

A.4.1 ADVOCACY

1.0 Objectives

- 1.1 People with disability should be aware that they have a right to ask for someone to advocate on their behalf. This person could be a relative, friend or a trusted person
- 1.2 ELS respects the right of people with disability to be supported by their family and/or advocate when making decisions.

2.0 Definition of Advocacy

2.1 Advocacy is:

- (1) Empowering and helping people to help themselves
- (2) Supporting efforts towards independence
- (3) Providing necessary resources for appropriate decisions and appropriate action
- (4) Informing people of their rights and responsibilities
- (5) Helping people achieve their rights
- (6) Bringing individuals and groups together for mutual support and action
- (7) Advocating and/or interceding on behalf of people only when self-help is inappropriate
- (8) A partnership with mutual sharing of information, tasks and action

2.2 An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the person with disability, represents the person's interests.

3.0 Types of Advocates

- 3.1 Citizen Advocacy concerns a member of the community who undertakes to form a relationship with a person with a disability and represent their interests as if they were the Advocate's own interests.
- 3.2 Self Advocacy is about empowerment of people with disability. That is, gaining the skills and support to advocate for themselves.
- 3.3 Corporate Advocacy speaks up in the interests of entire categories or groups of people.
- 3.4 Legal Advocacy provides access to legal services with additional assistance from a specialist legal service.
- 3.5 Crisis Advocacy is used when there is a major issue. The Crisis Advocate can usually give expert advice on the issue.
- 3.6 Class Advocacy allows one person to play an advocacy role for an entire category of people. This could be a lawyer, judge, politician or any spokesperson acting as an advocate in a very public manner to get changes in conditions of legislation or services.
- 3.7 Group Advocacy refers mainly to an informal group of people who may appoint themselves to act as a watchdog over a specific group.
- 3.8 Organisational Advocacy refers to staff who act as Advocates at work.

4.0 Rights of People with Disability

- 4.1 The person with disability may use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend, guardian or advocacy service.

- 4.2 People with disability wishing to use an advocate will submit a completed [Authority to Act as an Advocate](#) form to the ELS Chairperson. The person with disability has the right to change his/her advocate at any time and will inform the Chairperson in writing of any change.
- 4.3 Support Staff should make sure people with disability are aware of their right to use an advocate and should regularly remind people with disability of this option.
- 4.4 People with disability will have unrestricted access to their Advocate.
- 4.5 People with disability may change their Advocate at any time. The person with disability will inform the ELS Chairperson in writing of any change.

5.0 Advocate's Role

- 5.1 Advocates may support or represent the person with disability at:
 - (1) NDIS and Other Meetings
 - (2) Self Assessments
 - (3) Planning Meetings
 - (4) Policy Development and Review
 - (5) When making decisions
 - (6) Problem Solving
 - (7) During consultations
 - (8) With communication
 - (9) With Committee Membership
 - (10) As requested by the person with disability

6.0 Staff Working with Advocates

- 6.1 Where relevant, support staff will receive training in understanding advocacy and working with Advocates.
- 6.2 Staff will work positively with Advocates by:
 - (1) Building mutual trust
 - (2) Encouraging two-way information exchange
 - (3) Facilitating ongoing communication
 - (4) Evaluating the actions, results and methods

7.0 Related Policies

- Advocacy
- Authority to act as an advocate
- Choice and control
- Decision making and choice and control
- Formal decision making and choice
- External advocacy services list
- Participation and inclusion
- Skills development and Training
- Travel for people with a disability

8.0 Forms and Checklists

- Authority to Act as an Advocate

- External Advocacy Services