



## **Statement of Purpose**

### **NYAS Cymru**

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**Provider details:**

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

Head office: Tower House, 1 Tower Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, CF41 1FF

Legal entity: Charitable Company

Registered charity number: 1012485.

Management:

**Responsible individual** – Sharon Lovell, CEO, NYAS Cymru

**Responsible Manager** – Elly Jones, Operational Manager, Statutory Advocacy Services.

**Service locations:** NYAS is an independent professional advocacy provider regionally commissioned by local authorities to deliver independent professional advocacy services to children and young people in the following areas:

Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan

Swansea/Neath Port Talbot

Pan Gwent – Caerphilly, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Monmouthshire and Newport

Office location:

NYAS, Suite 5, Canton House, Cowbridge Road East, Canton, Cardiff, CF5 1JH

NYAS is registered with Care Inspectorate Wales for covering all services across Wales.

## **NYAS – An Overview**

The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) is a rights-based charity operating across England and Wales. Founded in 1979, our core aim is to ensure marginalised children and young people and vulnerable adults have independent advocacy representation to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are taken into account when decisions about their lives are being made.

NYAS provides a range of rights based person-centred services across Wales:

- Independent statutory advocacy to children and young people entitled under The Social Services Wellbeing (Wales) Act.
- Independent advocacy for children within Families First provision.
- Independent advocacy within mental health settings for children, young people and adults to ensure their rights are upheld.
- Parent advocacy services.
- Independent Visiting services whereby children and young people who are care experienced are matched with a volunteer who provides a befriending service.
- National participation group named the Young People’s Advisory Group, (YPAG), with young people to ensure their voices are heard and they can help influence policy and practice.
- Support and advocacy for care experienced young mothers.

NYAS is committed to influencing the political agenda in Wales to ensure children and young people’s rights are upheld and improved. NYAS sits on several advisory boards and works collaboratively with the wider sector. NYAS is represented on a number of Welsh Governments task and finish groups.

## **NYAS Vision, Mission and Values**

### **Vision**

Every child and young person has the right to be **heard**.

Every child has a right to feel **safe**.

Every child has the right to be involved in **decisions** made about **them**.

## **Mission**

At NYAS we **listen** to what children and young people want, **care** about what they say and **empower** them to get their voice heard. We ensure their wishes and feelings are expressed and acted upon to improve their situation and help them build a better future.

We will never stop in our efforts to influence, lobby and campaign to bring about positive changes and ensure children's and young people's rights are upheld.

## **Values**

Collaborative - We work closely with colleagues and partners to deliver an outstanding service to the children and young people who need us.

Accountable - We are open, transparent and accountable, taking responsibility for what we do.

Respectful - We value and respect each other and the people we work with, embracing diversity and nurturing trust.

Empowering - We listen to children and young people when they feel they are not being heard, inform them of their rights, and empower them to change their lives for the better.

## **Core Principals**

NYAS believes children and young people have an intrinsic worth irrespective of race, language, religion, disability, gender or sexuality or any other protected characteristic defined under the Equality Act 2010 and therefore:

- Children and young people have the right to be seen, heard and listened to and for their wishes and feelings to be considered regarding matters that affect their lives.
- Children and young people who are capable of forming their own views should have the right to express them freely in all matters affecting them.
- Children and young people should be given opportunities to be heard in judicial and administrative processes concerning them.

## **Service aims and objectives**

- To ensure children, young people and adults at risk are empowered to make informed and free choices and to speak for themselves.
- To ensure children, young people and adults at risk are enabled to express their wishes and feelings.

- To ensure children, young people and adults at risk are enabled to participate in decision making and planning that affects their lives.
- To influence local and national policy makers and practitioners to acknowledge the legitimacy and importance of children and vulnerable young people's rights and to address these matters directly.
- To provide a range of independent, confidential and user led information, advice, advocacy and legal services.

### **Service Criteria**

NYAS is a statutory commissioned service within local authority children service departments. We are commissioned to provide Independent professional advocacy in line with the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy in Wales, Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The National Approach to Statutory Advocacy places a duty on the local authority to ensure every child/young person who becomes looked after or subject to child protection processes receives an active offer of advocacy. This is enshrined within The Social Service Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

All local authorities in Wales have a duty to provide issue based independent professional advocacy services to the following:

Any child or young person who are -

- Looked after by children's service directorate
- Undergoing child protection processes and procedures
- Leaving care
- In need of a care and support plan
- Known to the children's disability team
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people

Additional to the above NYAS are commissioned to deliver advocacy to support any child or young person wishing to raise a concern within the Aneurin Bevan Health Authority.

### **Range of Services:**

NYAS provides an independent professional advocacy service which offers child led support and representation on individual issues to decision makers on behalf of and as directed by the child/young person.

