

Commissioning Position Statement

Advocacy Services – May 2025

Current Position

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to express their views and concerns, access information and services, defend and promote their rights and responsibilities and explore choices and options.

Oldham Council commissions with a range of providers to provide and deliver the Oldham Advocacy hub. Advocacy is a statutory requirement for the council to commission, based on an individuals' needs under the relevant legislative framework.

The Advocacy Hub offers advocacy support for people under the following acts:

- Independent Mental Health Act Advocacy (IMHA) is a statutory function under the Mental Health Act 1983/2007.
- Independent Care Act Advocacy (CAA) is a statutory function under the Care Act 2014.
- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) is a statutory function under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

In addition, the Hub offers support for people with LDA. Learning Disability Advocacy is not a statutory function for Councils to provide. However, having access to a specialist learning disability independent advocacy service is valuable to Oldham and its residents and we are proud to continue offering this service.

The council also commissions external partners to deliver the NHS Complaints Advocacy (NHS ICA) and Healthwatch Oldham.

Oldham's Advocacy Hub is in line with other GM Local Authorities who all offer a similar collective approach to advocacy services. This offers a more streamlined service for Oldham residents and an easier access route for referring agencies.

The current advocacy hub contract will be in place until September 2026 when the services will be reviewed with a view to exercising the opportunity to extend the arrangements.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Oldham Council Commissioning Approach <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/mps-commissioning-approach> and Capacity and Demand Profile <https://www.oldham.gov.uk/mps-capacity-and-demand-summary>. Documents produced May 2025, reviewed annually or as required.

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Current Gaps in the Oldham Market

Historically, providers have reported an increase in demand for advocacy services both through the acts referenced above as well as generic advocacy and this is reviewed through our contract monitoring process and will be considered at the point of re-tender and/or contract extension.

The contracts do not have referral targets applied to them, and monitoring is carried out using both a quantitative and qualitative approach.

Commissioning Approach

The council is legally obligated to comply with its contract procedure rules and all relevant procurement legislation in delivering services. We are still within the original 3-year contract for Advocacy services. Any new opportunities to engage will be advertised on the e-procurement portal, *The CHEST* (<https://www.the-chest.org.uk/>).

For more information or to discuss opportunities in Oldham, please contact us at ascommissioning@oldham.gov.uk.