

**BLACK  
HERITAGE  
SUPPORT  
SERVICE**

# Self Advocacy

## Brixton Residents Edition



# SELF-ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR BRIXTON RESIDENTS.

## Acknowledging Intersectional Realities

Self-advocacy is especially challenging for people living with multiple layers of marginalisation. Being Black already means facing unequal treatment in healthcare, housing, benefits, policing, and mental health systems. When this intersects with being queer, disabled, neurodivergent, chronically ill, or low-income, the barriers multiply.

This toolkit recognises these realities. It is designed to support you in navigating systems that were not built with your needs in mind, while helping you build confidence, clarity, and power.

## 1. What Is Self-Advocacy?

*Self-advocacy means:*

- ✓ Speaking up for your needs and rights
- ✓ Asking for clear explanations
- ✓ Making informed decisions
- ✓ Bringing someone with you for support
- ✓ Knowing what help exists locally

Self-advocacy does not mean doing everything alone. It means using tools, confidence, and support to ensure your voice is heard.

## 2. Preparing to Advocate for Yourself

### Know Your Goals

*Before an appointment or meeting, write down:*

- ✓ What you need help with
- ✓ Your main questions
- ✓ Any symptoms, issues, or worries

**Example:**

“I want to understand my medication changes.”  
“I need support with my housing application.”

### Ask Clear Questions

*You have the right to ask for plain English. Try:*

- ✓ “Can you explain that in simpler words?”
- ✓ “What does this mean for me day-to-day?”
- ✓ “What are my options?”

### Bring Notes or a Support Person

*People often forget information under stress.*

*You can:*

- ✓ Bring someone to advocate with you
- ✓ Ask to record the conversation
- ✓ Write down key points

### 3. Knowing Your Rights

#### In Healthcare

**You can ask for:**

- ✓ Clear explanations
- ✓ Time to process information
- ✓ Reasonable adjustments (e.g., longer appointments)
- ✓ Written instructions

**If confused, say:**

"I'd like to understand this better — can we go over it again?"

#### In Benefits & Housing

**You have the right to:**

- ✓ Free independent advice
- ✓ Support completing forms
- ✓ Appeal decisions
- ✓ Get written explanations

**If unsure, ask:**

"Can you show me where to complete this part?"

### 6. Accompaniment & Advocacy Options

#### Local organisations can:

- ✓ Attend appointments with you
- ✓ Speak on your behalf
- ✓ Explain medical or legal jargon
- ✓ Support appeals
- ✓ Help prepare documents

#### Start with:

- ✓ Brixton Advice Centre
- ✓ Citizens Advice
- ✓ Local mental health services
- ✓ Community Support organisations (churches, charities)

### 5. Scripts You Can Use

#### At the GP or Hospital

- ✓ "I don't understand that term — can you explain it another way?"
- ✓ "Can you write down the key steps for me?"
- ✓ "What choices do I have?"

#### When Filling Forms

- ✓ "I need help completing this section — can someone assist me?"
- ✓ "Can you explain what this part means?"

**Take forms to Brixton Advice Centre if needed.**

#### If You Feel Unheard

- ✓ "I want to be part of this decision."
- ✓ "I'm finding this overwhelming — can we slow down?"

## 7. Long-Term Self-Advocacy Tips

### Keep a Simple Journal

**Note down:**

- ✓ Appointments
- ✓ What was said
- ✓ What you need to do next
- ❖ This becomes your evidence and memory support.

### Build a Small Support Network

**This can include:**

- ✓ Friend
- ✓ Neighbour
- ✓ Faith leader
- ✓ Community worker
- ✓ Support group member
- ❖ Even one person helps.

### Use "I Statements"

**Helps keep the focus on your needs:**

- ✓ "I feel confused when medical terms are used."
- ✓ "I understand my situation differently — here's why..."

## 8. Final Message

Being Black in Brixton — especially when combined with disability, chronic illness, queerness, poverty, or trauma — means navigating systems that are often not inclusive.

This toolkit exists to help you speak up, get support, and access the care you deserve. You are not alone, and your voice matters.

## Local Brixton & Lambeth Support Services

### Legal, Benefits & Housing Advice

**Brixton Advice Centre**

- ❖ Free help with benefits, debt, housing, and rights.
- ✓ 167 Railton Road
- ✓ 020 7733 7554
- ✓ Walk-in info & phone advice available
- ✓ [brixtonadvice.org.uk](http://brixtonadvice.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice Merton & Lambeth**

- ✓ Benefits, housing, employment & consumer support.
- ✓ [lambeth.gov.uk](http://lambeth.gov.uk)

### Mental Health & Wellbeing

**Black Psychotherapy (Brixton)**

- ✓ <https://www.blackpsychotherapy.org/>

**Mosaic Clubhouse (Brixton)**

- ✓ Community mental health support, groups, and activities.

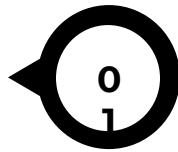
**Lambeth Talking Therapies (NHS)**

- ✓ Wellbeing support for anxiety & depression.

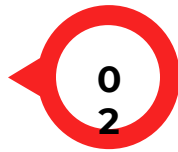
# Getting Support



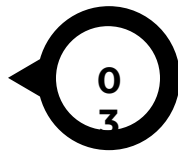
Sickle Cell Society  
[www.sicklecellsociety.org](http://www.sicklecellsociety.org):  
Information, advocacy, and support groups



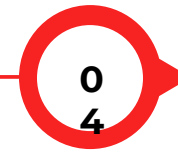
Contact – [www.contact.org.uk](http://www.contact.org.uk) For families with disabled children  
[HELPLINE 0808 808 3555](tel:08088083555)



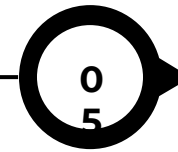
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): Available in every NHS hospital, please google the relevant hospital for their PALS advice line.



Citizens Advice  
[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk):  
Help with complaints and legal rights



Equality Advisory Support Service  
[www.equalityadvisoryservice.com](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com):  
Help with discrimination issues



Family Lives. For parenting and family life troubles  
**0808 800 2222**  
[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)



Advice Now – Free legal advice  
**0808 808 3555**  
[www.advicenow.org.uk](http://www.advicenow.org.uk)



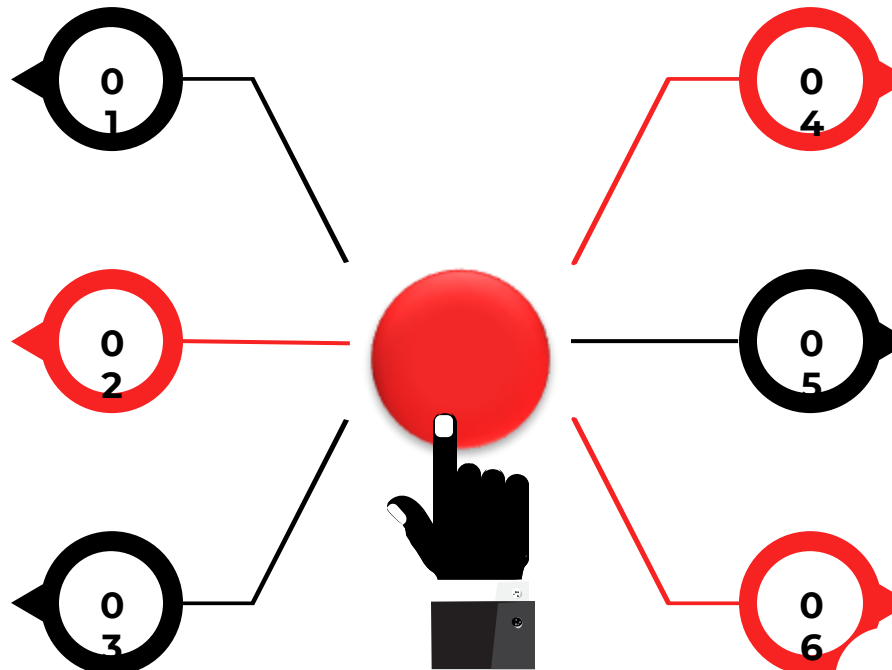
# Getting Support



**National LGBTQ+ support line**  
<https://switchboard.lgbt/>  
**0800 0119 100**

AGE UK – Advice for the elderly offers a free advice line on **0800 678 1602** (open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year).

The Black Heritage Support Service  
**0800 861 1463** Wed and Fri 10am-4pm  
[www.bhss.co.uk](http://www.bhss.co.uk)



**Carers UK**  
National helpline for carers  
Call 0800 808 7777  
<https://www.carersuk.org/>

**Google Tasks**  
Manage your tasks  
<https://zapier.com/blog/google-tasks-guide/>

**Mental Health Helpline**  
24/7  
<https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>  
Call - 116 123