In line with the United Nations Rights of the Child, Article 12, NYAS' primary role is to ensure the voice of children and young people is heard when decisions are being made about them or when the child/young person requests something to be stopped, started or changed. As a right's-

based charity, we do not work from a best interest perspective and will always be on the side of the child, taking a rights-based approach to our work.

As an independent statutory advocacy provider we are responsive to the needs presented to us by the child/young person and will deliver a bespoke advocacy service, providing a range of options to seek resolution to their issues to rebalance the power between children/young people and decision makers and to facilitate the voice of the child/young person to be heard, listened to and responded too. This course of action will be directed by the individual we are working with and will not be influenced by a professional or caregivers' viewpoint/agenda.

In 2019-2020, NYAS Cymru supported over 1500 children and young people with their advocacy needs.

The issues presented to the service are inclusive of but not limited to:

Placement moves

Family contact

Rights and entitlements

Access to legal support

Education issues

Health issues

Complaints

Leaving care issues

Disability issues

Access to services

Religious and cultural issues

Homelessness

Representation at formal meetings

## **Service implementation:**

### **Referral sources and service request**

On behalf of the child/young person and only where consent has been given, NYAS will accept referrals from various sources e.g.: partner services, children's service, self-referrals, health board and education or anyone who has been appointed by the child/young person to do so. All referrals are made via an electronic referral system via the NYAS website. Referrals are managed by the national helpline staff who assess the appropriateness of the referral in accordance with contract service specification. The referral, once accepted, will be inputted onto our organisational database CHIP by a helpline advisor for the attention of the relevant project coordinator for the service.

### **Service allocation**

On receipt of the referral the Project Coordinator will review details against service criteria. Where there is missing non mandatory information the Project Coordinator will make contact with the referring person to complete all relevant information. The Project Coordinator will then allocate the advocacy referral to the advocate on the Chip database. To support the allocation of the case and ensure NYAS meets the National Advocacy Standards and Outcomes Framework advocates' capacity, expertise and knowledge will be assessed against referral issue. The process of case allocation is completed within 1 working day. Where it is deemed English or Welsh is not the first language of the child, NYAS will access interpretation services to support advocacy delivery. We will ensure the active offer of providing a service in Welsh is provided and recorded. Where communication of the child is limited the Project Coordinator will determine with the referring person/close family member the communication resource/tools needed to ensure the barriers to communication are removed and full accessibility to the service can be made. The project coordinator will also screen the referral for any identified risks to the child or advocate, and allocate accordingly, ensuring any risk management measures are put in place.

### **Service delivery**

On receipt of the referral the advocate will within 48 hours contact the child/young person and agree consent has been sought for the service. The advocate will introduce the service, clarify need and arrange a face to face meeting with the child/young person at a venue where they feel able to talk openly and honestly and feel safe. As outlined within the service specification and National Approach to Statutory Advocacy in Wales the initial issued based advocacy meeting will take place within 5 days of receipt of the referral or when convenient for the child/young person.

At the initial meeting, the advocate will introduce the service, explain safeguarding, confidentiality ,NYAS internal complaints process, expectations and boundaries of role and explain our privacy policy. The advocate will clarify the need for independent advocacy and determine the current issue which requires advocacy support. Working with the child/young person the advocate will explore options to seek resolutions to the issue-based need. The course of action to be taken will be directed only by the child/young person. An action plan, (advocacy plan), outlining the steps to seek resolution is agreed with the child/young person and the advocate will take forward the actions requested. The child/ young person will be offered a copy of their plan and informed that they can access this if they so require. The advocacy plan will be made available to



the Child/young person in a language of their choice. The advocate working on the case and seeking resolution to the issue will continually feedback progress and updates with the child/young person and will if needed direct an alternative course of action for the advocate and review time plan. The action plan, (advocacy plan), will be updated accordingly.

### **Case recording**

NYAS' recording policy outlines the requirement of all case notes to be recorded on its electric case recording systems within 5 working days of every contact with the child/young person. This policy only differs when a safeguarding concern has been raised. In the case of a safeguarding concern all case notes are required to be written and submitted within 24hours.

Where a referral has been allocated to a self-employed advocate all case notes are submitted and recorded via an electronic system named CHIP, time frames apply and expected case note recording of fortnightly activity is required.

### **Case closures**

When the child/young person deems no further requirement of advocacy support or resolution to their issue, the advocacy case will be closed. The case is closed outlining the outcomes of intervention and feedback from the child/young person. NYAS has in place two forms of questionnaires to gather feedback from the service.

### **Promotion of views, wishes and feelings**

NYAS has a range of tools and resources by which the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people can be gathered and promoted to decision makers. The resources range from, but are not limited to, IPADS – Widgeit - Go, symbols, talking mats, pictures, child drawings formal reports and social stories. The process and method of the promotion of the voice of the child/young person will be determined by the child/young person themselves. Where the child/young person feels able and empowered to do so, the advocate will support at every opportunity to self-advocate.

