



**THE  
ADVOCACY  
PROJECT**

# **Supporting people to make decisions: The stories and impact of Supported Decision Making**

**the**[advocacyproject.org.uk](https://theadvocacyproject.org.uk)

**The Advocacy Project (Scotland)** is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). Scottish Charity Number: SC020564.

# Housekeeping



Feel free to ask questions, make comments and connect with others




Respect other peoples' opinions and points of view



Keep yourself safe and only share if you feel comfortable

# Workshop Objectives

- Increase your knowledge about Supported Decision Making.
  - Increase your knowledge of what it means to follow a 'human rights-based' approach and consider how you can apply this.
  - Consider how the principles of Supported Decision Making may apply to your day to day practice through a range of practical examples.
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# About The Advocacy Project

- Established in 1992 as a service user led organisation advocating for the rights of disabled people in Glasgow.
- Providing advocacy in Glasgow and East Renfrewshire.
- Open referral process.
- One-to-one issue-based support for adults across our service areas and collective advocacy.



# So, what is Supported Decision Making?

- Everyone has the right to equal recognition and respect for their choices.
- Supported decision making is the steps that you can take to keep a person's rights, will and preferences at the heart of decisions concerning them.
- Some countries have passed laws to give a formal legal recognition to supported decision making.

# Legislation

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## **Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003**

- ➔ *The patient must be permitted to participate as fully as possible in any function of this act.*

## **Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000**

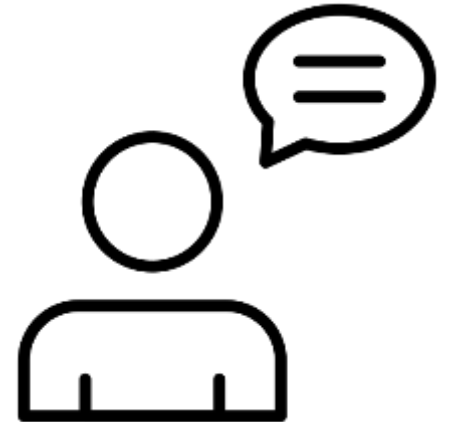
- ➔ *If human or mechanical support overcomes any communication problems the adult is not 'incapable'.*

## **Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007**

- ➔ *The adult must be encouraged to participate in the process and provided with the information they need.*

## **Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013**

- ➔ *Councils must give people information and advice so they are able to choose the best things for them and provide support if they find it hard to make a decision.*



# Factors that affect decision making

Not being able to hear

Noise level

Environment

Time of day

Experience (Good or bad)

Body position

Peer influences

Other's views

Wanting to please others



Anxiety

Mood

Stress

Tiredness

Confidence

Money

Understanding

Support

Knowing risks / benefits /  
rewards

# Potential Benefits of Supported Decision Making

Protect people's  
autonomy

Support people to be  
less isolated

Support people to  
have more  
independence

People may be more  
likely to be happy with  
the outcome

People may be able to  
participate more in  
decisions

Support people to be  
more informed

Empower people to  
have control in their  
own life

Support people's  
voices to be better  
heard

Ensures people's rights  
are recognised and  
respected



Human Rights based approach



# A Human Rights based approach?

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- A Human Rights based approach is about empowering people to know and claim their rights and increasing the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights.
- This means giving people greater opportunities to participate in shaping the decisions that impact on their human rights. It also means increasing the ability of those with responsibility for fulfilling rights to recognise and know how to respect those rights, and make sure they can be held to account.



