

Key legislation

Advocacy networks, reports, guidance

Late 1980s - Citizens Advocacy NE was set up to fundraise and lobby for advocacy

1994 - We set up Advocacy Network Newcastle (ANN)

1998 Human Rights Act

1994 - Advocacy in Newcastle: Report given to Newcastle Advocacy Strategy Group

2001 - Action for Advocacy was set up to support advocacy organisations nationally

2002 - National Advocacy Charter published

2005 Mental Capacity Act

2006 - National Code of Practice for Advocates published

2007 Mental Health Act

2009 - Independent Advocacy Qualification launched

2010 Equality Act

2010 - Austerity programme initiated by Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government

2010 - We contributed to a manifesto for independent Advocacy services in England and Wales

2012 Welfare Reform Act

2014 Care Act

2014 - Code of Practice for Advocates revised

2015 - Care Act Safeguarding Duties - Safeguarding Adult Boards established

2015 - NHS Complaints reform took place

2016 - We supported reconfiguration of Mental Health services across Northumberland, Tyne and Wear as part of the 'Deciding Together' consultation.

2017 - We responded to the Law Commission consultation to Deprivation of Liberty and Mental Capacity law

2019 - We responded to a Gender Recognition Act consultation

2019 - Mental Capacity Act is amended and Liberty Protection Safeguards added

1990

1995

2000

2005

2010

2015

Our Development and Services

 = First in country

 = Awards and Accreditation

1996 - We opened as 'Newcastle Advocacy Centre' and Citizen Advocacy starts

1996 - We developed the 'ANN Code of Practice'

1996 - We devised and sold our ANNETTE monitoring tool across the UK 

2002 - Mental Health Advocacy service started

 2005 Community Legal Service Quality Mark

2005 - We gave evidence to the Joint Committee on Mental Health Bill about Mental Health Advocacy

2005 - 'BME Black and Minority Ethnic' Advocacy service started 

2009 - IMHA and Relevant Person's Representative service started in Newcastle

2010 - We co-founded NE Regional Advocacy Network to provide support to and strategic development of regional advocacy services

 2011 Action for Advocacy Quality Performance Mark

2013 - Services were expanded to Gateshead (IMHA) and Northumberland (IMHA & IMCA)

2012 - We changed our name to Advocacy Centre North

2014 - Community Advocacy started (Newcastle)

2014 - Fulfilling Lives service started (Newcastle and Gateshead)

 2015 Advocacy Quality Performance Mark

2015 - Independent Care Act Advocacy and Partners for Justice Advocacy started in Newcastle

2015 - Neurological Advocacy service started 

2016 - Families through Crisis service started in Newcastle and Partners for Justice expanded to Durham

2016 - Health and Social Care advocacy extended to Gateshead

2017 - Welfare Advocacy service started in response to Welfare Reform, austerity measures and Universal Credit

2017 - DIY Advocate® self-advocacy app is launched 

2017 - Health and Care Advocacy service started (Newcastle and Gateshead)

2017 - Hate Crime Advocacy started (Northumberland and Tyne & Wear) 

2019 - Refugees and Asylum Seekers Advocacy service started (Newcastle)

2017 - Statutory Advocacy service (IMHA, IMCA, Care Act Advocacy) started (Gateshead)

 2018 Outstanding Service - National Advocacy Awards

2019 - we became

Connected Voice Advocacy

 2019 Advocacy Quality Performance Mark

2020 – We joined the Leaders in Advocacy Network set up by managers of advocacy services across England & Wales in response to the pandemic

2020 - Coronavirus Act

2020 - We developed Advocacy Principles with network of advocacy organisations

2021 - The 'Exploring 'hate relationships' through Connected Voice's Hate Crime Advocacy Service' report is published

2022 - NICE Guidelines (advocacy Services for adults with health and social care needs) are published

2024 - We responded to shape the Equality and Human Rights Commission Code of Practice, and feedback to Parliamentary and Health Ombudsman on barriers to using their complaints systems.

2024 – We joined Sunderland University's SAFE research exploring safeguarding older people

2025 - Mental Health Act

2025 - We showcased our hate crime and personal injury advocacy at a national advocacy conference

2025 - We facilitated a response from victims to the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner consultation on Out of Court Resolutions for Hate Crime.

2020 - We developed a service to support people who need safeguarding during the pandemic

We continued to provide advocacy with no interruption to service during the pandemic

2021 - We responded to consultations on reform of the Mental Capacity Act and Mental Health Act

2021 - We campaigned to increase Hate Crime categories in Law Commission consultation

2021 - We revised the DIY Advocate® self-advocacy app

2023 - Hate ID Toolkit is launched with Durham and Northumbria Universities

 2022 Outstanding Service - National Advocacy Awards

2023 - 'Help through Crisis' Project funded by the National Lottery

 2023 Best Equality - National Advocacy Awards

2024 - Social Justice Champion Training is launched

2024: We joined the judging panel for University of Sunderland short film awards about barriers to reporting hate crime in the North East

 2025 Advocacy Quality Performance Mark

2025 - Hate Crime Strategies Training is launched

2025 - We delivered Group Advocacy for residents in Gateshead, helping them improve their housing conditions.

2026 - We launched 'Know Your Rights' training with workbooks, online DIY Advocate tool, and peer support group work

2026 - We showcased our brain injury advocacy experience at Irwin Mitchell annual conference

2025