



The Henry Smith Charity is a grant-giving charity that funded 15 organisations providing independent and non-statutory advocacy to support people with learning disabilities and autistic people across the UK between 2022 and 2025. Not-for-profit enterprise, Social Finance, was awarded a grant to work as the learning and evaluation partner, building evidence of practice supporting people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

THE UNDENIABLE CASE FOR CHANGE

Independent advocacy for independent lives for people with learning disabilities and autistic people

NON-STATUTORY ADVOCACY AS A SOLUTION

Non-statutory advocacy provides one-to-one advocacy, self-advocacy groups, peer and citizen advocacy. **It is a form of community support that ensures that a person's voice is represented in important decisions related to their health, care, employment, education or housing** – creating better social integration, long-term personal growth and improved wellbeing, complimenting services provided by statutory advocacy (a legal entitlement to an advocate for certain people).

THOUSANDS ARE AT RISK

In the UK, approximately **1.5 million people have a learning disability, and around 700,000 people in the UK are known to be autistic**. These individuals often find it difficult to learn, develop new skills, understand information and interact with other people. Whilst local authorities and the NHS are

required by law to ensure that people have access to independent advocates in limited circumstances related to mental health and capacity to make decisions, **many people with learning disabilities and autistic people require a different form of support, that helps to prevent them entering a crisis situation.**

Outside of statutory advocacy, a patchwork of independent providers operate to support people with learning disabilities and autistic people and to help them have their voices heard. They typically rely on local authority contracts for funding. However, a volatile economic environment, including a projected £2.3 billion funding gap among councils in England for 2025/26 and 21% real terms drop in grant income between 2010 and 2022, is likely to have severe consequences on provisions outside of statutory advocacy.

Many will, and already are, slipping through the net, only to appear later in already oversubscribed crisis services.

TRANSFORMING LIVES: A FIRST OF ITS KIND REPORT

Social Finance's evaluation of Henry Smith Charity's £2.6m non-statutory advocacy fund, which supported 1,667 people, revealed a **myriad of positive outcomes for both the people supported and wider society**. The Henry Smith Strategic Grant programme cost £926,000 per year and generated estimated financial benefits of **£11.5 million per year** – around £34.5 million in total.

THE CASE FOR NON-STATUTORY ADVOCACY: A PATHWAY FORWARD



For every **£1 invested** in non-statutory advocacy, there are an estimated **£12 of savings** (£7 for the NHS and £5 for local authorities).



It **supported people** to access **health services, social services, independent living** and navigate **family-related situations**.



It supported **58% of people** to achieve their primary advocacy goals and a further **35% to make progress** towards these.



It has the potential to **contribute to wider economic benefits and boost growth**, by supporting people back into work.

NOW IS THE TIME TO DRIVE FORWARD MOMENTUM: HOW YOU CAN HELP...

1. Event Attendance

Join us at the Houses of Parliament on **Thursday 6th February** to engage with key stakeholders as we build a coalition of support for non-statutory advocacy.

2. Policy Ownership

In line with Government's mission to shift care from hospital to community, advocate for a Lead Policy Official to own non-statutory advocacy – support a joined-up approach to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities and autistic people.

3. Funding

Support a national non-statutory advocacy fund for people with learning disabilities and autistic people to support growth of the sector and help thousands more – with an initial £10m investment over the next five years.