NYAS will ensure that children and young people receive issue-based advocacy and an active offer of advocacy in the language of their choice. We will actively offer our services in Welsh as well as English and work within “The More Than Just Words” strategic framework for Welsh Language in Health, Social Services and Social Care. Our offer will be in line with our organisations Welsh Language Scheme.

### **Range of meetings**

Where directed to do so by the child/young person the NYAS advocate will support or represent the child at formal meetings in person or online to ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and considered in their care planning. The advocate will only attend meetings when directed

to do so by the child/young person and will either attend with them or act as a representative on their behalf. Where an advocate attends without the child/young person in order to protect any conflict and promote a child led service delivery, the advocate will not hear information which is withheld from the child/young person and will advise the meeting members of their role, boundaries and purpose of attendance. The range of meetings attended by the advocate is inclusive of but not limited to:

- Children Looked After Review Meeting
- Child Protection Meetings (initial and reviews)
- Care and Support Planning and review Meetings
- Family Group Conferencing
- Education and Health Meetings
- Secure Accommodation Review
- One to one meeting's with Social worker/other professional deemed as being decision makers in the child's life.

### **Safeguarding**

Independent statutory professional advocacy takes a pivotal role within the safeguarding of children and young people. NYAS has in place a robust safeguarding policies in relation to children/young people and vulnerable adults which ensures information of safeguarding concerns can be raised, recorded and reviewed. NYAS operates an out of hours safeguarding procedure which supports advocates delivering services outside normal office hours and is operational from 5pm – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 6pm Saturdays and Sundays.

NYAS' service is confidential and no information regarding the advocacy intervention undertaken with a child/young person is shared with any other persons unless directed by the individual receiving the service. The only caveat to NYAS confidential practise is the need to breach service confidentiality when there is a disclosure or concerns regarding the safeguarding of the individual or others or required by law for example, in court proceedings.

### **Active offer**

The National approach to statutory advocacy in Wales places a duty on children's service staff to ensure all children and young people who:

- Became a looked after child from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 – receive an active offer of advocacy.
- Become subject to child protection meetings following an S47 investigation - receive an active offer of advocacy.

NYAS' role within this duty is to ensure staffing resources are available to meet the demand of referrals to the service for the active offer of advocacy and to ensure every child/young person who becomes known to children's service departments within the above eligibility receive a face to face meeting with an advocate who will explain the following:

- The rights of the child/young person to access independent advocacy services
- Explain the role of the advocate and how to access the service
- Inform of rights and entitlements in relation to their legal status
- Provide information on services and support available to the child/young person including different types of advocacy available
- Inform child/young person of the children's services complaints procedure.

There are two determined outcomes for the active offer meeting

- 1) Issue based advocacy support required. Where it is determined by the child/young person advocacy intervention is required, the advocate will make a referral via an internal referral form and the allocation of case will be processed in accordance with our policies.
- 2 ) No current advocacy needs, case to be closed.

### **Delivery of services**

NYAS will deliver advocacy services and meet with the child in various community settings, education settings, home, youth service or via digital means determined by the child/young person where they feel safe and able to talk openly and honestly about their advocacy needs. Where needed a risk assessment will be completed and barriers to risks addressed. Where staff are meeting children and young people in the community NYAS' lone working policy is adhered to.

### **Staffing arrangements/qualifications and development**

**NYAS' service in Wales is delivered and managed by the following staffing model:**

CEO Wales

Operational Manger for statutory advocacy services Wales

Service Manager for each regional service

6 Project Coordinators who manage and deliver each locality service area

Salaried advocates

Self Employed Sessional Advocates

Senior Administrator

The staffing structure in Wales is supported by the charities National People and Culture department, finance department, legal department, IT department, policy department and communications/marketing department.

### **Range of qualifications**

NYAS' safer recruitment practices outline the expected level of key qualifications and expertise required. Baseline qualification of all staff is degree level of education or equivalent in a relevant and related field.

### **Training and development**

All newly recruited advocates undertake the Level 3 OCN in Children's Advocacy, which requires attending training over a three-day period, completion of a workbook and witness testimony from their manager to verify practice undertaken.

All Advocates are required to undertake mandatory training in Safeguarding (adults and children), GDPR, Advocacy Awareness, Information security, lone working, health and safety and equality and diversity. Managers are additionally required to undertake equality and diversity for managers and lone working for managers.

After successful completion of their 6-month probationary period all Advocates are required to undertake the Level 4 City and Guilds Independent Advocacy Qualification with our preferred provider Gower College and undertake the specialised pathway Advocacy for Children and Young People.

