



## **ADVOCACY POLICY**

# ADVOCACY POLICY

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# ADVOCACY POLICY

## 1.0 Policy Statement

Radcliffe Housing Society believes that our tenants should be enabled to express their views as clearly and candidly as they wish. We recognise some of our residents may not be able to communicate easily and we encourage representatives to speak on their behalf where that is appropriate.

## 2.0 Aim

The aim of this Policy is to encourage our service users, through the use of advocacy to express their views to us and to feel that their views are understood and respected.

## 3.0 Definitions

3.1 Advocacy is a process of standing alongside an individual who is vulnerable or representing an individual who is unable to speak out in a way, which represents their best interests.

- The aim of advocacy is to bring about a beneficial outcome in a way that enables a resident to retain as much control as possible, over how this is achieved
- An advocate may provide a person with information and advice to assist them to take action to resolve their own concerns, or may take a more active role in representing the persons rights to another person or organisation

### 3.2 Self-advocacy

When an individual speaks up or takes action by themselves or, is helped to speak up for themselves.

### 3.3 Informal advocacy

When an individual asks someone they know (such as a family member, friend or carer or someone who has the same disability, illness, condition or circumstances) to speak up or take action for that individual, also known as “peer advocacy”.

### 3.4 Independent advocacy

When an individual asks someone they do not know, to speak up or take action for them.

### 3.5 Group advocacy

When an individual asks a group of people or an organisation to speak up or take action for them.

### 3.6 An advocate can be:

- An individual
- A friend, family member or carer
- A community volunteer
- A person or organisation
- A paid practitioner (not a legal representative)

### 3.7 Advocacy is not:

- Information: This is a collection of facts which helps to improve understanding of a problem
- Advice: This is when someone gives their views or opinions about what should be done

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- Mediation: This is when someone aims to resolve a problem between two or more people. A mediator is a person who gives their own views or opinions to help everyone involved to agree

## 4.0 Notification

Any tenant wishing to nominate someone to act as their advocate must provide:

- Written confirmation to us, of their intention to use an advocate
- Signed authority for the named advocate to deal with matters on their behalf
- The full name and address of the advocate, and state their relationship (if any) to the resident
- RHS permission to share personal data with the advocate in accordance with the Data Protection Act

## 5.0 Exceptions

5.1 There are examples below where we will not recognise individuals acting in the role of advocate.

5.2 Where there is a clear conflict of interest, we have the right to request the use of an alternative advocate, e.g. when the advocate is a service user of the same community as the individual they're representing, where any investigation outcome would impact other residents within that same locality.

5.3 If it is necessary to refuse an advocacy request, and a resident is then at risk of being unable to promote their own best interests, we will provide information about independent organisations including Citizens Advice, Shelter, Age Concern and Victim Support who can provide advocacy.

5.4 We will request the use of an alternative advocate or in certain cases, terminate the relationship with the advocate when it is believed that the person has:

- Ongoing Court proceedings from us or live Court action imposed against them
- Previously had their tenancy terminated by Radcliffe
- Been designated as a "persistent and vexatious" complainant
- Current tenancy breaches with us or another service provider. For example ongoing ASB issues, rent arrears
- A current complaint or legal case held with us
- Displayed abusive behaviour towards staff or other residents
- An identified language barrier where English is not their first language

## 6.0 Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years. The review may be conducted earlier in line with any legislative, regulatory, best practice or to address operational issues