
Advocacy Policy

Carlow Regional Youth Services

Approval date: 2022

Revision date: 2025

1. Responsibility for approval of policy	<i>Board of Management</i>
2. Responsibility for implementation	<i>Community Based Drugs Workers</i>
3. Responsibility for ensuring review	<i>CEO</i>

1. Policy Statement (what this policy is for)

- 1.1. Carlow Regional Youth Services advocates and lobbies at a national level for young people about issues relating to them. Workers may also advocate on behalf of individuals who use the service.
2. 'Advocacy is a means of empowering people by supporting them to assert their views and claim their entitlements and where necessary representing and negotiating on their behalf. Advocacy can often be undertaken by people themselves, by their friends and relations, or by persons who have had similar experiences.'(Advocacy guidelines : Citizens Information Board 2007)

3. Purpose of this Policy

- 3.1. This policy relates to advocacy activities carried out by staff on behalf of people who use the service.

4. Scope (what this policy covers)

- 4.1. This policy refers to advocacy activity.
- 4.2. Carlow Regional Youth Services is not a professional advocacy service. Advocacy activity occurs as appropriate following needs assessment and communication with service user.

5. Principles (the values that drive this policy)

- 5.1. Advocacy activity is led by the service user.
- 5.2. Advocacy activity uses a partnership approach between the service user and the worker.
- 5.3. Advocacy is an activity that encourages and empowers service users to be actively involved in decisions and issues relating to them.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1. Manager: to make sure that advocacy activities are within the boundaries of the role of the worker.
- 6.2. Staff can support a service user through attending meetings with them, writing letters with them, assisting them to communicate with other services, completing application forms and any activity that has been identified as a need and that the service user has requested help with.
- 6.3. Staff may refer the person to a more appropriate advocacy service such as the citizens advise service if needed.
- 6.4. Staff can inform a service user of other services that might be in a position to advocate on the person's behalf.

7. General Guidelines for advocacy in CRY

- 7.1. At a national level – advocacy happens as needs arise and CRY may advocate for services needed for young people in the community of Carlow town and county.
- 7.2. National advocacy activity is coordinated by the CEO/ the Board of Management.
- 7.3. At an individual level, staff may advocate on behalf of a person using the service.
- 7.4. Advocacy can include activity that empowers a person to access services or to be heard in relation to their rights.
- 7.5. Individual advocacy activities carried out by staff with the service user can include : attending interagency meetings; communication with organisations or individuals; assisting with application forms; informing of other services; assisting with appointments; accompanying a person to events or activities etc.
- 7.6. Appearance in court with a service user is not within the role of CRY staff.