As an accredited training centre NYAS deliver various practice-based webinar-based training courses which is influenced by the skills and knowledge gap analysis of staff, growth and diversity in service delivery and the internal appraisal process.

As a local authority commissioned statutory service NYAS is able to access all social care workforce development courses delivered by the local authorities.

All NYAS staff are trained to level two in safeguarding children and young people and the protection of vulnerable adults. This training is updated on a two-year basis externally and 3 yearly internally within NYAS.

NYAS offers staff and self-employed advocates a range of training and development opportunities which is planned via a yearly staff training and development plan.

At point of employment all NYAS staff are assigned a mentor and coach to support good practise and develop a high quality of service delivery. All training and development of individual staff is reviewed as part of on-going one to one supervision and the annual appraisal process.

### **Training and development plan**

NYAS have an overarching training and development plan, which reflects the training needs of its workforce, via annual training needs analysis.

*NYAS has a training platform called Flick for all our compulsory and development training in addition to our Advocacy training.*

### **Governance and service monitoring**

As a commissioned advocacy provider NYAS' service delivery is monitored by local authority commissioners on a quarterly basis and 6 monthly by regional commissioners. The advocacy national reporting template is used to provide qualitative and quantitative information on service delivery and outcomes of intervention, national advocacy standards and national advocacy outcome framework.

Financial budgeting is managed by the NYAS finance department and overseen regionally by the Wales CEO and Wales Operations Manager. Robust financial monitoring is supported by quarterly spend reports, budgeting meetings and projected spend analysis.

The Responsible Individual will undertake a full audit of assessment via a Quality Care Review at least once every 6 months which will involve reviewing NYAS' systems (Cascade, CHIP and case audits) to ensure we are complying with regulations. This will include:

- Collating feedback with direct engagement from service users
- Communicating with staff to ensure adequate resources are in place and undertaking an equipment checklist
- Review staff records to identify staff turnover, sickness, complaints, concerns, performance measures, training undertaken
- Risk register record is up to date with details of plans for natural disasters, financial matters, staffing issues
- Health and safety reports including; fire, floods, incidents in the work place. The audit will also test alarms in place for all offices
- Analysis of data regarding significant incidents, safeguarding, whistleblowing, concerns and complaints. A clear outcomes and action plan report will be produced following each full audit with full recommendations and identified leads for completion.

NYAS services are supported by robust policies and procedures which are reviewed on an annual basis. (Can be presented on request).

NYAS in house quality assurance processes allow for monthly case audits and contract audits of services.

Timely staff supervision allows the robust management, improvement and development of commissioned services.

### **Service user involvement in governance:**

NYAS encourages and supports care experienced children and young people to take a role within service development, improvement and recruitment. NYAS' young people's advisory group help shape our services through co-producing publicity resources and service delivery tools, interviewing staff and involvement within tendering processes and quality assurance processes such as the Quality Care Review.

### **Complaints**

At point of advocacy intervention every child/young person will be informed of the NYAS complaints policy and how to access it. On receipt of a complaint, NYAS will follow an investigation process outlined within their complaints policy to determine an outcome to seek resolution the concern raised. The outcome of the complaint and the issue itself will be reviewed and used to inform improvements of practise within service delivery and management. We will provide all children and young people with information on our complaints process and ensure it is easy to understand. We will explain the process and include contact details for the Children's Commissioner for Wales and the Ombudsman. We will ensure our staff are also informed of the right to access our internal complaints procedure and make the policy and procedures accessible with-in our intranet system. The policy will be reviewed annually.

### **Office premises**

#### **NYAS Head Office**

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

Head office: Tower House, 1 Tower Road, Birkenhead, Wirral, CF41 IFF

Legal entity: Charitable Company

Registered charity number: 1012485

#### **Wales Office's**

**Service locations:** NYAS in Wales have 1 office Suite 5, Canton House, Cowbridge Road East, Canton, Cardiff, CF5 1JH. All our contracts have access to this office and we also use community hub spaces.

Each staff member has access to:

- Kitchen – providing necessary equipment for tea/coffee making facilities along with a microwave
- Meeting room for supervision/interviews and team events
- A dedicated space for young people to hold meetings
- A dedicated desk
- Equipment; including; photocopying, scanner, laptops, monitors, shredders, chairs, work desks, cabinets.
- Our I.T server.
- Disabled access.

This is a shared accommodation office block with NYAS having their own private entrance and access to the alarm system. The building has lifts provided to ensure it is accessible for wheelchair users. We have a weekly cleaning facility.

All staff are trained in GDPR and health and safety. Kitchen – providing necessary equipment for tea/coffee making facilities along with a microwave

- Meeting room for supervision/interviews and team events
- A dedicated desk
- Equipment; including; photocopying, scanner, laptops, monitors, shredders, chairs, work desks, cabinets.
- Our I.T server.
- Disabled toilet.