






Advocacy Monitoring Project Final Report – Easy Read

   	<p>Background and Introduction</p> <p>The Advocacy Monitoring Project was set up by Kent County Council and awarded to ECM Workbank for one year.</p> <p>Its was to monitor the work being carried out by Advocacy Partners to make sure they are delivering a good quality Advocacy Service across all of Kent.</p> <p>This included that people are supported to speak freely and have choice and control in their life.</p> <p>And that Kent County Council get value for money from the advocacy services.</p> <p>The current Advocacy service will run until September 2011 when it is due for review. The Advocacy Partnership are now called Voiceability.</p> <p>The results of the work will form part of the March 2011 Kent LD Partnership board meeting and will help to decide the future of the service.</p>
	<p>What we did – the Stages of project</p> <p><u>1 Devise a monitoring tool</u></p> <p>The monitoring tool produced was a questionnaire. It has flashcards showing symbols to help communication.</p> <p>3 adults with learning disabilities helped make the tool.</p>



2 Select monitors and train them in the use of the tool

Selection

A leaflet explaining about the project was sent to attract monitors.

A job description was written to communicate to those interested what the role would involve.

13 monitors were trained.

A leaflet was also produced to inform those who attend DPGs about the project.



3 Interviewing

The advocacy and learning disabled support groups contacted were –

Skillnet, North Kent Advocacy, Voice4Kent, Advocacy Partners and Mencap

The monitors were supported by mentors

The monitors found doing the interviews enjoyable and interesting.

The tool proved easy to use for both the monitors and those being interviewed.



4 feedback the information to the DPGs

Meetings with 2 of the monitors were held to look at how best to feedback the information gathered to the DPGs.

The monitors decided to use PowerPoint to feedback the findings.



5 support the monitors to report to the DPGs

After the first visit to present the findings (Maidstone) a review of the process was undertaken and adjustments made. The feedback often worked better if the DPG attendees had time to sit in small groups and to look at the findings and discuss with their support workers to clarify any points raised. This did mean that it took a great deal longer and was less successful at meetings where small group working is not usually done. Every DPG meeting is different so a flexible approach was needed.

It was felt that many at the DPGs had not really understood or in some case heard of the advocacy service that is available to them. There appears to be a need for a tool to explain the advocacy service and how it works and what it can do to benefit people.



6 devise a report of the findings

David Chapman an adult with learning disabilities employed by KCC, helped work on the project.

David Chapman requested the figures for the years work to be able to understand why some areas do not have LD adults coming forward to talk about the service. He was told that over the last 2 years the service has seen 627 people.



7 What we found out

25 people were interviewed.

12 were Male

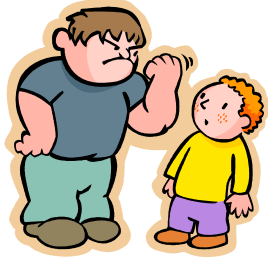
13 were female

All were British

Interviewees were sought from all Kent districts but there were no volunteers from Tunbridge Wells, Shepway, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Dover.

7 were age 20 -30 years





5 were age 30 – 40 years
10 were age 40 – 50 years
Only 1 person was age 60+

People heard about the service through

A support worker (9)

Advocacy Worker (5)

Someone else (7)

Benefits (13) and Bullying (8) were the main issues with which people wanted help from the service.

19 felt that the service had helped them with their issue.



The questionnaire wanted to know if the Advocacy Partnership was doing what it was asked to do such as.

To support people:

To express their views and to choose what they do

Yes the service is supporting people to do this for example in areas such as housing, health, employment and friendship

To choose how they are supported

It would appear that adults need to have a clearer description of the specialist nature of the service more so that they are better able to understand how the decisions are made to support them.

To make sure this support is delivered within the principles of person centred planning

Two thirds of those responding made a plan with their advocate. We do not know how person centred the plans were.

To manage change or to deal with difficult issues

The service is clearly supporting people with change and difficult issues such as bereavement, bullying and



relationships.

To support people to speak up at meetings

Half those interviewed said that the service helped them to speak up for themselves however it did not say where.