# The PANEL Principles

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There are some underlying principles which are of fundamental importance in applying a human rights based approach in practice:

- **Participation**
- **Accountability**
- **Non-discrimination and equality**
- **Empowerment**
- **Legality**



# The FAIR Approach



**Facts:** What is the experience of the individuals involved and what are the important facts to understand?



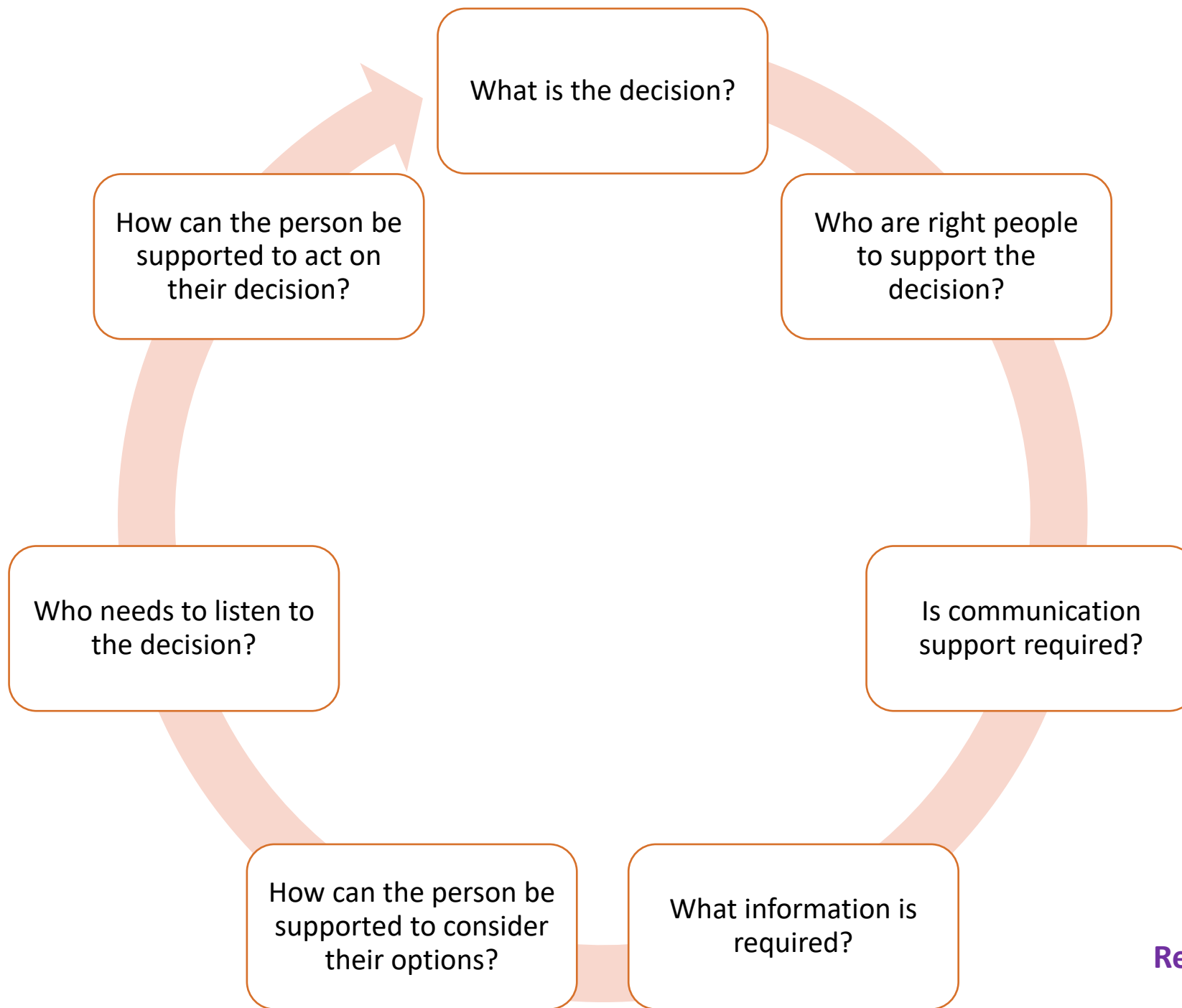
**Analyse rights:** Develop an analysis of the human rights at stake



**Identify responsibilities:** Identify what needs to be done and who is responsible for doing it



**Review actions:** Make recommendations for action and later recall and evaluate what has happened as a result



**Refer to Handout 2**

# The Advocacy Project

## Referral Form



**Name:** John

**Age:** 48

### **Address:**

Flat 0/L  
Old East View  
Glasgow

### **Referring Issue:**

The referrer advised that John's family feel he is unhappy in his current placement and would like him to move to a different care home. John's support workers feel that he is happy where he is.

