

# Peer Advocacy User Guide

The Peer Advocacy Service works as an equal partner with you



We are here to offer support and to help you find your voice

***I once was where you are now...***



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# 1. Introduction

The South Eastern HSC Trust Peer Advocacy Service is available for service users who live within the South Eastern HSC Trust locality.

The Peer Advocacy Service aims to support service users in expressing thoughts and preferences about their own mental health needs.

The South Eastern HSC Trust runs training courses for people who wish to become volunteer peer advocates.

# 2. What is peer advocacy?

Advocacy is a process of standing alongside you, speaking up on your behalf and encouraging you to speak up for yourself.

Peer advocates take action to help you understand your rights and represent your interests.

Peer advocates will have personal experience of mental health services.

All South Eastern HSC Trust peer advocates have completed their Open College Network (Level 2) Accredited Peer Advocacy Training and ongoing mandatory training.

# 3. How can peer advocacy help?

Peer advocates offer support and understanding for those using mental health services. **A peer advocate:**

- Can speak up for you, or will help support you to speak up and make your voice heard
- Can help you prepare for meetings with mental health professionals

- Will support you during meetings with health professionals
  - Can provide you with information on what services are available
  - Will support you in accessing services
  - Can meet with you in a confidential setting
  - Will listen to your concerns
  - Will work alongside you to assist you with your recovery.
- Benefit issues will be dealt with by Citizens Advice Bureau or Mindwise.

## **4. Who can access the peer advocacy service?**

You can access the advocacy service if you are:

- Aged 18 or over
- Are accessing South Eastern HSC Trust mental health services

## **5. Who can make a referral to the advocacy service?**

You can contact the advocacy service and make a referral if you are:

- The service user
- A carer, friend or relative
- A mental health professional
- A voluntary agency
- Another advocacy service

## 6. How can I contact a peer advocate?

**Contact:** Dymphna Hansen  
Peer Coordinator

**Telephone:** (028) 9263 3584 ext 81914

**Email:** dymphna.hansen@setrust.hscni.net

**Write to:** Dymphna Hansen  
Derriaghy Social and Educational Centre  
Unit 7, City Business Park, Belfast  
BT17 9GX

### Or meet with a peer advocate:

Venue	Days	Times:
Lagan Valley Hospital (Ward 12)	Wednesday	1.30pm -3.30pm
The Ulster Hospital (Ward 27)	thursday	1.00pm – 3.00pm
(Acute Inpatient Ward)	Wednesday	10.00am-12 noon
The Downshire Hospital (Ward 15)	Wednesday	1.00pm-2.00pm
Lagan Valley Hospital (Ward 11)	Monday Thursday	10.00am-12 noon 10.00-12 noon

**\*We also can meet you at Downshire Psychiatric Intensive Care Ward:**

### Or meet with a peer advocate within the community:

Our peer advocates can meet you at Derriaghy Social and Educational Centre for the Lisburn area: Action Mental Health for the Ards area: or Finneston House for the Downpatrick area. Call 028 9263 3584.

## **7. Contacting the peer advocacy service and what to expect**

The Peer Advocacy Service will respond to all enquiries made through the peer coordinator who will put you in touch with a volunteer peer advocate.

- The peer advocate will offer you an initial meeting date
- The meeting will take place in a confidential setting
- The peer advocate will explain the role of the peer advocate
- The peer advocate will explain how any notes taken will be stored and safeguarded
- You will be given a copy of the Peer Advocacy Service User Guide
- The peer advocate will listen to your views and concerns
- Together you and the peer advocate will discuss available options and how best to take your wishes forward
- A date for continued contact (if necessary) will be arranged
- The peer advocate will ensure that you are kept fully informed of any changes or developments with your issues
- This process will continue to be offered until your outcomes are achieved or until all available options are exhausted
- You can end your contact with the peer advocate whenever you wish

## 8. Confidentiality

The South Eastern Peer Advocacy Service will do its utmost to ensure that all information is kept confidential.

All South Eastern HSC Trust peer advocates have received training in confidentiality procedures including the exceptional circumstances that require the peer advocate to break confidentiality.

Exceptional circumstances are:

- Where a service user threatens to endanger themselves.
- Where a service user threatens to harm another individual.
- Where a service user expresses intent to carry out an illegal act/ or has carried out an illegal act

## 9. Training / Workshops

The South Eastern Peer Advocacy Service offers Self-advocacy Workshops/training on the wards and within the community. If you are interested in attending our training courses or workshops you can ask a member of staff or a peer advocate for an application form or timetable.

**To view a full list of training available:**

**Contact:** Dymphna Hansen  
Peer Coordinator

**Telephone:** (028) 9263 3584 ext 81914

**Contact:** Nadya MacLynn  
Recovery College Coordinator

**Telephone:** (028) 90413872 ext 89872



## 10. Complaints, Compliments, Suggestions

If things go wrong and you are unhappy with the service you receive we would like you to tell us, so that we can try to explore the concerns raised and improve our service.

If you wish to make a complaint there are a number of ways to do this:

### Stage 1

- You can speak directly to the peer advocate, or the peer coordinator, who will try to resolve the issues you raise.

### Stage 2

- If you are still not satisfied, or you do not want to speak directly to staff, you may make a formal complaint to the Complaints/Patient Liaison Manager.

You can do this by writing to:

Complaints/Patient Liaison Manager  
South Eastern HSC Trust  
Health and Care Centre  
39 Regent Street  
Newtownards  
BT23 4AD

**Telephone:** (028) 9056 1427 or Fax (028) 9056 4815

**Email:** [complaints@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:complaints@setrust.hscni.net)

You can expect your complaint to be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt. Your complaint will be investigated thoroughly, treated confidentially and responded to fully in writing within twenty working days. If there is a delay we will let you know the reason for this.

## Stage 3

- If things are not resolved to your satisfaction you can contact the Ombudsman (NI) by writing to:

The Ombudsman  
Progressive House  
33 Wellington Place  
Belfast  
BT1 6HN

**Freephone:** 0800 343 434

**Email:** [ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:ombudsman@ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ni-ombudsman.org.uk)

or

You can contact:

Patient and Client Council  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Ormeau Baths  
18 Ormeau Avenue  
Belfast  
BT2 8HS

**Freephone:** 0800 917 0222

**Email:** [info.pcc@hscni.net](mailto:info.pcc@hscni.net)

**Website:** [www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net](http://www.patientclientcouncil.hscni.net)

# 11. Other Useful Numbers

## Age NI (over 65 years old)

Belfast (028) 9024 5729

## Aware Defeat Depression Helpline

9.00am - 5.00pm 0845 120 2961 / (028) 9032 1734

## Cause Carer Advocacy

Main Office (028) 90650650

## Citizen's Advice Bureau

Ards (028) 9181 9257

Bangor (028) 9145 7000

Downpatrick (028) 4461 4110

Holywood (028) 9042 8288

## Cruse Bereavement Care

Belfast/Ards (028) 9043 4600 / (028) 9127 2444

## Cruse Helpline

9.00am - 5.00pm 0844 477 9400

## Law Centre (NI)

Belfast (028) 9024 4401

## Lifeline

24 hour service 0808 808 8000

## Mindwise

Ards (028) 9151 0127

Downpatrick (028) 4461 7964

Lisburn (028) 9266 5141 ext 2289

## Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority

Belfast (028) 9051 7500

The Peer Advocacy User Guide was produced by Trust staff in partnership with our peer advocates