

4-Tier Model of Advice

This model was originally developed by the Norfolk Advice & Advocacy Partnership (now the NCAN Strategic Partnership).

It describes different tiers or levels of information, advice, assistance and representation. Inevitably there are overlaps, but broadly the definitions are as follows:

Tier 1: Information

Where the agency provides leaflets or basic information about rights, entitlement and services. It also involves signposting callers to further sources of help or specialist advice.

Tier 2: Advice & Assistance

Providing specialist advice to address a problem as well as the practical support to meet that need. Examples include, help filling in benefit or tax credit forms; assistance with sorting out debt problems; advising on immigration rights. It also includes helping people apply for services, for example, as a carer, older person or the parent of a child with special needs.

Tier 3: Casework

Pursuing a case by challenging decisions when rights in social welfare law have been refused. It also includes taking up a case when a social care, health or educational service has been denied. In both cases it can involve gathering additional evidence, seeking a review of a decision (by telephone or letter), or lodging an appeal.

Tier 4: Representation

Challenging a decision through representation at a decision-making body such as an appeal tribunal, civil court or social care/education panel hearing. It involves preparing arguments to develop the case using relevant case law, guidance and statute and calling on expert evidence. The representative accompanies and speaks on behalf of the individual.