

FOI 2880

31st January 2025

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – INFORMATION REQUEST

I would like a copy of your policy for;
Independent advocacy for adults with a learning disability
Independent advocacy for adults with a mental health condition
Independent advocacy for adults with dementia

Question: If you do have a policy then provide what document you use to guide and monitor the independent advocacy process.

Response:

We do not have a policy in place for independent advocacy services. We are guided by the contract we hold with each organisation.

Question: Names of all organisations you are in contract with for independent advocacy?

Response:

Below are the community & voluntary sector organisations the Southern Health and Social Care Trust Mental Health & Disability directorate contract for the provision of advocacy services.

Organisation Name
CAUSE: (Advocacy for carers)
Disability Action: (Advocacy for Learning disability)
Inspire MH Advocacy: (Advocacy for MH including dementia)

Question: Total payments to each organisation above for each year from 2020 - 2025?

Response:

Southern Health and Social Care Trust total expenditure to each organisation over the last 5 financial years (1st April until 31st March), is listed as follows:

Organisation	FY 2019-20 £	FY 2020-21 £	FY 2021-22 £	FY 2022-23 £	FY 2023-24 £
CAUSE	£37,834	£41,400	£32,192	£37,696	£42,207
Disability Action	£143,817	£166,448	£150,174	£206,272	£220,669
Inspire MH Advocacy	£64,260	£56,811	£52,543	£70,166	£70,909

Disability Action figures report total expenditure per financial year and are not reported separately for Learning Disability and Physical Disability. Please note reported figures for financial year 2024/25 is not available at the date of reply.

Question: Does the Health Trust employees have to get consent from family of the service user before appointing an independent advocate?

Response:

No, consent for the involvement of an independent advocate is predominantly sought from the service user and there is no specific requirement for family consent. If the service user does not have capacity to consent to independent advocacy involvement, then their nominated person, as defined in the Mental Capacity Act, would be contacted to obtain consent.

Question: What legal status does an independent advocate have with they are appointed and paid by a Health Trust?

Response:

The Trust does not directly appoint or pay independent advocates, as stated above advocacy services are commissioned via a contractual agreement with respective organisations who provide this service.

Email: Foi.Team@Southerntrust.hscni.net