### **Communication Support:**

Referrer advised John is non-verbal and will use some signs to communicate.

### **Additional Information:**

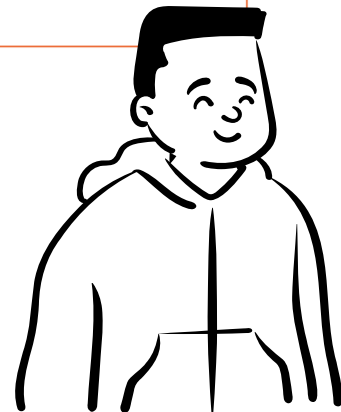
John has been assessed as lacking capacity and his family has welfare and financial powers. A Support Needs Assessment was completed last month by social work.

For office use only.  
Case reference number: 173621

### **Initial visit**

20/02/2025

- John lives with in a supported living with 2 other people, receiving 24h support.
- John's flat is tailored to his needs.
- John is able to manage some tasks independently.
- John appeared to be comfortable and at ease with the support staff and his flatmates.
- The advocacy worker noted John's non verbal cues and enthusiastic reactions when discussing activities he enjoys.
- John nodded positively when asked if he enjoys living at his flat.



**Refer to Handout 3**

# Facts



- John lives in a supported accommodation with 2 other people. He has a Learning disability and his family have Guardianship powers.
- His family feel that he is unhappy in his placement.
- Advocacy have interpreted that John is very happy within his accommodation

# Analysis of rights

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European Convention on Human Rights – Article 8  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons  
with Disabilities  
Scottish Health and Social Care Legislation





# Identify Responsibilities

- Guardian
- Support staff
- Social worker
- Advocacy



# Review actions

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- What was the final outcome for John?
- Is John happy?
- Does the situation for John need to be escalated? If so – where?



# Stories of Supported Decision Making



# The Advocacy Project

## Referral Form



**Name:** Betty

**Age:** 50

### **Address:**

24 Main Street  
Glasgow

### **Referring Issue:**

The referrer advised that Betty is looking for support to share her views during a social work review of her living arrangements.

### **Communication Support:**

Betty responds well to yes/no questions but referrer advised advocacy worker may need to clarify Betty's understanding.

### **Additional Information:**

Betty currently lives in the community with her foster carer. Due to a change in circumstances, it is likely Betty's living arrangements will need to change.

