# Advocacy Policy

## Aim of the Policy

This policy aims to help service users express their views to both the care service and other bodies, and to feel that their views are understood and respected by using the help of an advocate or advocacy service, where this is considered appropriate and needed.

## Policy Statement

Zenith Care Recruitment Care Recruitment service uses person-centred values and principles ensuring that its service users should be able to express their views as clearly and candidly as they wish to get the kind and quality of service they expect. We recognise that some service users may not be able to communicate their feelings and views easily, so we encourage and enable them to have access to advocates or an advocacy service where appropriate.

Zenith Care Recruitments approach to advocacy is consistent with all statutory requirements and guidance relating to the fundamental standards and the Care Act 2014.

## Defining Advocacy

Zenith Care Recruitment works to the following definition of advocacy developed by Action for Advocacy (revised 2014) as stated in the Code of Practice for Advocates.

“Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain service they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.”

Zenith Care Recruitment recognises that advocacy can take several forms and will always attempt to find the right kind of service for any individual needing or requesting it. It recognises the value of self-advocacy, peer advocacy and informal advocacy that can be provided by a person’s relatives and friends, as well as the input of trained advocates from formal advocacy services.

## Purpose of Advocacy is to:

* Assist and support people to speak out/speak up for themselves
* Ensure the person’s voice is heard and listened to
* Provide the information to people in a way that they understand and need to ensure they can make informed choices and decisions
* Assist people to achieve their goals and / or access the services they need
* Ensure that people are involved in decision making and have control over their situations and lives
* To be an enabling process

## When Advocacy Might Be Needed

Zenith Care Recruitment recognises that a person might need the representation provided by a personal advocate or advocacy service at different times in his or her involvement with a local authority and when making decisions around their care or starting a new care service. The following list is not exhaustive and Zenith Care Recruitment will always involve an advocate at the request of anyone they support. Some examples are:

* During the initial needs assessment and any subsequent assessment or reviewing of needs
* When creating or reviewing the service users plan of care
* When creating risk assessments relating to a service user’s activities
* When a service users mental capacity is being assessed, when best interest decisions are being taken, or consideration is being given to depriving them of their liberty
* When helping a service user to represent his or her views to an outside organisation
* When a service user wishes to express a concern or complaint
* In instances where a service user may have been subject to abuse
* When a service user wishes to give feedback about the care service as a matter of course or as part of a quality assurance program
* In helping a service user give input to the design or review of Zenith Care Recruitments policies and procedures.

As a care provider, therefore, we are:

* Committed to making available information about advocacy services, when appropriate or needed
* Prepared to fully involve an advocate who is representing a service user in communication with Zenith Care Recruitment over any issue
* Aim to facilitate the use of advocates who are representing our service users to other organisations.

## The Key Advocacy Principles

We endorse the Advocacy Charter promoted by Action on Advocacy, which lists 10 essential principles as follows.

1. **Independence**. Advocates should be independent from statutory and other agencies providing services to ensure there are no conflicts of interest.
2. **Person Centred**. Advocates are non-judgmental un-biased and respectful of the persons needs, views, culture and experiences.
3. **Empowerment**. Zenith Care Recruitment wants the people it supports to be empowered and contribute to the running of the Zenith Care Recruitment Care .
4. **Equal Opportunity**. Zenith Care Recruitment will ensure that all service users have access to and are offered the right to advocates on a fair and equal basis.
5. **Accessibility**. Zenith Care Recruitment will support service users to understand that where needed, advocacy will be free of charge and widely accessible.
6. **Supporting Advocates**. Zenith Care Recruitment will recommend advocates that are fully trained and skilled in their role.
7. **Accountability**. Advocates work will be monitored and evaluated.
8. **Confidentiality**. Zenith Care Recruitment will ensure that advocates will respect confidentiality of the service users and have an understanding of circumstances where confidentiality may be breached.
9. **Complaints**. Zenith Care Recruitment will ensure that service users are aware of the complaints procedure for any advocacy services.
10. **Safeguarding**. Zenith Care Recruitment will ensure that advocates are aware of safeguarding procedures and know how to act on any concerns or risks.

## Our Service Users’ Access to Advocacy

We will seek to make advocacy available to any service user who needs help in presenting their views by:

* Publicising information on local advocacy schemes that comply with the advocacy Code of Practice
* Helping service users to find and participate in advocacy schemes.
* Seeking peer support for individual service users from people who share their disability, heritage or aspirations
* Promoting a culture which enables service users to call on advocates to express their concerns and provide feedback on the way their care service is run

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## Local Advocacy Services Contact Details

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| London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Civic Centre, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7BN Tel - 020 8227 2915 Civil protection ServiceBarking and Dagenham council, Tel-0208 227 3588Email: civil.contingencies@lbbd.gov.ukLegal Advice:Citizens Advice Dagenham,339 Heathway, Dagenham RM9 5AFTel- 020 8594 6715Wellsprings Solicitors, 5 Faircross Parade, Barking IG11 8UNTel - 020 3538 6084**Notes**Protecting the voices, choices, and rights of adults in Barking and Dagenham |

## Training

Staff are provided with training on being an advocate for the people they support.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_Kechi Anyanwu\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_05th December 2021\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Policy review date: \_\_\_\_\_31st March 2022\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_