

Advocacy support for parents and carers attending child protection conferences and core group meetings

Introduction

We understand that child protection case conferences can be difficult meetings for parents and that it is not always easy for you to speak up and have your thoughts and opinions heard.

We want all parents taking part in case conferences to be able to express their views and be fully involved in making decisions. To make sure of this, your social worker will talk to you about whether you would like to have an advocate with you at the initial case conference.

What is an advocate?

An advocate is someone who is independent of Camden and who can attend child protection conferences and core group meetings with you to support you and help you to have your say or speak up on your behalf if you prefer this.

Why have an advocate?

Sometimes, you may find it difficult to speak out and express your views in meetings or you might feel that people aren't listening to you or taking your views into account. You may disagree with decisions, or be unhappy about the services being provided to support you. It's important that you feel able to speak up at meetings and you may find it easier if you have someone such as a relative, friend or professional who can act as an advocate to support you.

Who can be an advocate?

Anyone that you trust to help you can be an advocate. It can be a family member or friend, or a professional who works with you. If you don't know anyone who can be your advocate, you can ask your social worker to request an independent advocate or email ParticipationUnit@camden.gov.uk. For more information, please speak to your social worker.

How can an advocate help?

An advocate can:

- help you to prepare for meetings with professionals
- support you during meetings with professionals to ensure that your voice is heard
- ask clarifying questions during the meetings to support your understanding of what is being said during meetings and to check your understanding of information that is shared

- support you after the meeting, to make sure you understand the information that was shared and what the expectations are of you as a parent moving forward
- signpost you to support services
- give you information and advice about your rights
- support you to make a complaint.

If you would like an advocate to support you at a child protection case conference, or a core group meeting, please talk to your social worker before the case conference or email ParticipationUnit@camden.gov.uk.

