

Fosterline Wales Factsheet

Advocacy- a national approach

Information for Fostering Services in Wales

Introduction

The national approach to advocacy for children and young people in Wales, known to Children's Services departments, was introduced as working practice as of July 2017.

The national approach model places a duty on Children's Services staff to ensure all children and young people who became looked after, post 1 July 2017, and become part of child protection procedures, are receiving a service via a care and support plan.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is promoting views wishes and feelings, to ensure they are taken into account and acted upon during the decision making process that affect a child's life. Advocacy is enshrined in the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNCRC](#).

Advocacy is:

- child or young person led
- confidential (unless there are child protection concerns)
- represents the voice of the child rather than working from a best interest perspective.

Why is advocacy important?

Children and young people say they have:

- a better understanding of their rights and entitlements and how to get help
- an opportunity to express their wishes and feelings, and to be part of the discussion that influences their care plan
- a better understanding of what is happening to them. They understand their care plan and how to influence decisions or changes to their plan
- feel more confident and able to express their feelings, and better engage with the people who care for them
- through advocacy, they have been able to make changes in their lives – advocacy can help them stabilise placements, contact arrangements, education etc
- someone to tell, if they do not feel safe.

What is the 'active offer'?

The 'active offer' of advocacy is in place to ensure all children and young people are offered a face-to-face one hour meeting with the commissioned advocacy provider, when they first become known to the Children's Services department, and thereafter at key transitional times, for example, reviews, placement moves and conference meetings.

During the meeting the advocacy provider will:

- discuss the advocacy service
- inform of rights and entitlements
- provide information on services and support available to the child or young person
- inform the child or young person of the Children's Services complaints procedure.

The format of the meeting should include:

- an explanation of children's rights – UNCRC and Article 12
- an explanation of advocacy and the different types of advocacy (not just Independent Professional Advocacy)
- information about the local independent professional advocacy service, The Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Meic helpline
- information about the right to complain
- an explanation that the advocate will record that the meeting has taken place, the outcome of the meeting and that this detail will be reported back to the local authority.
- social care staff need to record details internally that the 'active offer' of advocacy has been made available, and make the relevant referral to the advocacy provider if the child or young person consents to a meeting.

The advocacy provider will monitor the number of active offers provided by social workers to the child/young person, and compare the number of active offers with the numbers who go onto receive the active offer and case work.

The active offer process

Stage 1 – Active offer

(Social Worker to explain in brief the advocacy service and offer a face-to-face meeting with advocacy provider – social worker to record offer and outcome)



Stage 2 – Referral to advocacy provider

(If the child/young person has agreed to meet with the advocacy provider, the social worker should make an active offer referral to the service using the online referral form @nyas.net)



Stage 3 – Active offer meeting

(On receipt of the referral the advocacy provider will contact the child/young person and agree a meeting date, time and venue. The advocacy provider will, with the consent of child/young person, inform referrer of arrangements)



Once the meeting has taken place it is deemed the following outcomes will be reached

Children and young people should be reminded of advocacy services throughout the time they are receiving support from Children's Services departments.

Expected outcomes

Outcome 1: take-up of advocacy. If the child or young person feels the advocacy service can provide immediate support for a specific issue, the advocacy provider will close the active offer referral and open a new referral for the identified issue and provide advocacy support. The provider will inform the named referrer of the outcome, which should be recorded within Children's Services data management systems.

Outcome 2: advocacy declined. The child or young person has identified no immediate need for advocacy support. The provider will provide service information, how advocacy can help and contact details for future support. The named referrer will be informed of the outcome which should be recorded on Children's Services data management systems. The advocacy providers will close the active offer referral.

Advocacy providers in Wales

Local authorities are expected to publicise their arrangements for advocacy services in their area and to provide information about children's rights to every child or young person they look after.

Welsh Government provides funding to support two independent children's rights organisations, National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) and Tros Gynnal Plant, to provide advocacy and advice for looked after children and care leavers.

Tros Gynnal Plant provides advocacy services to:

- North Wales region
- Mid and West Wales region
- Western Bay region

Call 0800 111 6880 or email northwalesadvocacy@trosgynnalplant.org.uk

NYAS Cymru (National Youth Advocacy Service) provides advocacy services to:

- Cardiff and the Vale region
- Gwent region
- RCT & Merthyr Tydfil region

Call 0808 808 1001 or email help@nyas.net

Further resources

Meic

This is a helpline service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. It covers information, advice and advocacy. <https://www.meiccymru.org/in-your-area/>

The Children's Commissioner Wales

The Children's Commissioner for Wales safeguards and promotes the rights and welfare of children and young people. <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/>

How The Fostering Network can help

The Fostering Network offers advice, information and support. Our expertise and knowledge are always up-to-date and available through our vital member helplines, publications, training and consultancy.

Advice

Fosterline Wales

Call us on 0800 316 7664 from 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you call outside this time please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

You can email us or write to us at:

Fosterlinewales@fostering.net

The Fostering Network Wales

1 Caspian Point, Pierhead Street

Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ

Support and resources

Our website is an essential source of information, while our online community brings together foster carers for peer support and advice. You can login to share your experience and get advice from other foster carers. Our online community is a safe and secure area to discuss foster care matters.

thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

The Fostering Network Wales Advocacy and Young People Factsheet

Fosterline Wales have produced an advocacy factsheet for foster carers. Foster carers have an essential role to play in enabling the voice of the child or young person to be heard. This factsheet outlines what advocacy for children and young people is and the importance of foster carers to enable the child or young person's voice to be heard. Download the Advocacy and Young People Factsheet

English version

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sites/www.fostering.net/files/content/advocacyandyoungpeoplefactsheet-englishupdated14julydsjc.pdf>

Welsh version

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sites/www.fostering.net/files/content/advocacyandyoungpeople-welshupdated22august2.pdf>

Training and consultancy

Wherever you are in your fostering career, as a foster carer, social worker or manager, The Fostering Network has a range of training designed to meet your development needs.

For more information contact our learning and development manager, Sarah Mobedji at sarah.mobedji@fostering.net

About The Fostering Network

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children to make foster care the very best it can be.

Contact

To find out more about our work in Wales, please contact:

The Fostering Network Wales
1 Caspian Point, Pierhead Street
Cardiff Bay CF10 4DQ

Telephone: 029 2044 0940

Email: wales@fostering.net

Web: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk

Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork

Follow us on Twitter: [@fosteringnet](https://twitter.com/fosteringnet)

Follow us on Instagram: [@fosteringnet](https://www.instagram.com/fosteringnet)



[/thefosteringnetwork](https://facebook.com/thefosteringnetwork)



[@fosteringnet](https://twitter.com/fosteringnet)

© The Fostering Network 2017