To stand up for their rights

Half those interviewed said the service had helped them to stand up for their rights.

To live as independently as possible in their communities

Although only one third of respondents said that they were supported by the service to live independently in the community, support with benefits and bullying for example suggest that the service is supporting people with issues which help them remain independent in the community.



The project was also asked to consider:

How could the service be improved?

Half the respondents felt the service could be improved.

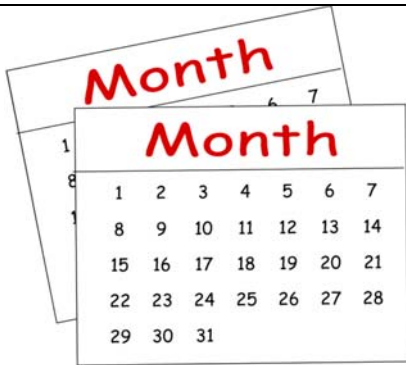
The bulk of Issues identified were:

Waiting time for acknowledgement of a referral and lack of communication about the referral.

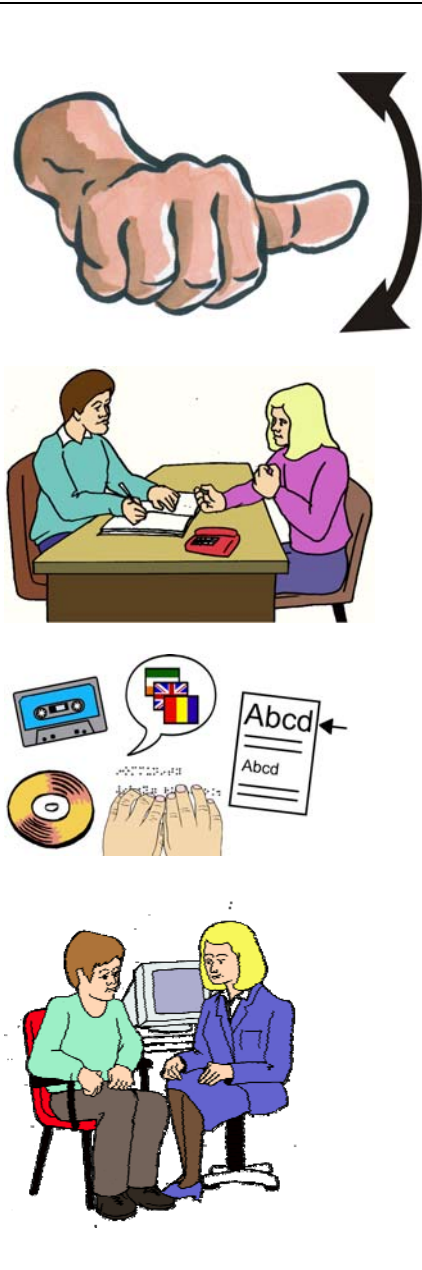
Waiting time for a first appointment.

Failure to provide the service following referral

Waiting time between appointments or after the first appointment



Frequency of meetings with the advocate
 Advocates cancelling or changing meeting arrangements



Do they meet their key objectives as above?
 Overall, for people who are being offered a service it is helping them to speak up for themselves and live independent lives in the community. However there are obvious issues of how many people can be seen and how quickly and who gets to be seen first and these need to be addressed.

Is it effective for users?

Almost everyone met the advocate in the place of their choice (18/ 22) and most people were happy with the support they received. There was dissatisfaction with the quantity of support and the timing, so it is not really effective yet.

Are communication needs being met?

All those interviewed had been able to talk to the service in the way they preferred.

Are individuals treated with respect, courtesy and dignity?

Almost all respondents felt they had been treated with respect.

Are cultural and religious needs taken into account?

All the respondents were British and no comments were received on this issue.

Conclusions

In conclusion, from the responses received from the monitoring tool it would appear that the advocacy service is supporting a number of people to speak up for themselves and solve issues which would otherwise stop their ability to



successfully live in the community.

However there do seem to be issues around the service meeting the needs of all the adults who require a service.