

## Information for social workers, professionals & parents or carers



“

Advocates listen first and share when I want them to.

“

Advocates make no decisions: they are on our side.

### Who do we offer Advocacy to?

We can work with children and young people if they are looked after:

- In foster care
- In residential care
- In supported accommodation
- With extended family or friends
- A care leaver

Referrals may come from:

- The young person in care or care leaver
- Any social worker or other professional (for example a teacher or youth worker)
- Parents or carers

### What is Independent Advocacy?

Independent advocacy is about speaking up with, or for, an individual or group. It's a way to help young people have a stronger voice and as much control as possible over their own lives.

Advocacy is an equal partnership between the young person and their Jersey Cares advocate. We can help them speak to professionals, carers, or teachers about anything which on their mind.

### Who are we?

Jersey Cares is an organisation for, and by, people with experience of care, and friends who care about this issue. Our vision is love, belonging and opportunity for people with experience of care.

We are an independent organisation which listens to and amplifies the voices and needs of people with care experience. We respond to make sure change happens by taking action through advocacy collaboration and influencing.

We use the words 'experience of care' to describe children, young people and adults who are currently or have been looked after. This could have been with extended family or friends, with foster carers, in residential care and on or off-island.

We encourage all young people with care experience to get in touch. In addition to 1-1 advocacy, Jersey Cares also offers the means for young people to share their views and experiences of care to influence public awareness, services and policies. We are linked with others across the UK doing similar work.

“

Advocates listen first and share when I want them to.

### How can advocacy help children and young people:

- By listening and supporting them to understand their situation.
- Supporting them to express their views or speak on their behalf.
- Providing information about their rights.
- Helping them to prepare for and participate in meetings and reviews.
- Supporting them to share a concern or make a complaint.
- Helping them to access services.
- Informing them about how Jersey Cares can help in other ways.

### How can advocacy help professionals and carers?

- Ensures that children and young people's views are heard and taken into account.
- Supports children and young people to understand and participate in their care plans.
- Builds confidence in decision making.
- Protects children and young people's rights.

### When should advocacy be introduced?

Research shows that young people wish to know about advocacy so they can make an informed decision about whether they need it. They want to hear about advocacy early in their care journey and for it be discussed regularly.

### What impact does advocacy have on children and young people?

- Improves their confidence in expressing their views.
- Enhances their involvement in the decision making process.
- Ensures their views are heard and taken into account.
- Increases their knowledge of their rights.

### What about confidentiality?

Jersey Cares staff will respect young people's confidentiality unless they tell us something that makes us think that they or someone else may not be safe. In this case, we will have to share this information with others involved in their care.

We will always tell them if we have to pass on information. We will also explain what may happen next and support them throughout the process.

### Want to know more?

Please contact Jersey Cares:



**Suzanne Day**

Advocacy and Participation Lead

M 07700 722009

T 01534 509856

E [suzanne@jerseycares.je](mailto:suzanne@jerseycares.je)

### How can I request Advocacy?

You can request advocacy by downloading the form on the website and sending to [info@jerseycares.je](mailto:info@jerseycares.je) or ring Suzanne. If you work for the Government of Jersey, please use Egress to send it back to us.

[www.jerseycares.je](http://www.jerseycares.je)