

Summary of Approaches to Non Instructed Advocacy

The four currently recognised approaches to non instructed advocacy are briefly set out below. It is acknowledged that an integrated approach is most effective in delivering non instructed advocacy.

Rights based Approach

With this approach, the role of the advocate is to ensure, using a variety of means, that the basic human rights of service users are promoted, defended and where necessary used to take affirmative action on behalf of the service user. Where the advocate believes that the injustice being done to the service user may be illegal, they should seek appropriate legal representation for the person.

Person-Centred Approach

In spending time with the service user, and may be others who the client knows and trusts, the advocate builds up a picture of their lifestyle, preferences and needs. The advocate can independently represent the person's views 'as if they were the advocate's own' (O'Brien 1981). In doing so the advocate is raising the profile of the service user's unique perspectives, and as such is promoting a person-centred approach to service delivery and decision making.

The Watching Brief Approach

This approach centres around 8 quality of life domains which are used as the basis for a series of questions that the advocate can put to the decision maker or service provider on behalf of the service user. Watching Brief provides a framework for questioning and challenging the decision maker or service provider in a non-confrontational way and encourages service providers to put the service user at the centre of the decision making process. Using the Watching Brief model advocates have to ensure that a number of issues are clear:

The Watching Brief model was developed, and has been extensively used by ASIST advocacy services in Staffordshire.

Witness-Observer Approach

The advocate, in observing the way in which a client lives their life may see or hear things that are unacceptable or which pose a threat to the person's well being. They may also pick up on the service user's preferences and pleasures, which can in turn be used to enhance positive relationships. This approach does not require the advocate to make judgements or assumptions, merely to report on the facts of his or her observations and bring them to the attention of service providers and decision makers.