



Policy Framework For The Funded Advocacy Program as endorsed by the Disability Services Commission Board May 1999

DEFINITION

To safeguard and advance the rights, interests and well-being of people with disabilities.

TARGET GROUP

This policy framework applies to people with disabilities who are eligible for Commission funded and provided services at levels 2 and 3. Level 2 eligibility is based on assessed need and includes people with a disability that is manifest before the age of 60 years. Level 3 eligibility is based on an assessment of need for people with an intellectual disability or autism.

PURPOSE

The Commission recognises that advocacy is undertaken by families and carers and by disability services in both the non-government and government sector.

However, there is a need for a formalised advocacy response that:

- is independent from the provision of either funded or provided disability services; and
- that provides people with disabilities with choice in meeting their advocacy needs.

Therefore, the Funded Advocacy Program will consist of non-government organisations that provide advocacy and are not involved in the provision of other disability services.

INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY SERVICE GUIDELINES

OUTCOMES

- People with disabilities are included, participate in and are accepted in all aspects of community life.
- People with disabilities have access to services/supports that meet their needs and choices.
- People with disabilities are supported to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- People with disabilities are not treated in a manner that is harmful, discriminatory or negligent.
- People with disabilities are treated justly and fairly.

OUTPUTS

Individual Advocacy Services focus on empowering and supporting people with disabilities to address their needs and/or choices in order to bring about positive changes in the quality of their everyday life. Individual advocacy can include:

- assistance to people with disabilities to enable them to act for themselves;
- support for families, carers and members of the community to act with or for people with disabilities; and
- acting with and for people with disabilities.

SERVICE GUIDELINES

Individual Advocacy Services:

- involve people with disabilities as actively as possible in the advocacy support that is provided;
- offer a high standard of service delivery by appropriately trained professional or voluntary staff, who are supported, resourceful and accountable;
- ensure that the advocate's primary loyalty is to the person for whom they are advocating;
- recognise the value of family and carers and include them where appropriate;
- are accessible to people with disabilities of all cultures, beliefs and linguistic backgrounds;
- always work towards optimum individual independence and empowerment of people with disabilities;
- strive to be independent, autonomous and minimise conflicts of interest;
- will involve people with disabilities at all levels of corporate governance and service development where possible;
- are provided in flexible, accessible settings; and
- provide services for which there is no charge.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY SERVICE GUIDELINES

OUTCOMES

People with disabilities:

- are included, participate and are accepted in all aspects of community life;
- have access to services/supports that meet their needs and choices;
- are supported to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives;
- are not treated in a manner that is harmful, discriminatory or negligent; and
- are treated justly and fairly.

OUTPUTS

Systemic Advocacy Services focus on influencing or producing changes in society in order to positively affect the quality of life of people with disabilities.

Systemic advocacy acts to affect changes in the following:

- government legislation;
- government and non-government policies, practices and services;
- private sector policies, practices and services; and
- attitudes and understanding of the general community.

SERVICE GUIDELINES

Systemic Advocacy Services speak with, and on behalf of, people with disabilities and are reliant on strong linkages with:

- people with disabilities, their families and carers;
- individual advocacy and other systemic advocacy organisations; and
- disability organisations.

Systemic advocacy services:

- identify the issues that are of greatest concern or priority to people with disabilities;
- offer a high standard of service delivery by appropriately trained professional or voluntary staff, who are supported, resourceful and accountable;
- ensure that the focus of systemic advocacy is people with disabilities;
- recognise the value of family and carers and include them when appropriate;
- are accessible to people with disabilities of all cultures, beliefs and linguistic backgrounds;

- strive to be independent, autonomous and minimise conflicts of interest;
- will involve people with disabilities at all levels of corporate governance and service development where possible; and
- are provided in flexible, accessible settings.

Date: 10 September 2002
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