



Launch of the Independent Parental Advocacy Service

Empowering families, building futures

What is the Parental Advocacy Service?

The Parental Advocacy Service is a new service being offered to parents going through safeguarding procedures

The service is made up of panel of independent parental advocates

Advocates have been recruited, vetted and trained by our independent partners – relational activism.com – leading experts in relational practice

Parental Advocates are managed and allocated cases by the Team Manager in the MACPT

Advocates are trained and qualified to OCN level and a result of their training and qualifications, they are highly skilled in supporting parents



Relational Activism



Supporting Redbridge's Parental Advocacy Service

- A lived-experience-led organisation working alongside local authorities
- We support Redbridge by training, mentoring, and practice development for advocates
- Our role is to strengthen participation, not influence decisions

What this means for Redbridge staff

- Advocates are supported, supervised, and clear about their role
- A shared approach to relational, calm, and respectful practice
- Advocacy that complements professional roles



Why Independent Parental Advocacy?

Empowers parents to play an active role in safeguarding decisions.

Treats parents as respected partners in child protection

Provides a safe, independent space to ask questions and raise concerns.

Supports meaningful participation in meetings and decision-making

Rebalances power in often complex and distressing processes.

Aligns with national children's social care reform

What do we mean by independent?

- Not the allocated social worker
- Not a decision maker
- Focused on supporting the parent
- Not influencing outcomes
- Ensuring fair and informed participation

Service aims

Empower families
to take part in
safeguarding
decisions

Commit to
transparency,
equity, and
relational practice

Guide parents
through child
protection
processes

Help parents
understand rights &
prepare for
meetings

Reduce adversarial
dynamics &
improve
communication

Promote better
outcomes for
children



How the Service Works

All parents in the Child Protection process are offered an Independent Advocate

Advocates are also available to families accessing Family Help: Pre & Post Birth

Advocates support parents throughout Child Protection enquiries and processes



The role of the advocate

Represent parents' interests in key child protection meetings

Simplify complex reports & explain rights and responsibilities

Prepare parents for what to expect before, during & after meetings

Ensure parents' views are heard - empower them or speak on their behalf

Support parents to express thoughts & engage positively with professionals

Bridge the gap between families and social workers



How It Works Step by Step

Initial Contact:

- LCPP offers advocacy when informing parent about ICPC

Consent:

- Verbal consent accepted; LCPP notifies MACPT Manager and case worker

Information Sharing:

- Case worker explains advocate role and provides flyer

Allocation:

- MACPT Manager matches parent with advocate

Engagement:

- Advocate contacts parent within 1–2 days and arranges pre-conference meeting

- Parents can request an advocate at any point while the case is open
- Advocates will not be allocated to cases within their own team

What Difference Will This Make?

Parents:

- Feel heard
- Understand processes
- Less stress
- Empowered

Professionals:

- Better engagement
- Fewer conflicts

Children:

- Stronger plans
- Better outcomes

Advocacy = Better engagement, better relationships, better outcomes

Feedback so far

The support of the advocate has helped the conference by being more measured, enabling the participations of the parents.

During an ICPC, a father was intoxicated, prior to having an advocate the father would not have been allowed to attend, however, with the advocate being in the home, they were able to keep him calm and support him to engage in the meeting

I now offer advocates to all parents I work with who are due to attend conferences, as the service has proven consistently beneficial.

The advocate supporting the mother today was excellent. Their professionalism was noted by the team, and we would gladly work with them again.

The advocate's calm but firm intervention challenged unfair assumptions and ensured the parent was treated fairly despite communication delays and the use of an interpreter.

Having an advocate present is vital for parents who struggle with lengthy, complex meetings, helping them understand the process and participate more confidently.

Would you like to become an advocate?

We are expanding the team of advocates

All staff are welcome to apply (with manager approval)

Apply via the microsite – closing date: TBC

Interviews will be face-to-face at Lynton House – date: TBC

Ongoing support and reflective practice provided

Accredited qualification in Parental Advocacy included



Parents supporting parents

- Expanding advocacy by involving parents with lived experience
- Makes advocacy more relatable, accessible, and responsive
- Builds a stronger, inclusive service reflecting real family experiences
- Aim: advocacy available to any family involved with Children's Services
- Paid role with OCN qualification in Advocacy
- Information session coming soon (date TBC)
- Email us if you know a parent who may be interested**

Any questions?



If you have any questions about the service, please contact
Claire Gilmour or Syrikea Allen



