

A HELPING HAND 24 HOURS A DAY

People leave our services when they have more confidence and can be independent, but the app means that they are not alone.



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Danuta's story

Danuta, from Poland, has lived in the UK for six years. She has longstanding illnesses and relies on help from health and social care services. Faced with a complex system of benefits, support services, and a language barrier, Danuta found the process of getting help very difficult.

A friend recommended Advocacy Centre North (ACN), part of Newcastle CVS, to Danuta where she was matched with an advocate. Danuta learned about disability rights, applied for benefits and had her flat adapted to make it more accessible.

She was then introduced to an app developed by ACN. DIY Advocate enables people to articulate their situation or problem and identify solutions by answering a series of questions. The content is used to formulate an action report which can be saved or sent to a service or support worker.

As Danuta is more confident using written English than spoken, the app suited her. It has helped her resolve issues that would have required the support of her advocate.

After a care assessment, she was concerned about an administration fee, she was advised she must pay to have a carer. Danuta used DIY Advocate to articulate the problems she would have in paying this and to find information that supported her case. This gave her the confidence to work with social services to resolve the issue.

Following the sudden death of her mother, Danuta began to consider what would happen in the event of her own death.

She explains: "I and my family had known my mother's wishes on her funeral service. But despite the hope

that I will live a long time, I realised that none of my relatives know what my opinion is about how I would like to be treated at the end of my life."

Danuta has used her app to find information and to create an action plan, which includes preparing official documents and telling her family in Poland what they contain.

"DIY Advocate helped me to cut off the stress associated with the fact that in the event of an emergency situation I am not prepared for it."

Shervin Nouri, who was Danuta's advocate at ACN, believes the app is empowering people who previously relied on their services.

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"The app is that extra bit of help to enable them to self-advocate," she says. "It is efficient and available 24 hours, we know people like it because we have started to receive less 'simple questions' - they can find this information quickly using the app."

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