

Setting up an Advocacy Group



Inclusion Ireland

The National Association for People
with an Intellectual Disability.

What is advocacy all about?



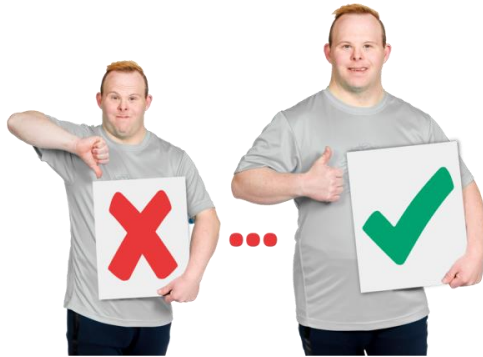
Advocacy” means ‘speaking up for someone else’



Self-advocacy is speaking up for yourself.

Definition of self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is



- Saying what you want and need
- Saying what affects you so that things get better for you.



- Learning how to speak up for yourself so you are heard, and things can change.

Definition of self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is



- Learning to make your own decisions
- Being proud of who you are.
- Respecting yourself and others.



Definition of self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is



- Understanding your rights within the law.
- Standing up for your human rights



- Speaking up about important things.

Why is advocacy important?



It can be hard for people with disabilities to have their say about things that are important .



Being part of an advocacy group can make it easier and give you support to

- Speak up for yourself !
- Say what you want !

A good Self-advocacy group:



- Uses Information all members can understand.



- Agrees and makes a work plan.
- Works as a Team.
- Respects and treats everyone equally.



- Agrees good rules for members and support staff.

A good Self-advocacy group :



- Works with other groups and services that will make them more powerful.



- Meets people and stays in touch with them.



- Gets funding and resources, like computers internet and good support.

A good Self-advocacy group:



Finds out who makes the decisions about the things that are important to you -

- A Government Department?
- The HSE?
- The County Council?
- The CEO of your service?



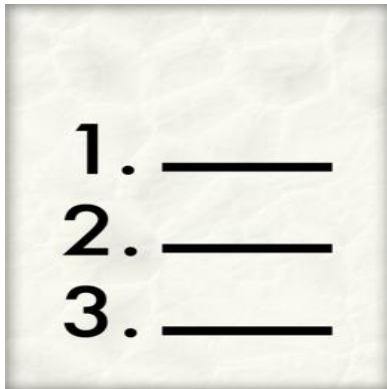
Makes an action plan that everyone agrees to.

Running good advocacy group meetings



Talk about and agree the different jobs in the group.

If members of the group agree and understand their jobs, meetings can run better.



Make a list of the jobs.

Make a list of the skills needed to do each job.

Discuss the support that you need to do the different jobs.

Jobs an advocacy group will do:



- Start and finish meetings on time.
- Make an agenda and plan for meetings.
- Work through the points on the agenda.
- Stick to the points on the agenda.



- Bring information to meetings about issues.
- Bring information about law and policy connected to the groups work.



- Agree an action plan.
- Agree who will do the work for each action.

Jobs an advocacy group will do:



- Take minutes.
- Send minutes out to group members.
- Remind members of the date, time and place of meetings.

- Go to meetings and conferences and represent the group.
- Be a contact person for the group.



- Manage and report to the group about its money.

Who in the advocacy group will do each job?



Most self-advocacy groups have clear roles and jobs for group members.



If everyone agrees and understands their role and job it can help the group run well.

Roles within a group:

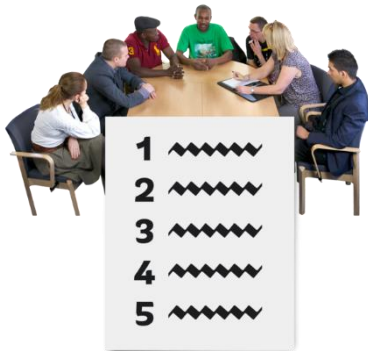


- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

A chairperson will:



- Welcome everyone.
- Lead and take charge of the meeting.
- Make sure each meeting runs smoothly and works well.



- Will make an agenda and a plan for each meeting.
- The support staff will help the chairperson with this.

A chairperson will:



- Involve the members of the group when making the agenda.
- The agenda can be agreed at the end of each meeting.



- Go through the points on the agenda.
- Stick to the points on the agenda.
- Will help the group stick to the points the agenda.

A chairperson will:



- Ask members to vote on each decision at the meeting
- Say what decision is made at the end of each point on the agenda.



- Know that they do not have more say than other members of the group.
- Everyone in the group is equal.

A Chairperson will:



- Encourage all members to take on work so that everyone works. Not just the chairperson.
- Will make sure everyone is listened to and heard.



- Will make sure that everyone is included in decisions.
- Will ensure members feel safe, respected and at ease in meetings.

The Secretary



The secretary writes the minutes of the meetings.



It is important everyone can understand the minutes.



Minutes will be sent to members 2 weeks before a meeting to give people time to go over them

The Treasurer



- Manages the money for group.



- Sets up a bank account for the group.
- Lodges money in the bank.



- Reports on money matters to the group.

Having Good support



- Your group will run better if you build on the skills of members.



- Talk about the extra training and support that you need – then make sure you get it!