

**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

Citizens Advice Merton & Lambeth

- ✓ Benefits, housing, employment & consumer support.
- ✓ 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.