

## **Advocacy Service Referral Policy**

Referrals to the Advocacy Service received both internally, from other Mind in Croydon services, as well as those received from external agencies and self referrals will ALL be dealt with by the same process.

Any third party (this includes other statutory and voluntary agencies, service users friends and families) referrals can only be accepted into The Mind in Croydon Advocacy Service, if the client has agreed to this referral. If the client lacks the Mental Capacity to agree to this referral (assessed under the Mental Capacity Act 2005), then a referral will be accepted in accordance with our Non Instructed Advocacy policy.

Any information disclosed by a third party regarding an Advocacy client will be shared with that client by the Advocacy Service.

We promote clients to self - refer because of the nature of our service which operates independently, in confidence and instructed by the client. However, we recognise that not all clients will have the ability to self-refer.

This referral policy is in line with Mind in Croydon's Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **1.0 Receiving and processing referrals**

1.1 Referrals need only include name, contact number/ contact details (including address) of the referred person and a brief outline of the issue that the individual may be seeking support and representation over.

1.2 Community and inpatient referrals are contacted within 7 days of either admission on the ward, or initial telephone/email enquiry.

Community referrals are contacted within 1-2 working days of allocation.

All IMHA referrals will be responded to or allocated either the same day or within one working day.

1.3 Responding to referrals will be assessed and prioritized using the following criteria:





- Is the referral from an IMHA qualifying individual or non-IMHA qualifying individual?
- Resident of Croydon; registered with Croydon GP; accessing or wishing to access Croydon mental health services.
- An assessment of priority / need of the individuals' issue(s) is made by the manager of the service alongside the advocacy team and considers such factors as whether there are other professionals/ people involved with that individuals care.
- An individuals ability to self-advocate on identified issues to a greater or lesser extent.
- Referrals from an individual requesting repeat advocacy support, revisiting the same issue will be discussed on a case by case basis at allocation meetings.
- For individuals who are the responsibility of commissioning authorities other than London Borough of Croydon, a secured purchase order will be required.

1.4 Referrals are allocated to an individual advocate during weekly referral allocation meetings. Referrals are then contacted via telephone or other stated preferred method of contact and initial meetings organised. Please refer to 1.2 in relation to IMHA referrals which may require allocation outside of the weekly allocation meeting

## **2.0 Missed or cancelled appointments**

2.1 There may be circumstances where a service user is unable to keep an appointment. Whenever possible the service user should contact the advocate to cancel the appointment to enable the appointment to be offered to someone else. In this instance The Advocacy Service will offer up to 3 appointments, if the service user does not attend the Advocacy service may consider closing the referral/case. Failure to notify the Advocacy Service of a cancellation may result in closing the referral/case.

Date last reviewed: March 2018

