

Self Advocacy in Cumbria and the North East

Speaking up groups: how are they doing?



July 2019

Easy read report



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Skills for People wrote this report with help from Self Advocacy groups.

A big thank you to all those who took part!



This report is about Self Advocacy with people with learning disabilities and people with autism in North East England and Cumbria.

The ideas in it come from Self Advocacy Groups from the area.

It tells you

- What is self advocacy?
- What groups do self advocacy in our region
- The problems these groups face
- Ideas from the groups about what could be better



We want to make sure Self Advocacy Groups can keep going.



Self Advocacy groups help people and change the world.

We think Self Advocacy groups are important!

These groups told us about what they do and their ideas about self advocacy

Autism in Mind

Better Days

Darlington Association on Disability

Durham County Council, Partnerships & Engagement Team & Durham Parliament

Gateshead People

LD: North East

People First Independent Advocacy

Skills for People

Stockton Helps All (Within Stockton and District Advice and Information Service (Citizens Advice))

Sunderland People First

Your Voice Counts

What is self advocacy?



Self advocacy is important for people with learning disabilities and people with autism.



Self advocacy is about speaking up.

It can mean when a person speaks up about what matters to them. Sometimes people need help to do this.



It can mean when a group of people come together to speak up about what matters to them. We call these groups Self Advocacy groups or Speaking Up groups.

In these groups people learn about their rights. They learn to be more confident so they can speak up.



The groups often speak up about things which matter to lots of people with learning disabilities and people with autism. They try to make the world better for these people.

Why is Self Advocacy important?

Self Advocacy groups help people in lots of ways



They help to protect people's rights.

They help people feel more confident and feel better about themselves.



They help people to meet others and feel less lonely.

They help people to become leaders, sharing what they know to make the world better.

Self Advocacy helps to make the world better



They help to change the world and make it better. Groups of people have been speaking up for ever. Lots of things have changed because people spoke up about what matters to them.



Sometimes group members work with people from health and social services to make services better.

Self advocacy groups can tell councils and health services what people really think.



What problems do Self Advocacy groups face?

Money is the main problem!

Self Advocacy groups often do not have enough money to pay for the things they need. Like someone to support the group, a room to meet or transport to help people get to meetings.



Funding for Self Advocacy groups comes from the health service, councils or charities. All these are struggling to have enough money.

Small groups can lose out to big charities when it comes to getting money.

Many groups are supported by a charity or organisation that does other things like advocacy, or giving advice, or running social groups. These organisations may not have enough money to pay staff to support the groups.



Many organisations try to keep Self Advocacy groups going even though they do not have money to do this.

This means many Self Advocacy groups have had to close. We are worried that others might close soon if things do not change.

What would help? Money for Self Advocacy



Over the past two years people have been working together trying to make sure Self Advocacy is strong in the North East and Cumbria.

Reshaping Advocacy is group of people who are trying to do this.



We want to make sure that Self Advocacy groups get money so they can carry on and be strong. We have been saying that the health service and councils should put some money into our groups.

We should work together with councils and health services to help make Self Advocacy groups strong.

Direct Payments (money for your support) might help some people to get involved in Self Advocacy groups. We need to understand more about this.



There are places where we could do more self advocacy: like in hospitals, or care homes.

What would help: working together



Self Advocacy groups should work together more.
Members of groups want this to happen!



Working together we can get our messages across better.

Groups should work together to work out how we can get money, and how we can save money.



Self Advocacy groups should share their good ideas with each other



Self Advocacy groups could get better at showing how we help people and how we make the world better. That might mean funders will be more likely to give us money. We need some help to do this.