

HELPING ME BE HEARD



Advocates play a key role in helping young people speak up, so they feel listened to and understood.

They use communication strategies that work best for each person. Advocates help turn thoughts and feelings into clear messages. They make sure conversations focus on the young person's priorities when making decisions. The goal is to give young people the support and skills they need to speak up for themselves when possible.

KEY MESSAGES

- The advocate helps me to put my thoughts and feelings into words.
- The advocate asks questions to draw out what I want to say if I'm struggling or unsure where to start.
- If needed, the advocate can rephrase what I say in a way that professionals will understand better.
- After meetings we discuss what happened and the advocate checks if I felt listened to in meetings or decisions.
- The advocate redirects conversations if others talk over me or ignore my needs.
- The advocate supports me to speak for myself when I want to.
- The advocate practices important conversations with me.
- In meetings, the advocate emphasises my key messages and concerns I want to prioritise if that's what I want.

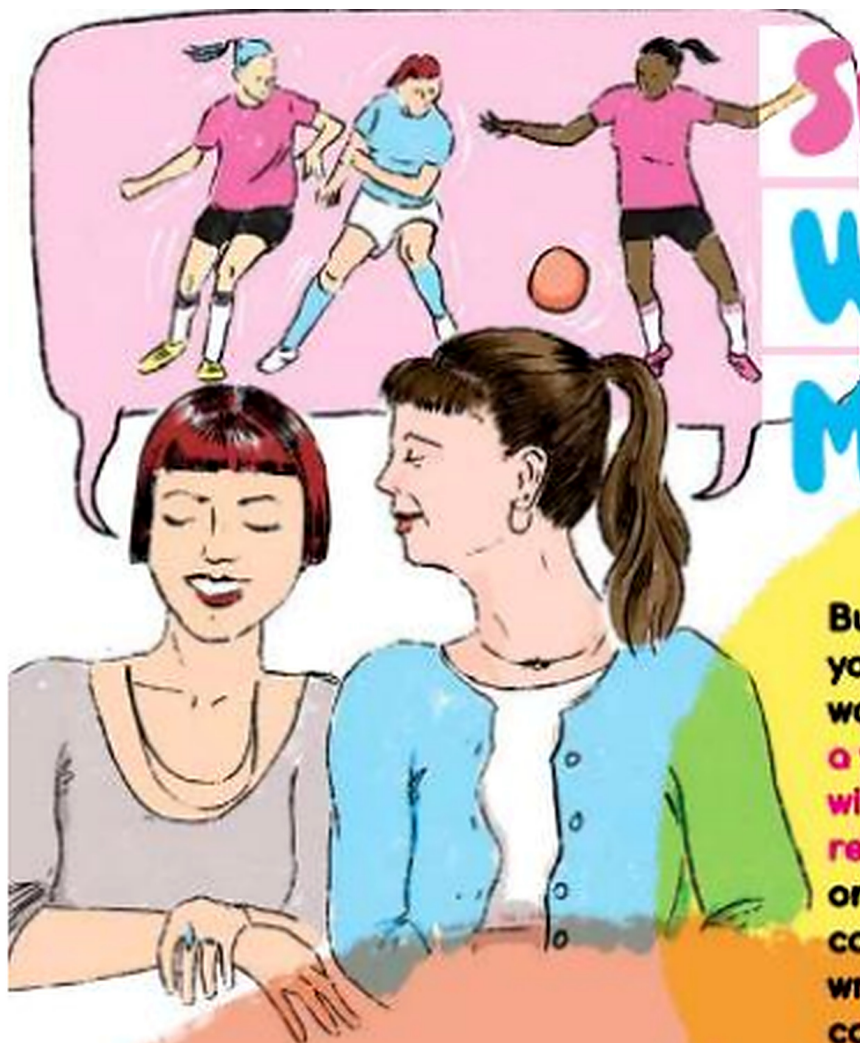
INFORMATION TAILORED FOR ME

Resources should be easy for young people to understand and access. **This means presenting information clearly using formats that are interesting and relatable for young people.** Advocates still explain concepts verbally - resources can't do everything! **Well-designed resources empower young people to speak for themselves in the future.**



KEY MESSAGES

- Resources should be relevant to my age and interests.
- Resources should present information clearly and avoid confusing language.
- The advocate clearly explains anything complicated that I need to know.
- Resources should highlight how advocacy can help me.
- Online and printed information uses creative designs, graphics, and colours to capture my interest and help me to remember key points.
- Information is straight to the point and doesn't overwhelm me with too many details.
- Written material breaks information down into easy sections and bullet points instead of long text.
- Information is available in different formats - e.g., printed guides, animated videos, graphics, comics, websites, chat forums - so I can engage with information in the way that works best for me.



SOMEONE WHO HAS MY BACK

Building trusting relationships with young people makes advocacy work. **Taking time to understand a young person and their life without judging them builds that relationship.** Following through on agreed actions and being compassionate when things go wrong shows young people they can depend on the advocate. The goal is to create a partnership where young people feel that someone has their back.

KEY MESSAGES

- The advocate clearly explains their role and how it's different from other professionals in a way that I understand. They may dress differently and show their personality.
- The advocate clearly explains what they can and can't do to support me so I know how they can help.
- The advocate takes time to get to know me as a person before starting formal advocacy.
- I learn more about the advocate's background and interests, so they feel more relatable to me.
- The advocate is reliable and consistently follows through on agreed actions and promises.
- If the advocate makes a mistake or doesn't have an answer, they'll honestly admit it and apologise if they let me down.
- If I get frustrated, the advocate won't take it personally.
- The advocate validates my feelings and experiences without judging me before presenting options.