

Do you know your rights?

Everyone has rights. It is important to know what they are and what you can do if your rights are not respected. As a disabled person you may face additional difficulties exercising your rights.

So what should you do when this happens?



Time to get equal

scope

About cerebral palsy.
For disabled people achieving equality.

In a shop or restaurant

Talk with the person who is in charge and see if you can work things out together informally. Let them know what you think would be a reasonable solution, as this may resolve the matter. Or if they come up with an alternative, listen and decide whether this solution would be acceptable to you.

If a shop or restaurant refuses to make an adjustment you can contact the Disability Rights Commission (details at the end of this sheet) to discuss what further action could be taken. This might include taking the shop/restaurant to a Discrimination Tribunal, but this would only be as a final resort if all other negotiations failed.

Housing

If you are homeless or living in temporary accommodation, your housing rights are limited. However, Shelter offers a helpline advice service (details at the end of this sheet). You may find the information sheet 'Choosing Where You Live' in this series helpful for finding out information about your rights as a tenant, living in residential accommodation or when buying a property.



Health

If you have difficulties getting the health services you need, you should ask your GP or consultant to refer you to the appropriate service. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy are all in great demand and have strict criteria about who needs them most. For this reason it is best to give as much detail as you can about your health needs. You may have to wait sometime to receive these services and, if you only provide basic details you may be given a lower priority than you should have. You have the right to change your doctor if you are not happy with the service they provide. You can also seek a second opinion if you are unhappy with a diagnosis they make.

Social Services – Community Care

You are entitled to have a community care assessment if you want one. This should take account of all your needs, and once you receive the care plan the local authority are legally obliged to meet your identified needs. You are also entitled to a care review if your needs change at any time.

Complaints procedures

All health and social services have complaints procedures which have a legal precedent so that your right to complain is a legally protected one. You should ask the service provider for a copy of the procedure and they should be able to tell you how to make a complaint against the service.

Complaining to your councillor or MP

Your local councillor and MP are other sources of support in helping you obtain the services and help you are entitled to. You can find the details of your local MP and councillor and how to contact them from the websites listed at the end of this sheet or your local library.

Advocacy

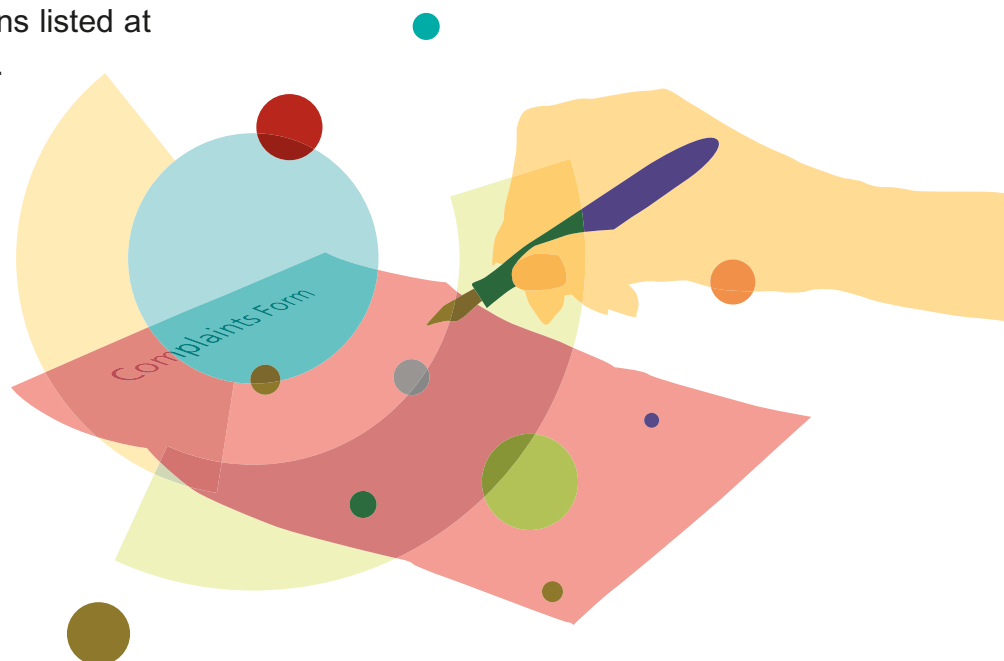
Every disabled person has the right to be involved in decisions that affect their life. An independent advocate will help you if you need support to express your choices. They will ensure that your opinions are presented by helping you to speak up for yourself or speaking on your behalf. You should be able to find details of your local advocacy organisation from the Citizens Advice Bureau or contact one of the organisations listed at the end of this information sheet.

Who are you safe to get advice from?

The Government has set up the Community Legal Services. They have a quality kite mark, which they give to information and advice services who meet their standards. Look for this sign when seeking advice, as it guarantees the accuracy and reliability of the information they give. A member of the Federation of Advice and Information Centres is also recognised as a reputable advice service.

Confidentiality

Every person has the right to expect that information about them is treated confidentially, and not shared with members of the public, commercial companies or anyone else. Information should not be shared with other professionals without your knowledge and consent. If a doctor, social worker or advice worker talks about one of their clients in public they may be breaching this confidentiality. Unless they are doing it because there is a risk to the person's safety, or they are about to commit a crime, it is against the law for them to do so.



Further information and support

Advice UK

www.adviceuk.org.uk

Telephone: **020 7407 4070**

A network of free independent advice centres.

Action for Advocacy

www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk

Telephone: **020 7820 7868**

Citizen Advocacy Information and Training

www.citizenadvocacy.org.uk

Telephone: **020 8880 4545**

Disability Rights Commission (DRC)

www.drc-gb.org

Email: enquiries@drc-gb.org

DRC Helpline: **08457 622 633**

Textphone: **08457 622 644**

An independent body established in April 2000 to stop discrimination and promote equality of opportunities for disabled people.

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Parliament

www.parliament.uk

A website focussing on the work of parliament, where you can find contact details for your local MP.

Shelter

www.shelter.org.uk

Shelterline (Freephone) **0808 800 4444**

Please note any mention of a product or web link does not constitute a recommendation by Scope. For further information about cerebral palsy and Scope services:

Call 0808 800 3333

Email: cphelpline@scope.org.uk

Or log on to www.scope.org.uk

This information can be made available in other formats if required, eg large print or tape.