

## Covid-19 Vaccinations

### Statement from The Sunnybank Trust - December 2020

As a charity, we provide a wide range of services to the learning disability community. Throughout the pandemic, we have witnessed how people with learning disabilities have been disproportionately affected. Our Advocacy service has experienced a particularly high level of demand and our Citizen Advocates have worked hard to ensure that our members' voices are heard and wishes being listened to.

Our Advocates are entirely impartial and neutral in all decision making. Their role is to ensure that people with learning disabilities are able to express their thoughts and opinions, and to support them to do so.

*'The role of an advocate is to **offer independent support** to those who feel they are not being heard and to ensure they are taken seriously and that their rights are respected. It is also to assist people to access and understand appropriate information and services. An advocate will ensure a person has the tools to make an informed decision; **it is not about making the decision for the person.**'*  
(Age Concern UK)

In light of the recent introduction of a Covid-19 vaccination, we would like to reiterate that we remain neutral in all medical decisions that our members choose to make. Whilst we welcome the recent medical breakthrough, and the choice that it offers, Sunnybank Staff, Volunteers and Advocates cannot offer personal opinions or endorse any specific aspect of the testing and treatment of Covid-19.

We support our members through:

- **A person-centred approach:** Treating our members as an individual who has individual choices.
- **Choice:** respecting the individual's right to live the life they choose and that makes sense to them based on their capacity.
- **Clear information:** Supporting decision-making with clear and understandable information.
- **Reasonable adjustments:** Allowing the person the time and resource to understand the issues in order to make as informed a decision as possible.

Our role at Sunnybank is not to provide advice (personal or otherwise) on the decision-making process for the vaccine. All advice and vaccine support should be handled by a social worker, IMCA and/or next of kin. The role of our staff and volunteer advocates is to ensure that our members are given the benefit of due process as well as relevant information, sufficient time and support to understand the choices.