

4.2 Advocacy for parents requiring learning disability support

Advocacy can help service users both to understand their rights and choices and also to support them in resolving issues of great significance to their lives. We have drawn on an article by Bauer et al. (2014)¹ for the costs of providing an advocate for parents with learning disabilities and at risk of having their children taken into care. Based on information provided by two of the four projects and taking mid-points of salary ranges provided, combined with routine data and assumptions made for staff employed by local authorities, the mean cost of an advocacy intervention consuming 95 hours of client-related work (including one-to-one sessions, external meetings, but excluding travel and training costs) was £4,671. Information on the wider costs and benefits of advocacy and early intervention signposted or referred to by the advocate can be found in the referenced paper (Bauer et al., 2014).¹

The costs below are based on the average of two advocacy projects. The first is in rural and urban parts of the country where most service users are in areas of deprivation; and the second in urban regions with large areas of poverty and child protection issues.

Costs and unit estimation	2015/2016 value	Notes (for further clarification see Commentary)
A. Wages/salary	£36,115 per year	Project A: Two part-time advocates (salary range £20,000-£25,000); Project B: Eighty per cent of a service manager (salary range £29,604-£31,766), plus one part-time (3.5 hours per week) advocate (salary range £26,401-£28,031).
B. Salary oncosts	£ 9,982 per year	Employer's national insurance is included plus 20 per cent of salary for employer's contribution to superannuation.
C. Overheads Management/supervision	£6,728 per year	Project A: supervision from a service manager for 2 hours per month (24 hours per year) Project B: service manager is provided with 4 hours formal supervision and 20 hours informal supervision per month (288 hours per year). Advocate has 3 hours formal and 3 hours informal supervision by manager per month (72 hours per year).
Direct overheads	£3,227 per year	Premises costs (office, stationery, utilities etc.) are estimated at 7 per cent of salary costs. ²
Indirect overheads	£7,375 per year	Indirect overheads assumed to be 16 per cent of direct care salary costs. ² They include general management and support services such as finance and human resource departments.
D. Qualifications	No costs available	Project A: advocates required 20 hours of national advocacy training. Project B: NVQ level 4 management and national advocacy qualification required.
E. Training	No costs available	Project A: further training consisted of 8 hours by Family Rights Group plus additional training to individual requirements. Project B: 5 days per year provided by a range of safeguarding, advocacy, legal and community organisations.
F. Capital overheads	£2,650 per year	It is assumed that one office is used and costs are based on the new-build and land requirements of a local office and shared facilities for waiting, interviews and clerical support. Capital costs have been annuitised over 60 years at a discount rate of 3.5 per cent, declining to 3 per cent after 30 years. (See Preface for more information.)
G. Travel	No costs available	Project A: average travel time per intervention = 70 minutes, range (40-120 minutes) Project B: average travel time = 15 minutes.
Working time	41 weeks per year 37 hours per week	Includes 29 days annual leave and 8 statutory leave days. Ten days for study/training and 8.5 days sickness leave have been assumed based on the median average sickness absence level in England for all authorities. ³ Unit costs assume 1,513 working hours.
Ratio of direct to indirect time on client-related work	1:0.13	1,344 hours of client-related work are assumed per year. ¹
Caseload		Project A: Caseload of 8-10 parents. Project B: 10 families.
Time per case	95 hours of client related work.	On average, an advocacy intervention consisted of 95 hours of client-related work (one-to-one sessions, external meetings travelling and preparation time) provided over a 10-month period. Face-to-face time ranged from 3 to 68 hours.
Unit costs available 2015/2016		
Average cost per working hour £29, average cost per client-related hour £49. (Estimates exclude travel costs). Average total cost £66,077; Total cost for project A: £37,826; Total cost for project B: £94,327. Average cost per advocacy intervention (based on 95 hours); £4,671 (Project A £2,674 and Project B £6,667).		

¹ Bauer, A., Wistow, G., Dixon, J. & Knapp, M. (2014) Investing in advocacy for parents with learning disabilities: what is the economic argument? *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, doi: 10.1111/bld.12089.

² Based on information taken from Selwyn, J., Sempik, J., Thurston, P. & Wijedasa, D. (2009) *Adoption and the inter-agency fee*, University of Bristol, Bristol; and Glendinning, C. et al. (2010). Home care re-ablement services: Investigating the longer-term impacts, Final Report, University of York, PSSRU Kent, Department of Health, London.

³ Local Government Association (2016) *Local Government workforce survey 2014/15*, research report, March 2016.
<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11627/Workforce+Survey+2014-15+report+Final.pdf/185ef91c-b4be-46a3-b854-b43c25c8df2a>. [accessed 17 October 2016].