

Advocacy strategy consultation: results

Executive summary

Most respondents had care and support needs or were unpaid carers. They were from a broad range of age groups and half were male, with 35% female and the remainder not answering.

Almost three quarters (73%) had used advocacy before and 27% had not. Professional advocacy was the most used type (67%), followed jointly by self-advocacy, group advocacy and informal advocacy (all 39%).

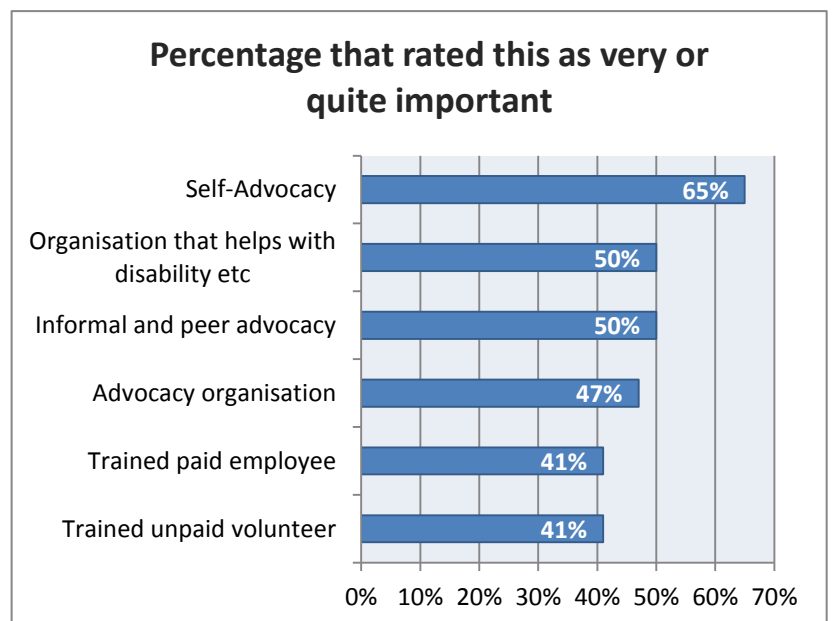
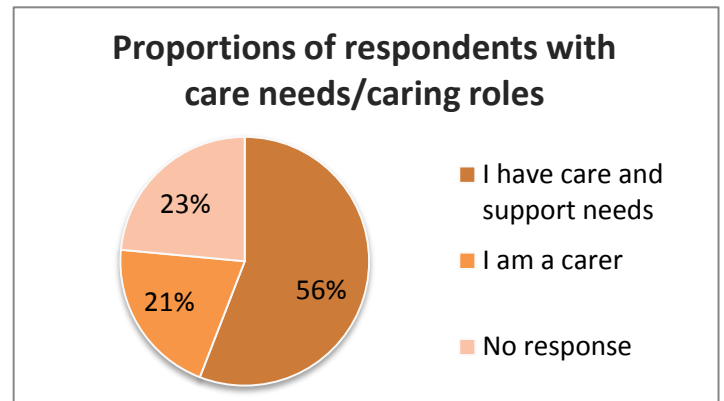
The positive effect advocacy has was a strong theme in written comments, and most people who had used advocacy said that they couldn't think of anything that would have improved their experience of advocacy (73%).

Conversely, there were also indications that access is a challenge for some people, primarily because people don't understand what advocacy is, how it can help or they felt overwhelmed/under-confident about accessing it.

Self advocacy was rated as the most important type of advocacy, followed by advocacy from disability-focussed organisations, and informal and peer advocacy. This at least suggests more could be done to support self-advocacy, given only 39% of people reported self-advocating in the past, yet 65% consider it important.

Most people want to access services either at home, in central locations (e.g. the town centre) or in local community settings (68%, 53% and 47% respectively).

People strongly support the principles and features of the advocacy Quality Performance Mark, with between 74% and 91% of respondents rating the following features as very important or quite important.



An advocacy service should:

- Be confidential
- Explain how advocacy can help
- Tell people about advocacy so people know it's there if they need it
- Meet a recognised standard, such as the advocacy quality performance mark
- Provide training and support to help people speak up for themselves

An advocate should:

- "Listen to me and be understanding"
- "Give me information and explain things in ways I understand"
- "Be well-trained"
- "Have appropriate skills and knowledge so they can support me"
- "Understand how health and social care services work"

In conclusion, the results give a generally positive picture of people's experiences of advocacy locally but, in places, also identify some possible areas for improvement or further development.