

# Providing customer advocacy and support policy



<b>Purpose and Scope</b>	
<p>Access4u is committed to the principles of respecting and protecting the legal and human rights of individuals and their right to services.</p> <p>To this end Access4u supports the right of customers 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 customer and this organisation. The organisation will work co-operatively with any advocate nominated by a customer and treat them with respect.</p> <p>Access4u is also committed to providing customers with advocacy and support when it is requested.</p>	

<b>Responsibilities and delegations</b>	
This policy applies to	Governing Body. Staff and Volunteers
Specific responsibilities	<p><b>The Board</b> – Responsible for ensuring effective governance mechanisms are in place.</p> <p><b>The CEO and Managers</b> – Responsible for monitoring and ensuring adherence to Policy and related procedures.</p> <p>Ensure due diligence and take reasonable steps to ensure Access4u are meeting their obligations.</p> <p>Ensure objectives of the policy are achieved.</p> <p><b>Staff</b> – Responsible for adherence to this and related policies, procedures and forms that support this policy.</p>
Policy approval	CEO

<b>Policy context</b> – this policy relates to:	
Standards	National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework
Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018</li> <li>• National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013</li> <li>• Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992</li> <li>• The Disability Services Act SA 1993</li> <li>• The Disability Act 2006</li> <li>• Guardianship and Administration Act 1993 (SA)</li> </ul>
Contractual obligations	NDIS Code of Conduct
Organisation policies and procedures	<a href="#">A4u Policy Customer Rights and Service Charter</a> <a href="#">A4u Policy Human Rights</a>
Forms, record keeping, other documents	<p>Service Promotion and Information Strategy</p> <p>Onboarding Checklist</p> <p>Participant Risk Assessment Documentation</p>

Definitions for the purpose of this policy the following definitions apply:

Word	Definition
<i>Advocacy</i>	<p>A process that supports a client’s voice, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting and protecting legal and human rights;</li> <li>• Empowering disadvantaged individuals and groups;</li> <li>• Increasing an individual or group’s control over goods and services;</li> <li>• Being responsive to, and emphasising, an individual or group’s needs and wishes;</li> <li>• Challenging stereotypes and stigma;</li> <li>• Overcoming barriers that restrict opportunities;</li> <li>• Supporting an appropriate societal and service delivery response to individuals or groups; and</li> <li>• Supporting a better quality of life for a person or group.</li> </ul>
<i>Advocate or support person</i>	<p>A person nominated by the client to promote the rights of the client and communicate his or her views and preferences. An advocate may attend meetings with the client and help him or her raise issues or complaints with a service provider. The advocate or support person takes direction from the clients and does not override their choices or decisions.</p>

## Procedures

### Supporting advocacy

Managers and Coordinators will be responsible for:

- Ensuring training in the use of advocates
- ensuring services/programs maintain printed material on relevant advocacy and advocacy services
- maintaining local advocacy resource/contact lists

Access4u understands that the right of customers to formal and informal advocacy, including carers and other support persons, is linked to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Access4u promotes and embraces this human rights philosophy.

Access4u supports:

- The customer’s right to use an advocate of their choice; and
- Interactions with any advocate or support person nominated by a customer.

### Providing customers with information

Managers and Coordinators will ensure customers 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 customer is:

- Assessed and re-assessed for services

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- 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 customer

Managers and Coordinators are required to ensure that customers are aware of their rights to use an advocate in relation to the service, including having their advocate present for all assessments, meetings and communication between themselves and the organisation.

If the customer 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 Senior Manager / Manager / Support Coordinator will be able to assist them to make contact. It is their responsibility at the time of first contact with the customer to discuss any communication issues or requirements.

If a customer has an advocate it is the Senior Manager / Manager / Support Coordinator's responsibility to discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the customer's advocate. The name and contact details of the advocate are to be included in the customer's personal record. Staff will not disclose any information about the customer to an advocate, when the customer is not present, unless the customer has provided their permission to do so.

Access4u ascertains the areas or life domains in which the customer wishes the advocate/support person to be involved and respects the customer's wishes. Access4u also respects the customer's right to change their advocate, or change their mind about having an advocate involved in the service received from Access4u.

## Working with advocates (when a customer has nominated an advocate)

Where a customer has identified or nominated an advocate the person onboarding the customer must:

- Record the advocate's details in the customer's personal record
- Ensure the customer 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 customer's advocate and involve them in the care and service planning
- Ensure that the customer knows they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Any changes should be documented with written confirmation from the customer.

If an authorised representative is acting on behalf of a customer, the organisation will require proof of representative authority. Authorised representatives include:

- Guardians

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- 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.

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

### Providing advocacy and support

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