

**Advocacy Project – Overview For Referring Agencies**

**What is the GMCDP Advocacy Project and who is it for?**

GMCDP in partnership with Manchester Mind provides an advice/advocacy service for young people who identify as disabled and are in crisis. This often causes many young people to experience (or to have experienced) discrimination and barriers because they have impairments. This might include young people who:

•Are mobility impaired

•Are learning disabled

•Have poor mental health

•Are visually impaired or blind

•Are hearing impaired or deaf

•Have a ‘hidden’ impairment or health issues

• Have multiple impairment issues

GMCDP will provide general advocacy to young disabled people, who meet the following criteria:

• Are aged 15-25 years of age

•Live within Manchester City Council boundaries

•Are experiencing, or likely to experience crisis without advice/advocacy

•Are not subject to immigration or home office restrictions

Young disabled people can enter the advocacy relationship at the following times:

•When there is awareness and a wish to get needs met

•Where there are barriers in getting the right support, especially when making the transition to adult services

•There is a wish to express, and have support in expressing views, wishes and aspirations to service providers (voluntary and statutory)

• To obtain advice/assistance in claiming specific disability related benefits. For example, Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

• To obtain support with applying for housing (using Manchester Move and specific housing agencies)

• To obtain access to mainstream services which encourage and promote the independence, participation, engagement and autonomy of young disabled people.

The GMCDP advocacy project is **not** able to undertake the following:

• In depth benefit advice – not related to disability

• Legal Advice

•Independent Mental Incapacity Advocacy

•Tribunal Representation when challenging benefit decisions

• Complex, lengthy community care act issues where there is dispute over care assessments

If a referral is not within the GMCDP remit, or cannot be dealt with at that time. GMCDP is committed to signposting within its partnership or else to organisations that have particular expertise in key areas.

Sometimes a referral may be within the Advocacy services’ remit, but it is not possible to start working with a young disabled person immediately due to the capacity of the project. If this is the case the young disabled person will be offered the option of being added to a waiting list or being signposted to another agency.

The Advocacy project waiting list is operated on a first come first served basis. If a young disabled person is added to the waiting wait GMCDP aims to give an approximation of the time that they can expect to be waiting before they receive the service. GMCDP will also aim to keep them informed regularly about any changes to these timescales.

**How Can I refer?**

Anyone can refer someone to the Advocacy Service, but we only work with young disabled people who want to have an advocate. A young disabled person, you, or someone you know, can initially contact us by phone, or email to discuss the issue(s), then a referral form needs to be completed with consent and data protection form which can be sent by email or by post.

If support is needed to fill out the referral form we can discuss and arrange to offer support to complete.

When completing the referral form, please provide as much information as possible. This will enable GMCDP to review each referral as soon as possible and identify if we can offer support.