

ADVOCACY SUPPORT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Full Care Lifetime recognises the importance of ensuring the participant's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice is maintained. Both participants and potential participants 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.

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

POLICY

All participants 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 participant's nominated advocate and will show the same respect to the advocate as is shown to the participant. Where participants cannot advocate for themselves, it is Full Care Lifetime's policy to ensure that the participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

Advocacy Principles

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

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 him or herself. 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 advocacies:

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

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PROCEDURE

Initial Assessment (Participant without an Advocate)

- Discuss the participant's right to appoint an advocate at any time and to have an advocate present to speak on their behalf.
- Provide the participant with advocacy information.
- Explain to the participant their rights regarding advocacy as per the Full Care Lifetime's Service Agreement and Charter of Rights, and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018.
- Advise the Participant that if they wish to utilise advocacy services, then Full Care Lifetime can assist them in contacting any of these services.
- Provide the form; "Authority to Act as an Advocate" to the Participant. In the event that they decide to utilise the services of an advocate. The completed and signed form is kept in the participant'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 participant that they can withdraw approval for an advocate to act on their behalf at any time.

Initial Assessment (Participants with Advocates/Representatives)

- Prior to Initial Assessment
 - At initial contact with the participant 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 Participant of the need to complete the Authority to Act as an Advocate form and provide this form to the Participant.
 - 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 participant's file.
 - Ensure the potential participant is aware of their advocacy rights, including the right to have an advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between the Participant and Full Care Lifetime.
 - Schedule the Participant'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 Full Care Lifetime to formally recognise the nominated person as the Participant's advocate.
 - Gather information about the advocate, such as contact details and methodology.
 - Explain that the Participant has the right to change their advocate at any time. Changes should be documented with written confirmation from the Participant using the Authority to Act as an Advocate form.

Working with Advocates

- Clearly identify the existence of an Advocate on the Participant's file.
- Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used, between the service and the advocate.
- Communicate with a Participant'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 Participant as agreed.
- Ensure all On-Call staff is aware of the Participant's Advocate.

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Continuing work with Advocates

- Remind Participants of their right to have (or change) an advocate by providing them written and verbal information during reassessments, visits or meetings.
- Remind the participants 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 Participants who are assessed as "not able to manage their service" and who have no other advocate to the Department of Justice and Community Safety and Attorney General, Office of the Public Advocate as appropriate

Note: there is a web-link to access advocacy services which require the input of a postcode. Full Care Lifetime will guide and assist participants in this matter.

<https://disabilityadvocacyfinder.dss.gov.au/disability/ndap/>

Advocacy Information

- 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
- Deaf Australia - deafau.org.au
- Deafness Forum of Australia - deafnessforum.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 - 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
- Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) - wwda.org.au