



25 years of advocating for carers

About us

We provide independent individual, collective and peer advocacy to unpaid carers who support individuals with mental illness, eating disorders, dementia, learning disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury.

A carer may be a family member, partner or friend who supports or cares for a person. Carers may or may not live with the person they support, and they may or may not carry out physical tasks.

Our services

Individual Advocacy

We provide advocacy services for carers of:

- people with eating disorders living in the community or in hospital; and
- people in mental health settings in Lothian who are in a period of transition. For example, people they support may be moving from hospital rehabilitation wards to community living, from children's (CAMHS) to adult mental health services, returning to Lothian from 'out of area' placements or for those moving from Lothian to 'out of area' placements.

Advocacy is about having somebody to help you be heard and represent your needs and views as effectively as possible. An advocacy worker is there to support you in your decisions and can lend weight to your views. They will support and work with you on specific issues and try to get them resolved.

You may need:

- Help with finding ongoing support for yourself as a carer
- Assistance and support at meetings, mental health tribunals or reviews with medical staff and social care staff
- Help with letters and forms or with raising your issues
- Information about your rights
- Advocacy support in your role as named person, appointee, power of attorney or welfare guardian
- Support to focus on your own health and wellbeing

Collective Advocacy – Carers Forum

We provide opportunities for carers to be involved in collective advocacy. Carers can work together to bring about change and raise awareness of issues which affect them. They can share their experiences, exchange information, and take action as a group. Our Carers Forum meets bimonthly and is led by carers.

Peer Advocacy and Support

As a carer, you may be interested in meeting someone who has been through a similar caring experience – a peer.

Peer support can help you to talk about your experiences, work through feelings, learn coping strategies, and learn about what other services are available to support you. Carers can engage in peer support through one-to-one or group meetings.

Peer Support Volunteering

We offer peer volunteering opportunities for unpaid carers, or former carers who are interested in utilising their experiences to help others in a similar situation. Carer peer support volunteers are trained through Health in Mind's Peer Work Course, are disclosure-checked and receive support and supervision. Volunteers can work one-to-one with carers or help to facilitate groups.

We are always looking for carers, or recent carers, to volunteer so please get in touch if you are interested.

Carers Peer Support Groups

We run monthly peer support group meetings for carers.

There is a general peer group for family and friends supporting someone with mental illness, dementia, learning disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury.

We also facilitate groups specifically for carers and siblings supporting someone with an eating disorder. This includes community based groups and groups for carers of someone in hospital.

For more information on our carers peer support groups or to find out when and where the next meetings will be, you can visit our website: www.edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk

How to get in touch

Carers can access our services directly or by referral from another organisation. If you would like further information or to make a referral, please call us on **0131 322 8480** or email info@edinburghcarerscouncil.co.uk

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