

GUIDELINES FOR ADVOCACY

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of standing alongside an individual who is disadvantaged, and speaking out on their behalf in a way that represents the best interests of that person. The aim of advocacy is to bring about beneficial outcomes in a way that enables each client to retain as much control as possible over how it is carried out. An advocate may provide information and advice in order to assist a person to take action to resolve their own concerns, or may take a more active role in representing the persons rights to another person or organisation.

Why would I need an Advocate?

People need advocates for all sorts of reasons. Many clients can successfully advocate on their own behalf, however there are some people who may experience difficulty speaking up for themselves.

In these instances, an advocate may:

- Assist the client to access services
- Assist the client to change services
- Ensure that the service chosen is appropriate
- Communicate with the service provider
- Negotiate suitable resolutions where a complaint or dispute has arisen.

Who can be an advocate?

Advocacy is the process of standing alongside an individual who is disadvantaged, and speaking out on their behalf in a way that represents the best interests of that person. If a client of our agency has asked you to be their advocate, this means they would like you to act on their behalf. You may be a family member or friend of the person, or a member of an advocacy service.

Clients and prospective advocates should be aware that interpreters cannot be used as advocates, as they have a distinct role to play in interpreting communication between two or more parties.

The role of an advocate explained:

Advocacy may involve speaking, acting or writing on behalf of an individual (or group) who has limited ability to exercise his/her rights. Advocacy is a mechanism to facilitate client rights, and you may be requested to support the client in exercising his/her rights. Examples of rights you could be asked to support include:

- The right to privacy and confidentiality;
- The right to respect and dignity;
- The right to quality services;
- The right to information to inform decision making;
- The right to choice and control;
- The right to make and resolve complaints;
- The right to non-discriminatory service; and
- The right to protection of legal and human rights, and freedom from abuse and neglect.

CLIENT ADVOCATE NOMINATION FORM

Your information is strictly confidential. If you require assistance with this form, we can assist you with this and are also able to provide you with interpreting/translation assistance if required.

I wish to nominate an advocate/support person from the following:

- Advocate:** An advocate is a person who, with explicit authority, represents another person's interests.
- Informal Advocate:** A friend or family member who is nominated by a client as their personal advocate. This is more like a support person.
- Systems Advocate:** An organisation or professional advocate who can act for a disadvantaged individual or group of individuals in an institutional setting.
- Legal Advocate:** A nominated advocate whose role has legal status, for example holding and Enduring Power of Attorney.

CLIENT AUTHORISATION OF SUPPORT/ADVOCATE

I, _____ nominate _____

to act as my advocate/support person, effective from _____ (insert date).

His/Her Contact Details

Organisation: _____ Address: _____

Mobile: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Client Signature: _____ Date: _____

Advocate/Support Person: _____ Date: _____