

PBS Helpline Resources

Rights and advocacy

Wherever you are in relation to the health and social care system, you have rights. You are not a passive recipient of care – this is supported by guidance and legislation.

Finding your way around services can be daunting – it can be hard to find out about and access what you need (have a look at our video on accessing services).

Here are some suggestions:

- Find out what you're entitled to. It's worth looking on the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) website (www.scie.org.uk), and look at relevant guidance like the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014. (It's worth reading the summaries unless you really want the long version!).
- If you use services, there may be relevant support groups in your area that you could join.
- If you're a carer, there may be carers groups around where you can access advice and support. One example is Carers UK (www.carersuk.org), but there are many local groups too – see what is available in your area.

Lastly, consider advocacy. A good advocate will listen to you to make sure they understand what's going on for you, they will help you get the information you need to make choices, and they'll help make sure that you are heard.

There are advocacy services for people with disabilities or additional needs, and advocacy services for carers. Again, it's worth finding out what's available in your area.

In some situations (such as if you are detained under the Mental Health Act) there is a legal right to advocacy.

