Advocacy Policy

Advocacy

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Advocacy

Policy statement:

The John Graham Centre (JGC) aims to ensure that t students of JGC are involved in shaping the services/ support that they receive from the centre. Some students may need support in order to be able to do this.

JGC is committed to the concept and provision of advocacy where it empowers students who would otherwise have difficulty in expressing their views, to enable them to participate as fully as possible in decisions that affect them.

Purpose:

- To confirm the JGC's commitment to advocacy.
- To support the implementation of Advocacy for all.
- To provide guidance to JGC staff on the appropriate use of advocates and when to refer.

Introduction into Advocacy:

Advocacy is one person helping another person to make their needs and wishes known. The helping person is called an advocate.

An advocate will work with or on behalf of a student to enable their voice to be heard to secure the services/ support that they need and uphold the rights they are entitled to. Advocacy aims to empower students to make effective choices about their lives and to ensure that they receive the same respect, dignity and consideration as everyone else.

It should help them to make choices about the services they receive and how those services are delivered. Advocacy can help students by:

- Clarifying their own views and choices
- Assisting with expressing their views effectively
- Representing their views faithfully and effectively
- Ensure that students are given access to independent advice and accurate information.
- Enabling negotiation and resolution of conflict to take place

Kent County Council have commissioned 'Advocacy for All to provide advocacy for people with a learning disability in Kent.

There are certain circumstances in which an advocate must be offered:

- Where the student expresses a wish to complete a self-assessment but experiences difficulties in doing so, a referral to an advocacy service should be considered.

- Where the student needs support to say what it is that they want to say.

- Where a student is speaking up in regards to their wishes and what they want but no one is listening/ taking them seriously.

- Where a student needs support to make decisions in regards to their care/ support etc. A student may be deemed as not having the capacity to make such decisions.

An advocate needs to be independent of JGC and its settings. Whilst JGC staff may on occasion act on behalf of a student and seek to represent their interests, this is not, strictly speaking, advocacy.

What JGC will do:

JGC will provide information about advocacy in all situations where it could benefit a student or when the individual perceives themselves to be vulnerable. JGC staff should ensure that students are aware that they can self-refer to advocacy providers.

Information regarding 'Advocacy for All 'can be obtained from JGC office.

It is important to remember that an advocate can empower a person but is not a decision maker and cannot change decisions made by the MDT (multi-disciplinary team).

Date of planned review: 16.02.23