

Supporting Parent Participation in Child Protection – When to Consider Advocacy

What might be getting in the way of the parent participating fully?

Taking part in child protection processes can be complex and challenging. At times, barriers may make it harder for parents to understand, engage, or express their views.

Barriers might include:

- ✓ Information is complex or difficult to understand
- ✓ Meetings feel overwhelming or difficult to follow
- ✓ Communication needs are not fully met
- ✓ Language or literacy differences
- ✓ Stress, trauma, or emotional wellbeing affecting participation
- ✓ Physical or learning disabilities, or cognitive impairment, affecting engagement
- ✓ The process feels unclear, fast-moving, or intimidating
- ✓ Limited time or support to prepare for meetings or decisions

How Advocacy helps:

- ✓ Supports parents to prepare for meetings
- ✓ Helps them express their views and questions
- ✓ Provides support during meetings
- ✓ Checks understanding at each stage
- ✓ Offers consistent, independent support

Advocacy is independent and on the side of the parent. It can support equitable participation and help services meet duties under the Equality Act.

What difference can Advocacy make?

- ✓ Communication is clearer and more accessible
- ✓ Meetings are more focused, purposeful, and effective
- ✓ Fewer misunderstandings and less need to revisit or repeat information
- ✓ Processes are more consistent, helping to reduce delays
- ✓ Positive outcomes are more likely to be sustained over time

Consider a referral when additional support could help the parent participate more fully

How to refer to Connected Voice Advocacy: