can be downloaded via the Capacity Building Resources area of www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk. Make sure that you date each of the policies and procedures and agree on a review date.

Information Recording System

You will need to make sure you have a way of capturing the information you need to record. Some of this will need to be the figures required by your funders. Equal opportunities monitoring is also important.

However, you also need to be able to get information about issues you are working with, progress made, outcomes and satisfaction. The main points at which you can capture this data are the first meeting / referral form, ongoing case notes, supervision notes and closing meetings. Examples of forms that may help with this can be found in Templates and Forms.

It is good to use a variety of methods of monitoring to capture a true picture of the impact of advocacy: These include:

- Ideas boxes in meeting rooms
- Photographs and video diaries
- Interviews with people you support, volunteers and staff
- Focus groups
- Evaluation forms
- Observation
- Verbal feedback



The templates and forms booklet has a couple of forms and tools that you can use to measure outcomes. Good Practice links has a number of useful websites that have further information about monitoring and evaluation.

Employers and public liability insurance

All voluntary organisations need to take out insurance. Whatever you do there is a risk and we live in a world where people and organisations are increasingly likely to take your advocacy service to court. It is very easy for claims to be made against organisations and if it is not insured the trustees may be personally liable and may have to pay the damages out of their own pockets.

Some insurances are compulsory. That means the law states you must have them. These include employer's liability if you employ staff and motor insurance if your advocacy scheme owns a vehicle. Optional insurance includes public liability insurance and trustees liability insurance. For more information about insurance, see the accountability section of our Good Practice Links booklet.

CC49 - Charities and Insurance, which includes further guidance on insurance, can be downloaded via the Charity Commission website

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc49.asp>

Checklist: To employ advocates, it is important to have the following:

- A contract of employment
- To budget for PAYE and National Insurance
- A process for supervision
- A grievance and disciplinary procedure that you can follow
- A plan for paying any extra costs associated with sick leave and maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- A plan for paying any costs related to redundancy
- CRB Checks. A list of umbrella bodies that can administer these checks free of charge can be found at <http://crb.gov.uk/>

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**Please email any suggested
amendments or additions to
caroline@actionforadvocacy.org.uk**

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