For office use only.  
Case reference number: 185632

### **Phone call to referrer**

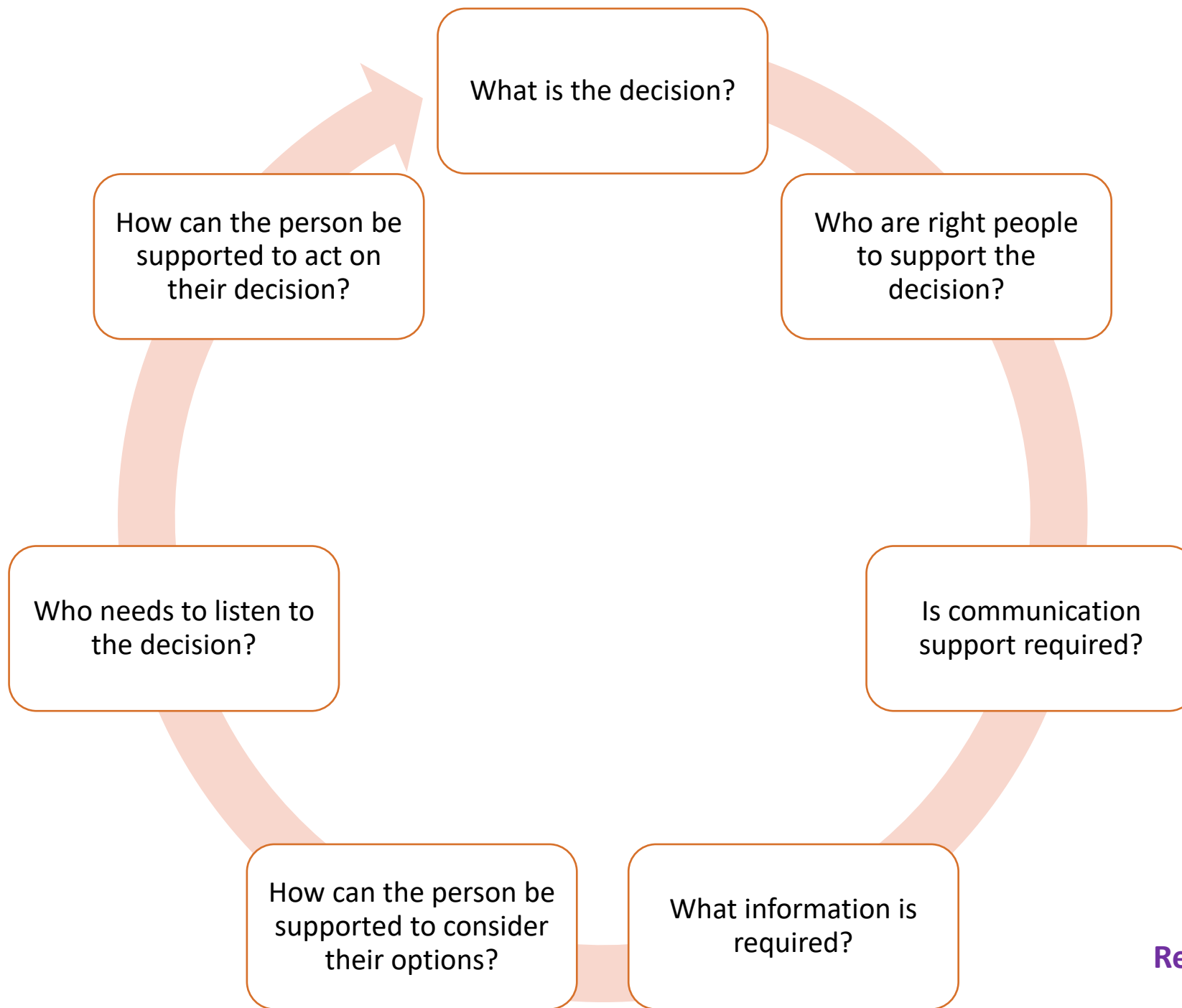
11/03/2025

Called the referrer. Referrer advised:

- Betty has been living with her foster carer for 26 years.
- Betty has a learning disability.
- Betty has a support worker who has a really good relationship with her.
- Betty attends a day centre twice a week. Betty goes to a cooking class on Tuesday mornings.
- Betty loves watching TV and her favourite TV is River City.



**Refer to Handout 4**



**Refer to Handout 2**

# The FAIR Approach



**Facts:** What is the experience of the individuals involved and what are the important facts to understand?



**Analyse rights:** Develop an analysis of the human rights at stake



**Identify responsibilities:** Identify what needs to be done and who is responsible for doing it



**Review actions:** Make recommendations for action and later recall and evaluate what has happened as a result

# Summary of Key Points

- Everyone has the right to be involved in decisions that affect them.
- Some people may need support unique to them to be able to participate in decision making.
- Supported Decision Making cannot be rushed.
- Scottish law does not specifically recognise Supported Decision Making but it's principles are intertwined throughout.



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