

BILINGUAL ADVOCACY CASE STUDIES 2023-24

Case 257 – Arabic speaking Service User, self-referred to SIS and also by Voices in Exile

257 needed help to support his access to a specialist about his severe spine and knee ligament issues. The GP had made a referral six months previously but 257 had heard nothing more. The pain medication was becoming less effective and causing side effects. This situation was causing anxiety and stress.

The language barrier meant that 257 had struggled to make an appointment with his GP because of the triage system in operation and the need to adequately explain the reasons for the appointment. They were also unable to follow up the referral because of the language barrier.

The bilingual advocate liaised with various hospital departments to follow up the referral and get information about treatment options. 257 was able to understand the referral system, what procedures were necessary, the likely waiting times, how appointment details would be communicated and have expectations managed.

“I felt confident to talk openly with my advocate about my needs. I am very thankful for your support. It has given me the clarity of what to expect, I had been waiting to hear about my referral for over 6 months and I was very worried that I may not be seen, I can now wait a few weeks with peace of mind.”

Increased voice and personal control:
has influenced the decision making processes
achieved the outcome they were seeking
felt listened to by the professionals
Improved opportunities:
has improved quality of life
Challenging injustice:
has been protected from abuse or neglect
Increased independence:
has increased personal dignity and respect
has increased confidence

Case 230 – Arabic speaking Service User referred through Refugee Radio

230 is an unpaid carer for his wife, they are refugees with 5 young children. They were unaware of their rights to access any support services as a carer.

The advocate explained the role of *The Carer's Centre* and the potential support on offer. 230 agreed to a referral for a carer's assessment. The advocate helped make an appointment, ensured translated information was made available, clarified expectations and helped 230 prepare.

As a result of the appointment, 230 received a carer's card which entitled him to discounts around the city, low-cost internet and electrical equipment, and applied for Carer's Allowance. 230 was connected to other services; BHCC Reablement Services and [Crossroads Care](#) for respite. 230 is considering whether to join a Peer Support Group.

"As new to the country with no English, family joining me recently, my wife with health conditions and young children, I would not know what to do or where to ask for support. Thank you so much for helping us to feel supported and get the help we need"

Increased voice and personal control:
has influenced the decision making processes
achieved the outcome they were seeking
felt listened to by the professionals
accessed information to support decision making
Improved opportunities:
has improved quality of life
has increased choice
achieved improved economic wellbeing
Challenging injustice:
has increased access to community services
Increased independence:
has increased personal dignity and respect
has increased independence
has increased confidence
has increased access to social and/or support networks
Had rights upheld:
has increased knowledge (or use) of their rights

Case 242 – Portuguese speaking Service User referred by a SIS Community Interpreter

242 was worried about her health, in particular her heart. She was not feeling well and was uncertain whether she had been referred by her GP for a cardiology appointment.

242 felt that she had not been listened to during previous GP appointments due to her level of English and was reluctant to go again. 242 had been speaking by video call with a private doctor in her country of origin, and having medication sent by a relative, instead.

The advocate helped 242 to access the *Patient Knows Best* system to check health information, test results, referrals etc. They attended a GP appointment together at which 242 was able to clearly explain her concerns. This secured a referral to a cardiologist. The advocate liaised with the cardiology medical secretary about 242's concerns about medication, prescribed in the country of origin, running out and ensured interpreters would be booked for all future appointments.

"I didn't want to go to my GP practice; they can't be bothered with me because I don't speak English. I have been speaking with a doctor in Brazil using video call and then someone sent me the prescribed medication. It was much better when the advocate could help me. I finally managed to get the medication I need and now I can also see my medical information, letters, test results etc. for myself online. I know I can self-refer for an interpreter to SIS when I have an appointment."

Increased voice and personal control:
has influenced the decision making processes
achieved the outcome they were seeking
felt listened to by the professionals
is supported to appeal, complain or raise concerns
accessed information to support decision making
Improved opportunities:
has improved quality of life
has improved health or treatment
Challenging injustice:
has been protected from abuse or neglect
was supported to challenge discriminatory practice
Increased independence:
has increased personal dignity and respect
has increased confidence
Had rights upheld: