

4. Advocacy Support Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

Skymac recognises and maintains the importance of ensuring the participant's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice. Both participants and potential participants have the right to select and involve an advocate or representative of their choice, to participate or act on their behalf at any time.

Scope

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

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 wellbeing, prevention of abusive and discriminatory treatment or stopping unjust and unfair treatment so that a person's fundamental needs and interests are met.

Below is a list of six 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 people with disabilities.
3. **Family advocacy** - A parent or family member advocates with, and on behalf of, a family member with a disability.
4. **Citizen advocacy** - Matches people with disabilities to volunteers.
5. **Legal advocacy** - Upholds the rights and interests of individual people with disabilities by addressing the legal aspects of discrimination, abuse, and neglect.
6. **Self-advocacy** - Supports people with disabilities to advocate for themselves, or as a group.

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 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. When a participant can't advocate for themselves, it's Skymac's policy to ensure that the participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

Advocacy principles

- Skymac will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- Skymac will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.
- Skymac 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.
- Skymac will utilise a governance system to enable Skymac to identify where a participant needs advocacy.

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 Skymac's Service Agreement and Charter of Rights and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020.
- Advise the participant that if they wish to utilise advocacy services, Skymac can assist them in contacting any of these services.
- Provide the Authority to Act as an Advocate Form to the participant if they decide to utilise the services of an advocate. The completed and signed form is stored 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 (participant with advocate/representative)

Before initial assessment

- During initial contact with the participant, ensure that they're informed of their right to an advocate and record the advocate's details if they have one.

- Advise the participant of the need to complete the Authority to Act as an Advocate Form and provide the appropriate form to the participant.
- Contact the nominated advocate to ensure they're aware that they are nominated and to confirm that they agree to be an advocate.
- Place the completed Authority to Act as an Advocate Form 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 themselves and Skymac.
- Schedule the participant's initial assessment at a time and date that will allow the advocate to be present.
- Ensure an identified advocate is present at the assessment.

At initial assessment

- Request the completion of the Authority to Act as an Advocate Form if it has not already been completed, for Skymac to formally recognise the nominated person as their advocate.
- Gather information about the advocate, such as contact details and best practices
- Explain to the participant that they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Changes should be documented in writing by the participant using the Authority to Act as an Advocate Form.

Working with advocates

- 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 referrals for additional or alternative services.
- Provide the advocate with ongoing information regarding the health and well-being of the participant as agreed.
- Ensure that all on-call staff are aware of the participant's advocate.

Continuing work with advocates

- Provide participants with written and verbal information that reminds them of their right to have (or change) an advocate during reassessments, visits, or meetings.
- Remind participants of their right to have (or change) an advocate during each annual review of services or via written communication.

- Communicate effectively and work cooperatively with advocates.
- Refer participants assessed as 'not able to manage their service' (and who have no other advocate) to the [Department of Justice and Attorney General, Office of the Public Advocate, as appropriate.](#)

Note: A web-link accessing disability advocacy services is available. As a postcode, town or suburb is required to be entered to access services, Skymac will guide and assist participants. To access go to [Disability Advocacy Finder.](#)

Related documents

- Authority to Act as an Advocate Form
- Resident Handbook

References

- [Disability Services Act 2006 \(QLD\)](#)
- [NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2020 – Version 3](#)
- [Privacy Act \(1988\)](#)

Advocacy Information

An advocate is a person who will listen to you and help you to make decisions about what should happen in your life and help you to make those decisions work by speaking on your behalf. An advocate makes sure that people who provide support to you, respect your rights, and will speak out for you if your needs are not being met.

You can ask anyone you know well and trust to be your advocate.

- A member of your family or a friend you can trust.
- A person from a formal advocacy service.

A list of advocacy providers can be found on the Queensland Government's website [here](#), with some outlined in the table below.

Queensland advocacy providers

Advocacy Providers	Phone
Brisbane Speaking Up for You Unit F2, 1st Floor 12 Browning Street WEST END QLD 4101	(07) 3255 1244
Gold Coast Gold Coast Disability Advocacy Inc. 6/18 Ferry Street NERANG QLD 4211	(07) 5564 0355
South West Queensland Ipswich Regional Advocacy Services Inc. 40 South Street IPSWICH QLD 4305 TASC National Ltd Unit 3, 265 Brisbane Street IPSWICH QLD 4305	(07) 3281 5409 (07) 4616 9700
Central Queensland Capricorn Citizen Advocacy Inc. 3/118 George Street ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700	(07) 4922 0299
North Queensland Independent Advocacy in the Tropics Inc. Office 2/179-181 Ross River Road MUNDINGBURRA QLD 4812 Mackay Advocacy Inc. 22 Nelson Street MACKAY QLD 4740	(07) 4725 2505 (07) 4957 8710
Specialist Services	Phone
People from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Disability Network of Queensland 121 Copperfield Street GEEBUNG QLD 4034	1800 718 969
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds Amparo Advocacy Inc. 53 Prospect Road GAYTHORNE QLD 4051	(07) 3345 4900
Queensland Community Support Scheme and support with decision-making Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia Ltd 121 Copperfield Street GEEBUNG QLD 4034	(07) 3637 6000

People with spinal injuries Spinal Life Australia Ltd 109 Logan Road WOOLLOONGABBA QLD 4102	1300 774 625
People with brain injuries Synapse Australia Ltd Level 1/262 Montague Road WEST END QLD 4101	1800 673 074
People with Down Syndrome Down Syndrome Association of Qld Inc. 282 Stafford Road STAFFORD QLD 4053	1300 881 935