

## How Advocacy ends?

- An advocate will meet with you and explain their role
- An advocate take notes when they speak with you
- An advocate makes phone calls on your behalf and may attend meetings with you or for you
- An advocate keeps you updated about what's happening
- An advocate will never make a decision for you
- Your advocate won't refuse to speak to you- but might not always be available

## When does Advocacy end?

- Your advocate will be available to work with you for up to 6 sessions maximum and advocacy will end when this time is up
- If you no longer want an advocate, please let us know by contacting our office
- Families Matter may withdraw advocacy if for some reason you do not cooperate with the advocate or do not attend meetings
- Families Matter will withdraw advocacy if you threaten or use verbal or physical abuse on an advocate or member of Families Matter staff.
- Families Matter will withdraw advocacy if you choose to have a solicitor or trade union represent your case



### Families Matter

Unit B9, Enterprise Fund Business Centre,  
Ballyraine, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Tel: 074 91 25598  
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The Strengthening Families programme

# A Guide to Families Matter Advocacy Service

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## Your Advocacy Guide

- This guide is about Families Matter and our Advocacy Service
- It explains who Families Matter are and what we do
- It also explains advocacy and the role of the advocate

- Families Matter works with statutory, voluntary and community agencies and families in County Donegal.

- Families Matter runs the Strengthening Families Programme throughout the county.

- Families Matter offer the advocacy service is to families who have participated or who are participating in the Strengthening Families Programme.

## What is Advocacy?

- Advocacy is about saying what you want
- You can do this yourself or you can get support to speak up

## ✓ WE CAN

- Help you to understand what to do if your rights have been ignored
- Help connect you with services, programmes and support you need
- Help you to speak up for yourself
- Help you to start conversations about the services you receive and if necessary challenge decisions
- Support you to express your opinions if you are afraid

## ✗ WE CANNOT

- Override decisions made by state agencies
- Represent families in custody or access matters
- Provide child protection services
- Speak for families in a court of law or influence a legal decision
- Provide any character or professional references

## The Advocate

- An advocate is a trained professional who will support you to have your voice heard
- An advocate listens to what you have to say
- An advocate explains things to you in a way you can understand
- An advocate will always treat you with respect

## Confidentiality

- An advocate will keep your information private and will not tell it to anyone outside of Families Matter without your permission
- However, we cannot keep your information private if we are concerned about your safety or your family's safety
- We cannot keep your information private if you make us aware a about child protection concern

