

## **When working with an advocate:**

- Please refer people to the service but only if the service user has agreed to or requested this.
- Don't tell the advocate anything that you wouldn't tell the service user/patient. An advocate will tell the service user of any information related to them or their situation.
- If you want to talk about anything related to advocacy, please speak with the advocate or the Manager.

***We also provide Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) as provided for by the 2007 amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983.***

### **How to contact us:**

Cherry Pedler (Manager),  
Community Support Network ,  
336 Brixton Road, London, SW9 7AA  
0207 274 4490 (tel)  
0207 733 0166 (fax)

**COMMUNITY x SUPPORT NETWORK**

**South London**

**Registered Charity No. 1083649**

**Company No. 4041867**

**Advocacy  
Service**

## **Information for Staff**

### **What is an Advocate?**

An independent person who supports people in speaking up for themselves over their care and treatment (and other concerns).

### **What an Advocate is Not:**

- A social worker
- A healthcare professional
- A counsellor
- A benefits advisor

- A solicitor

## **Some of the ways that advocates can support service users:**

- Listening and supporting the person to get their voice heard
- Supporting the person during ward rounds and CPA meetings
- Supporting people when they are talking about their treatment and care with clinical staff
- Giving clear information about rights, medication and treatment
- Giving information about groups and support available in the community

## **Different Kinds of Support**

Self Advocacy – an advocate, where possible, will encourage and support service users to speak for themselves.

Joint Speaking Up – Sometimes the service user and the advocate will both speak to present the users' views.

Full Representation – When a service user is unable to speak for her or himself, an advocate will speak on her/his behalf following the user's direct instruction.

## **How we work:**

**The service user always makes the decisions.**

**Advocates do not make any value judgements about what is “best” for the service user.**

**We provide information, not advice, about choices available.**

**An advocate will only act on instruction from the service user.**

**A service user will need to give written permission if s/he wants the advocate to access her/his records.**

## **Complaints about the service:**

**The CSN has a complaints policy and procedure that is available from the advocates or from our office. We encourage anyone to make use of this procedure if needed.**