

# Cross Regulatory Independent Lay Advocacy Service

A lay advocate's main role is to support people to make sure their voice is heard and express their own wishes and feelings. The term 'lay' is used to describe an advocate who is not a professional member of the regulatory body and cannot give legal advice.

## A lay advocate can:

- Support people with communication during the regulatory process
- Listen and try to understand a person's point of view and situation
- Provide support to fill in forms when necessary
- Support people to tell others what they would like or introduce them to others who may be able to help in relation to the regulatory process
- Help people to understand what choices they have and what the consequences of these choices might be in relation to the regulatory process.

## A lay advocate cannot:

- Provide advice, including legal advice
- Speak on behalf of people who are able to do so for themselves
- Make decisions on behalf of people
- Solve all of someone's problems for them
- Mediate, counsel or befriend
- Carry out care and support work
- Tell or advise someone what they should do or advise on a course of action.



## Confidentiality

POhWER advocates are independent of the regulators and so information that is shared with an advocate is confidential. If the advocate thinks that the person may hurt themselves, another person or has told the advocate something that is illegal, this cannot be kept confidential.

## Information Sharing

If an advocate becomes aware of important information that has not been shared with the regulator by the person they are supporting, the advocate will encourage the person to do so. If this does not happen, the advocate must withdraw the advocacy service and inform the regulator.

Offering an introductory discussion with an advocate, with no obligation to use the advocacy service can often help to reduce any anxiety about working with an advocate and give a member of the public the opportunity to ask questions.



## Contact POhWER at:

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