

Advocacy Support Policy

1. PURPOSE

Community Care TASMANIA recognises the importance of ensuring the client's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice is maintained. Both clients and potential clients have the right to select and involve an advocate, or a representative of their choice, to participate or act on their behalf at any time.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

3. DEFINITION

Advocacy: is the active support for a cause or position and, in this context, it is an expression of support for a person who may find it difficult to speak for themselves. It may include matters such as achieving social justice, improving a person's well-being, prevention of abusive and/or discriminatory treatment or stopping unjust and unfair treatment so that a person's fundamental needs and interests can be met.

Below is a list of types of advocacy:

1. *Individual Advocacy:* a one-on-one approach, aiming to prevent or address instances of discrimination or abuse.
2. *Systemic Advocacy:* working to influence or secure long-term changes to ensure the collective rights and interests of vulnerable people.
3. *Family Advocacy:* a parent or family member advocates with and on behalf of a family member.
4. *Citizen Advocacy:* matches vulnerable people with volunteers.
5. *Legal Advocacy:* upholds the rights and interests of individual people by addressing the legal aspects of discrimination, abuse and neglect.
6. *Self-Advocacy:* supports people to advocate for themselves, or as a group.

4. POLICY

All clients have the right to use an advocate of their choice to represent their interests and speak on their behalf regarding any aspect of the supports or services that they receive.

Staff will work cooperatively with the client's nominated advocate and will show the same respect to the advocate as is shown to the client. Where clients cannot advocate for themselves, it is Community Care TASMANIA's policy to ensure that the client's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

4.1 Advocacy Principles

- Community Care TASMANIA will ensure that all staff receive training in the use of advocates.
- Community Care TASMANIA will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- Community Care TASMANIA will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.
- Community Care TASMANIA will work cooperatively with any nominated advocate chosen by the client and show the same respect to the advocate, as is shown to the client.
- Community Care TASMANIA will utilise a governance system to enable Community Care TASMANIA to identify where a client needs advocacy.

5. PROCEDURE

5.1 Initial Assessment (Client without an Advocate)

- Discuss the client's right to appoint an advocate at any time and to have an advocate present to speak on their behalf.
- Provide the client with advocacy information.
- Explain to the client their rights regarding advocacy as per the Community Care TASMANIA's Service Agreement and Charter of Rights, and the relevant standards of practice.
- Advise the client that if they wish to use advocacy services, then Community Care TASMANIA can assist them in contacting any of these services.
- Provide the form; "Authority to Act as an Advocate" to the Client. In the event that they decide to use the services of an advocate. The completed and signed form is kept in the client's file.
- Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used; between the service and the advocate (such as email, phone or any other method).
- Inform the client that they can withdraw approval for an advocate to act on their behalf at any time.

5.2 Initial Assessment (Clients with Advocates/Representatives)

- Prior to Initial Assessment
 - At initial contact with the client ensure that the person is informed of their right to an advocate and record the advocate's details if the individual has an advocate.
 - Advise the client of the need to complete the Authority to Act as an Advocate form and provide this form to the Client.
 - Contact the advocate to ensure they are aware that they have been nominated as an advocate and agree to do so.
 - The completed Authority to Act as an Advocate form is kept in the client's file.
 - Ensure the potential client is aware of their advocacy rights, including the right to have an advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between the client and Community Care TASMANIA.
 - Schedule the client's initial assessment at a time and date that will enable the advocate to be present.
 - Ensure an identified Advocate is present at the assessment.
- At initial assessment
 - If not already received, request the completion of the Authority to Act as an Advocate form. Explain that this must be completed for Community Care TASMANIA to formally recognise the nominated person as the client's advocate.
 - Gather information about the advocate, such as contact details and methodology.
 - Explain that the client has the right to change their advocate at any time. Changes should be documented with written confirmation from the client using the Authority to Act as an Advocate form.

5.3 Working with Advocates

- Clearly identify the existence of an Advocate on the client's file.
- Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used; between the service and the advocate.
- Communicate with a client's advocate and involve them in the process of goal setting, planning service responses, and / or referrals for additional or alternative services.

- Provide the Advocate with ongoing information regarding the health and well-being of the client; as agreed.

5.4 Continuing work with Advocates

- Remind clients of their right to have (or change) an advocate by providing them written and verbal information during reviews, visits or meetings.
- Remind the clients of their right to have (or change) an advocate, during each annual review of services or via written communication.
- Communicate and work cooperatively with the advocate.
Refer clients who are assessed as "not able to manage their service" and who have no other advocate to the Department of Justice, Attorney General of Tasmania Department, Office of Public Guardian as appropriate.

Community Care TASMANIA will guide and assist clients by assisting them to access Advocacy Tasmania for additional support. Details include:

Website:	www.yoursaytas.org
Call:	1800 005 131 (9am – 4pm)
Text	0457 806 963
Email	contact@yoursaytas.org

Note: There is a web-link for people with disability to access advocacy services which require the input of a postcode. Community Care TASMANIA will guide and assist clients in this matter. <https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/>

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Authority to Act as an Advocate [P:\2019\Programs\NDIS\Forms for signing up new client\WELCOME PACK\Authority to Act as an Advocate Form.docx](#)

7. REFERENCES

- [Aged Care Act 1997 \(https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00023\)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2019C00023)
- Aged Care Quality of Care Principles 1997
(<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2019C00063>)
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
- Disability Inclusion Act and Regulation 2014

- Privacy Act (1988)

8. ADVOCACY INFORMATION

- ACSA (Aged and Community services Australia) <https://acsa.asn.au/>
- Advocacy Tasmania <https://advocacytasmania.org.au/>
- Australian Centre for Disability Law – disabilitylaw.org.au
- Autism Asperger’s Advocacy Australia (A4) - a4.org.au
- The Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand - www.asan-au.org
- Blind Citizens Australia - bca.org.au
- Brain Injury Australia - braininjuryaustralia.org.au
- Children with Disability Australia - cda.org.au
- COTA Tasmania (Council on the Ageing)
- Deaf Australia - deafau.org.au
- Deafness Forum of Australia - deafnessforum.org.au
- Dementia Australia Tasmania <https://www.dementia.org.au/>
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) - dana.org.au
- First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN) - fpdn.org.au
- Human Rights Council of Australia – hrca.org.au
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) - idrs.org.au
- Mental Health Australia Tasmania- mhaustralia.org
- National Council on Intellectual Disability (NCID) - ncid.org.au
- National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA) - neda.org.au
- Physical Disability Australia (PDA) - pda.org.au
- People with disabilities Australia pwd.org.au
- Short Statured People of Australia - sspa.org.au
- Speak Out <http://speakoutadvocacy.org/>
- Tasmanian Elder Abuse Helpline (Legal Aid Tasmania)
<https://www.legalaid.tas.gov.au>
- Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) - wwda.org.au

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