



CASS Group- Disability Services

ADVOCACY

Policy Code: 1107	ADVOCACY
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1. Policy Statement

CASS Disability Services (DS) is committed to the principles of respecting and protecting the legal and human rights of individuals and their right to services.

To this end CASS Disability Services supports the right of participants to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be in relation to assessment, reviews, complaints or any other communication between the participant and this organisation. The organisation will work co-operatively with any advocate nominated by a participant and treat them with respect.

CASS DS is also committed to providing participants with advocacy and support when it is requested.

2. Procedures

Supporting advocacy

The Unit Head will be responsible for ensuring:

- all staff receive training in the use of advocates
- ensure services/programs maintain printed material on relevant advocacy and advocacy services
- maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists

Providing participants with information

Coordinators will ensure participants and potential advocates are informed via appropriate formats (including verbally and in writing) about their right to use an advocate and the role of an advocate when the participant is:

- Assessed and re-assessed for services
- Oriented to the service or program
- Refused service

Or if:

- They want to make a complaint about the service
- A staff member believes an advocate may be beneficial to the participant

Coordinator is required to ensure that participants are aware of their rights to use an advocate in relation to the service, including having their advocate present for all assessments,



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meetings and communication between themselves and the organisation.

If the participant is unsure whether they may want to nominate a person as an advocate, they are to be provided with information (in an appropriate format) on various specialist advocacy organisations that may be able to assist them. If they would like to contact any of these organisations the Coordinator will be able to assist them to make contact.

It is the responsibility of Coordinator at the time of first contact with the participant to discuss any communication issues or requirements.

If a participant has an advocate it is Coordinator responsibility to discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the participant's advocate. The name and contact details of the advocate are to be included in the participant's personal profile.

Staff will not disclose any information about the participant to an advocate, when the participant is not present, unless the participant has provided their permission to do so.

Working with advocates (when a participant has nominated an advocate)

Where a participant has identified or nominated an advocate the Coordinator must:

- Record the advocates details in the participant's personal profile
- Ensure the participant is aware of their advocacy rights including the right to have an advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between themselves and the organisation
- Ensure the advocate knows they have been nominated as an advocate and agrees to this
- Ensure any identified advocate is present at assessments and meetings
- Communicate and work co-operatively with the advocate
- Communicate comprehensively with a participant's advocate and involve them in the care and service planning
- Ensure that the participant knows they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Any changes should be documented.

If an authorised representative is acting on behalf of a participant, the organisation will require proof of representative authority.

Authorised representatives include:

- Guardians
- Attorneys under enduring powers of attorney
- Agents under the Medical Treatment Act 1988
- Administrators under the Guardianship and Administration Act 1986
- A person otherwise empowered by the consumers to act or make decisions in their best interests.



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Proof of representative authority will be sighted and a copy of that document placed in the participants file. Proof of authority includes Guardianship or Administration order or Enduring/ Medical Power of Attorney.

3. Providing advocacy and support

Where a participant does not have an identified or nominated advocate and they request assistance from the organisation the request will be considered by the responsible coordinator. The type of individual advocacy and support that can be provided will be dependent on the organisation's capability and resources.

4. Advocacy Services:

Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association

PO Box 884 Granville NSW 2142

Tel: (02) 9891 6400

Freecall: 1800 629 072

Family Advocacy

Freecall: 1800 620 588

Intellectual Disability Rights Service

Phone: 9318 0144

Documents related to this policy	
Related Policies	Complaints and Feedback
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	• Service Agreement • Participant's Handbook

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
3 years	Unit Head	HAS & DS Committee

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review due
Version 1	1 June 2014	HAS & DS Committee	31 May 2017
Version 2	29 May 2017	HAS & DS Committee	28 May 2020



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Version 3	November 2020	HAS & DS Committee	November 2023
Version 4	November 2023	HAS & DS Committee	November 2026
Version 5	September 2025	HAS & DS Committee	September 2028