

12.1

How will you deliver an Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service in Cambridgeshire and in particular, how will the IMCA work and support people who lack capacity to make the relevant decision and represent their views to ensure their best interests are met? Please provide additional supporting evidence of how your organisation has successfully delivered this type of service. (550 words, not including additional evidence requested)

VoiceAbility has been successfully providing the IMCA service in Cambridgeshire for six years. During this time we have supported nearly 600 people, delivered on all key targets and through our successful training and awareness raising programme increased eligible referrals from 61 per annum in 2008/9 to 94 in 2011/12 and reduced the number of ineligible referrals from 92 per annum to 10 over the same period.

If we are chosen to continue to provide the service we will build on these foundations to deliver increased value for commissioners by:

- Developing an IMCA communication plan that will deliver a new structured programme of information and training.
- Working with individuals, professionals and family members to improve levels of feedback and input into service delivery.
- Developing an Equal Voice plan which will ensure that partners have access to a service which is tailored to their individual needs.

Delivering an IMCA service for Cambridgeshire.

The IMCA service in Cambridgeshire will continue to be delivered by two part-time IMCAs, George Kirkman and Rachel Mason. Together they will provide over 6000 hours of face-to-face advocacy support over the three years, a figure which excludes any leave and the additional time which they will devote to awareness raising, training and networking. George and Rachel have established themselves as trusted and valued professionals in hospitals and care homes in Cambridgeshire receive consistently positive feedback about their work including;

“Advocacy service was delivered promptly with the interests of the service user firmly at the forefront of all decisions”

The service will be led by Service Manager, Reiz Evans, who has been leading all VoiceAbility’s advocacy services across Cambridgeshire and Norfolk since 2009. Reiz is a qualified IMCA with 8 years of professional practice who has been responsible for increasing referral rates, ensuring the quality of the service (including compliance with the MCA legislation and its associated guidance), supporting the professional development of the IMCAs and contributing to raising the profile and understanding of the MCA.

As now, the service will be available from Monday to Friday 9am-5pm (excluding public holidays) and will continue to improve on agreed response times. Our current average response time is half a day.

Working with people who lack capacity.

VoiceAbility’s IMCAs adopt a person-centred approach to advocacy, which focuses decision-making on the needs of the individual. This involves

- Ascertaining, wherever possible, the individual’s views on the decision to be made. VoiceAbility IMCAs are trained in a range of communication techniques which can be

used if the partner is not able to express an opinion vocally. They also have access to other professionals such as speech and language therapists to aid this process.

- Liaising with friends, carers, experts and others who know and understand the individual and their context.
- Using any previously recorded information about the individual's views or opinions.
- Using non-instructed advocacy approaches, where the individual is unable to express their opinions, which includes using the 'Watching Brief' approach'.
- Attending meetings to represent the individual, where appropriate and relevant.
- Writing clear and professional reports designed to convey the results of the advocate's research and support the decision-maker to understand what solution will most effectively serve the partner's best interests.
- Challenging decisions where the IMCA believes that the individual's best interests have not been served.

Supporting information

- Lists of VoiceAbility's IMCA contracts
- Cambridgeshire IMCA annual report 2011/2012
- VoiceAbility's successful IMCA + QPM assessment