

Media Release

30 July 2015

New 'advocacy hub' to strengthen voices, champion rights and make positive change for Lincolnshire's children, young people and adults.

New telephone number for all advocacy referrals and enquiries 01529 400479

This month, Total Voice Lincolnshire launches a new Advocacy Hub. In a new partnership, the service brings together specialist advocacy for adults, children and young people across Lincolnshire into one service and has boosted the different ways people can speak directly to fully-trained advocates.

Advocacy is a free, independent and confidential service commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council and provided by Total Voice Lincolnshire (TVL), led by VoiceAbility.

Advocacy is about supporting people to speak for themselves so that their views, wishes and opinions about their care and well-being are heard and understood. Advocates help individuals to get information and think through the available options. Advocates don't provide advice or make decisions on their behalf. Advocates are there so people are not alone when facing major decisions that will impact heavily on their lives. Total Voice Lincolnshire supports eligible people on a wide range of issues including:

- Preparing for and participating in care assessments or meetings with social workers or health professionals
- Challenging decisions made about the person if the person thinks they're not right for them
- Appealing changes to benefits or attending tribunals
- Helping people to understand their rights about their care needs, welfare or legal entitlements
- Keeping people safe from harm

All advocates are independent of council and care services.

Total Voice Lincolnshire now provides a telephone advocacy offer, where individuals can arrange to speak directly to fully-trained advocates Monday to Friday from 9am until 8pm

and Saturdays from 10am until 4.00pm, and fortnightly drop-in advocacy sessions in locations across the county.

Ruth Ingamells, Regional Director of VoiceAbility and Total Voice Lincolnshire says:

“By bringing specialist services together, Total Voice Lincolnshire will be able to support more people to get their voices heard, champion their rights and help change the lives of people in our communities”.

“The Advocacy Hub means that people who need someone there to support them when they need to make important decisions will quickly be put in touch with the right advocate to meet their needs.

“More people will be able to speak directly to specially trained advocates.”

Cllr Mrs Patricia Bradwell, executive member for Adult Care, Health and Children's Services, said:

"Helping people have a voice is an important way to make sure they are getting services that are right for them, and help they need at the right time. Good advocacy can stop people's personal situations or care deteriorating to the point that they need more help from other services or acute healthcare.

“The new advocacy hub which we have commissioned brings together adults and children's advocacy, which will be especially important for young people who will be able to stay in the same advocacy services, in many cases with the very same advocate, as they move into adulthood.”

The Total Voice Partnership is made up of VoiceAbility, Barnardo's and Age UK Lincoln and Lincs2Advice.

VoiceAbility, Total Voice lead, provides adult statutory advocacy and community advocacy, the telephone advocacy service and hold drop-in sessions.

Barnardo's, a leading children's charity, provides the advocacy and rights service for children and young people, and will be visiting children's homes regularly.

Specialist advocates from Age UK Lincoln will also be available through a new visiting advocacy service to residential care settings.

The new telephone number and email for advocacy in Lincolnshire is 01529 400479 and tvf@voiceability.org. More information, including a referral form for advocacy, is available from the Total Voice Lincolnshire website: www.totalvoicelincolnshire.org

Ends

Notes to editors:

To be **eligible** for free adult advocacy service, you will need to be over 18 and;

- Using Adult Care services
- Using Mental Health Services, or
- You are a carer of someone using these services.

Total Voice also provide **statutory advocacy** for people who are detained under the **Mental Health Act 1983**, those individuals protected by the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** and for people eligible for care and support advocacy under the **Care Act 2014**.

Children and young people's advocacy offers an independent voice to children and young people, to assist them in resolving issues relating to their welfare, care and circumstances.

Eligible children and young people include children who receive services within Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and/or are eligible to receive a service from LCC. These include CYP who are at risk or who may be at risk and have issues or complaints about the services they receive, and include CYP who:

- Have serious concerns about their care
- Want greater participation in decisions being made about their future
- Wish to challenge decisions being made about them
- Wish to make a complaint
- Are subject to Child Protection issues (an advocate will automatically be offered to all CYP on an opt-out basis)

Information about the Total Voice service and about our partners can be located at:
<http://www.totalvoicelincs.org/about-us/who-are-tv/>

Or call:

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