



Gofal Cymdeithasol **Cymru**
Social Care **Wales**

Advocacy in dementia care

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Advocacy seeks to ensure people have their voices heard, express their wishes and safeguard their rights.

What is advocacy in dementia care?

*At the heart of rights-based and person-centred support and care, is ensuring that the voice of the person remains at the centre of any actions or decisions -
The Dementia Action Plan for Wales*

Throughout the course of a person's lived experience of dementia, the type of support they might need to express their views, to make decisions and to access entitlements will vary.

It is acknowledged that the term 'advocacy' can be used to mean different things for different people.

For some, acting as an 'advocate' can be part of a friendship or a family relationship with the person or as part of a more general support worker role.

For others, part of their professional role will be to advocate for the people they support.

In some situations, the role of an advocate can only be taken by a person who is totally independent from the person's personal circumstances and any decisions or actions that need to be taken. This is known as an 'independent advocate'.

Sometimes the involvement of an advocate is required by law and there are particular or specialist's areas of advocacy, undertaken by specialist independent advocates.

Other than when the appointment of an advocate is required by law, it is not the intention of this plan to prescribe the type of advocacy or provider of advocacy at different stages.

However, the potential value of the role of independent advocacy as 'the voice of the citizen' should be recognised at all stages of a person's lived experience of dementia, explained and actively offered as a rights-based approach to service delivery.

Independent mental capacity advocates

[The Mental Capacity Act 2005](#) introduced the role of the independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA).

IMCAs are a legal safeguard for people who lack the capacity to make specific important decisions.

IMCAs are mainly instructed to represent people where there is no one independent voice, outside of care services, such as a family member or friend, who can represent the person.

[The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Code of Practice on Advocacy](#) says that local authorities should identify people who may need other people to make decisions on their behalf as early as possible in the process, in case an advocate is required.

We want your feedback

Help us to improve the Dementia resource for care professionals by telling us what you think about it in our short [four question survey](#).