

YORK'S PARENT ADVOCACY PROGRAMME



How can I request an advocate?

If you have been notified that a Child Protection Conference will be taking place for your child and you would like to speak to an advocate, you can either:

- Ask your social worker to make a referral, or
- Contact the Volunteer Service at volunteer@york.gov.uk or call 07542510430 or 07901813436

Please get in touch with the Volunteer Service if you would like more information about our service, if you are interested in receiving support from one of our parent advocates, or if you are interested in volunteering as a parent advocate.



What is a parent advocate?

A parent advocate is a parent or carer who has had previous experience of engaging with Children's Services and has received training to support other parents going through the same process.

Parent advocates use their own experience of working with Children's Services to help you express your views, understand your rights and engage with professionals to receive the right support for you and your family.

How can a parent advocate help?

If a social worker has completed a Section 47 for your child and this is progressing to a Child Protection Conference, you can request support from a parent advocate.

Because they understand what it is like to have Children's Services involved with their family, a parent advocate can help you by:

- Providing emotional support
- Helping you to understand the process and what to expect at the Child Protection Conference
- Discussing professional reports with you and helping you to prepare your response
- Ensuring your views are heard at the Child Protection Conference



What support can my advocate offer?

We offer all parents going through Child Protection an initial phone call with one of our advocates, no matter what stage you are at in the process. This is your opportunity to ask questions and to speak to someone who understands what you are going through.

If you feel you need more support after this phone call, our advocates can also offer the following:

- They can help you to understand professional reports and prepare responses.
- They can attend Child Protection Conferences with you to make sure you feel supported and able to express your views.
- They can check in with you regularly between conferences to see how things are progressing and whether you need any further support.
- They can attend Core Groups with you to ensure you understand what professionals are asking you to do.

Support from our advocates can be tailored to what you need as an individual.

What skills do parent advocates have?

Parent advocates are volunteers with unique experience of and insight into the child protection process. They have undergone in-depth training to develop skills to make them effective advocates, including:

- A non-judgmental, empathetic approach and strong listening skills
- Clear communication skills and an ability to explain processes simply
- Commitment to equality, inclusion, and family empowerment

Your discussions with your parent advocate are confidential, unless there are any safeguarding concerns relating to yourself or your child.

