

# BROTHERS OF CHARITY SERVICES IRELAND

## NATIONAL POLICY

Brothers of Charity Services, Ireland

# Self Advocacy



Advocacy means talking up for others and ourselves. Self-advocacy means encouraging people to speak up for themselves about issues that affect them, about their rights and about what people want from their support service



We aim to support people to raise their own issues and to talk up for other people with disability about their issues.



We like self-advocates to make their own decisions, to be independent, to take part in advocacy meetings, to speak up for themselves and others, and respect all means of communicating



## A: THE MAIN IDEAS



1. All people are equal and should be treated with respect and dignity.



2. The Service will listen to you and your advocates. It will act *on the wishes and wants of each person.*



3. *If you want, you can be involved in decisions about the running of your service and how to improve it, to serve you better.*



## **B: ADVOCACY TRAINING, AND MAKING INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE**



2.1 You will get training to understand your rights and to learn how to stand up for yourself and be as independent as you want to be.



2.2 If you want, you will be supported to join groups in your community.



2.3 You will receive information in a way that you understand.



C: **PRIVACY, INDEPENDENCE**



3.1 Your information will be shared with people you trust and who respect your privacy and want to support your choices. Sometimes information cannot remain private. You will be given support to help you understand the reasons for this.



3.2 You are encouraged to speak up for yourself and others through self-advocacy.



3.3 The service will promote the growth and development of self-advocacy.



**D: INDEPENDANT AND CITIZEN  
ADVOCACY**



4.1 The service will aim to make sure people who don't use speech are understood, represented and have their rights respected.



4.2 The service says Independent advocates will be respected. These advocates are usually trained, registered and paid.

The service also recognizes Citizen Advocates. These are also trained but are more informal and often voluntary and Independent.

Citizen advocates are independent of BOC services and can represent your interests in partnership with you.





4.3 You will be given help to get help from independent advocates. The service will respect and respond to independent advocates.



 **E: JOINT ADVOCATE /  
MANAGEMENT DECISION MAKING  
STRUCTURES**



5.1 The service will work in partnership with you and your advocates in a meaningful and equal way.



5.2 The service will support self-advocacy training in a respectful and meaningful way. You will get support to take part in self-advocacy meetings. This could be transport to and from the meetings, help to run and plan the meetings, and/or help to understand the issues raised and the advocacy activities.



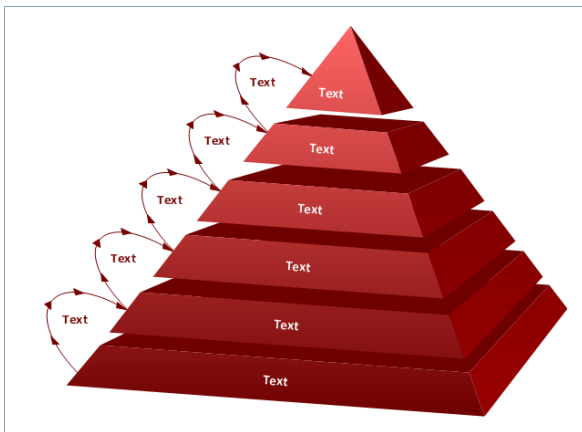
**F: INFORMATION, PROTECTION AND CONSULTATION STRUCTURES**



6.1 The service will work with you to help provide training on self-advocacy to supporters, advocacy supporters and families.



6.2 The service will give your self-advocacy supporters the time, freedom and protection they need to advocate on your behalf or with you as you decide.



6.3 All people supported by the service should have the chance to be involved in advocacy at a local level. This should feed into regional and national levels. We recommend local Advocacy groups should meet every 4-6 weeks.

Regional meetings every 3 months.

National meetings 6 times a year with 2 meetings a year with the Chief Executive and Regional Directors.



6.4 To show this is working we want to create a report of actions each year. Tracking the changes to see the difference we make when we speak up.



**G: GOVERNANCE? /  
THE WAY THE SERVICE IS RUN**



7.1 Your service supports self-advocacy.  
Each area will follow the guidelines for advocacy in this document.

A designated advocacy coordinator to be appointed in each region.



7.2 The way the service is run;  
- How the policies and guidelines are created,  
- how the service runs, where decisions are made and how people are recruited, appointed and trained will all clearly show how advocates are involved

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