

Advocacy skills

1. **Advocacy** means giving support to a person so their voice is heard. Your disabled brother/sister may be entitled to an advocate to support them with some decisions.
2. **Use the laws to support your key points.** Human rights, care and equality laws are complex – don't expect to learn them all (health and social care staff won't either). But having a basic understanding will help when you are putting across a key point about your disabled brother or sister's care.
3. **Tips for managing meetings:** request a meeting time that enables you to attend; ask for a copy of the agenda in advance; send any issues that you would like to be discussed to the chair a week before; have some questions ready; ask for clarification if there's anything you don't understand.
4. **Remember that you cannot change everything, all at once.** You may only have the time and energy to change one thing. Do what you can, and focus on what's good.
5. **It is OK to ask** (and press for) answers to who, what, how, when something will happen. It's OK to ask for progress reviews.
6. **Look after yourself too.** You can't support your brother or sister if you become burnt out and ill. Take care of yourself in whatever ways you can – all small acts of self-care do add up. Join an online support group for adult siblings at www.sibs.org.uk to meet others and share experiences.