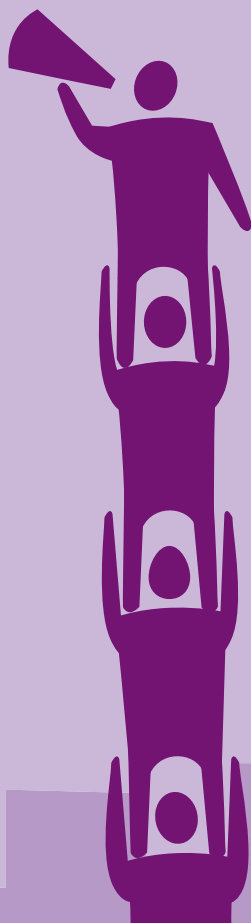




Centre on Human  
Rights for People  
with Disabilities



**Advocacy Service**

**Have Your**

**Voice Heard**

**Supporting people with disabilities to achieve their human rights**

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## Who we are

Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights works to promote and protect the human rights of people with disabilities through education, capacity building, outreach work, campaigning, research and advocacy support.

## Understanding human rights

Human rights are entitlements that every human being has to be treated fairly and to be involved in society. Some examples of human rights include the right to:

- healthcare;
- education;
- live independently and participate in the community;
- access justice;
- an adequate standard of living; and
- freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

In Northern Ireland, our human rights are protected by the Human Rights Act (1998), which allows us to go to court or to a tribunal to seek a remedy, if we believe that our human rights have been violated.

People with disabilities have the same human rights as everyone else. This has been confirmed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2008), which was ratified by the United Kingdom (UK) in 2009. By ratifying, the UK agreed to be legally bound by the Convention's terms.

However, people with disabilities continue to encounter a range of physical, cultural, social and attitudinal barriers, which prevent them from accessing the same rights as non-disabled people. This includes making decisions about their lives, living independently, getting an education and employment, obtaining an adequate standard of living and healthcare, getting around and being included in society.

When faced with these barriers, it is important that you understand your rights, know the options available to enable you to overcome these barriers and feel empowered to take action and speak up for your rights. This is how an advocate from Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights may help.

## **Advocacy support**

Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights provides an advocacy service to support people with disabilities to take action to secure their human rights and represent their interests.

The advocacy service is:

- confidential;
- provided free of charge; and
- independent, which means the advocate can work in partnership with you, with no conflict of interest.

Our advocates promote the human rights of people with disabilities and the four principles of human rights – fairness, respect, equality and dignity.

In line with Disability Action's pan-disability focus, the advocacy service is provided to people with all types of disabilities and our advocates have excellent experience in working with people with multiple disabilities.

## **How an advocate can support you**

If you are a person with a disability and you believe you have been treated unfairly and denied your human rights, you can speak to an advocate from Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights.

The advocate will listen to you and identify the options available to you. Once you have made a decision on these options, the advocate will develop an action plan for you and support you, as needed, to represent your interests and say what you want.

## **Non-instructed advocacy**

An advocate from Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights can also provide non-instructed advocacy, when a person with a disability cannot give a clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation, for example a person may have a brain injury, dementia or a profound learning disability.

The advocate will work to uphold the person's rights, ensure fair and equal treatment and access to services and make certain that decisions are taken with due consideration for the person's individual preferences and perspectives.

## Who can use the advocacy service?

- Adults and children with disabilities who have been denied their human rights and need support to enable them to deal with a difficult situation.
- In cases of non-instructed advocacy, when a person with a disability cannot give a clear indication of their views or wishes in a specific situation, the request may be made by someone involved in the care of the individual. The advocate will always act only for the individual and not for the person making the request.

## Expertise

Our advocates have extensive experience working in a wide range of situations, with people with disabilities who have been denied their human rights. The advocacy service is also supported by the expertise of other units within Disability Action, including Access, Employment and Training, Information and Housing.

## Professional

Our advocates are trained and have completed the NVQ Diploma in Advocacy. They work to the core principles of advocacy as set out in the Action for Advocacy Charter and also work within Disability Action's policies on confidentiality, vulnerable adults and child protection.

For further information on the Advocacy Service or the work of Disability Action's Centre on Human Rights, please contact:

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