

## 1.4 Advocacy Support Policy and Procedure

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Drafted by:	BV, ML, TV	Endorsed by Board on:	11/5/2020
Responsible person:	EO	Scheduled review date:	May 2021
Associated documentation:	Authority to Act as an Advocate Form		

### PURPOSE

Interchange IE recognises the importance of ensuring the participant's right to use an advocate or representative of their choice is upheld. Both participants and potential participants have the right to select and involve an advocate, or a 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 him or herself. 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 it is possible that a person's fundamental needs, human rights 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.

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### 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 cannot advocate for themselves, it is Interchange IE's policy to ensure that the participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

### ADVOCACY PRINCIPLES

- Interchange IE will ensure that all relevant staff receive training in the use of advocates.
- Interchange IE will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- Interchange IE will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.
- Interchange IE 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.
- Interchange IE will develop expertise in identifying when a participant needs advocacy, especially in relation to a threat to their basic human rights.
- Interchange IE will support any mechanism that will promote meaningful advocacy for vulnerable non represented participants. (For example, through Interchange IE's safeguarding panel)

### 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 Interchange IE Service Agreement and Charter of Rights and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018.
- Advise the participant that if they wish to utilise advocacy services Interchange IE can assist them in contacting any of these services if they are in receipt of Interchange IE auspiced Support Coordination. Other participants who wish to utilise advocacy services will be provided with a list of contacts for advocacy support.

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- 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***

- Ensure during initial contact with the participant that they are 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 that they are aware they are nominated and to confirm 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 Interchange IE.
- Schedule the participant's initial assessment at a time and date that will allow the advocate to be present.
- Ensure that 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 Interchange IE to formally recognise the nominated person as the participant's advocate.
- Gather information about the advocate, such as contact details and methodology.
- 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 and details 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. This includes people who are not authorised to act as an 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.

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- 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 and any restrictions regarding the contact of non-authorised contacts.

### 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 at any time, including each annual review of services or via written communication.
- Communicate and work cooperatively with advocates.
- Refer participants assessed as 'not able to manage their service' (and who have no other advocate) to the Victorian Government 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, Interchange IE will guide and assist participants. To access go to [disabilityadvocacyfinder](#)

## RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICIES

Authority to Act as an Advocate Form

## REFERENCES

- Disability Act 2006 (VIC)
- Disability Inclusion Act and Regulation 2014
- Disability (NDIS Transition) Amendment Act 2019
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- National Disability Strategy 2010-2020
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
- Privacy Act (1988)
- Victorian Charter of Human Rights (2006)

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### ADVOCACY INFORMATION

Organisations	Websites
Australian Centre for Disability Law	<a href="http://disabilitylaw.org.au">disabilitylaw.org.au</a>
Autism Asperger's Advocacy Australia (A4)	<a href="http://a4.org.au">a4.org.au</a>
The Autistic Self Advocacy Network of Australia and New Zealand	<a href="http://asan-au.org">asan-au.org</a>
Blind Citizens Australia	<a href="http://bca.org.au">bca.org.au</a>
Brain Injury Australia	<a href="http://braininjuryaustralia.org.au">braininjuryaustralia.org.au</a>
Children and Young People with Disability Australia	<a href="http://cyda.org.au">cyda.org.au</a>
Deaf Australia	<a href="http://deafaustralia.org.au">deafaustralia.org.au</a>
Deafness Forum of Australia	<a href="http://deafnessforum.org.au">deafnessforum.org.au</a>
Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA)	<a href="http://da.org.au">da.org.au</a>
First Peoples Disability Network (FPDN)	<a href="http://fpdn.org.au">fpdn.org.au</a>
Human Rights Council of Australia	<a href="http://hrca.org.au">hrca.org.au</a>
Inclusion Australia (National Council on Intellectual Disability - NCID)	<a href="http://inclusionaustralia.org.au">inclusionaustralia.org.au</a>
Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS)	<a href="http://idrs.org.au">idrs.org.au</a>
Mental Health Australia	<a href="http://mhaustralia.org">mhaustralia.org</a>
National Disability Services	<a href="http://nds.org.au">nds.org.au</a>
National Ethnic Disability Alliance (NEDA)	<a href="http://neda.org.au">neda.org.au</a>
People With Disability Australia	<a href="http://pwd.org.au">pwd.org.au</a>
Physical Disability Australia (PDA)	<a href="http://pda.org.au">pda.org.au</a>
Short Statured People of Australia	<a href="http://sspa.org.au">sspa.org.au</a>
Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA)	<a href="http://wwda.org.au">wwda.org.au</a>

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### VICTORIAN ADVOCACY PROVIDERS

Advocacy Providers	Website
Action on Disability in Ethnic Communities (ADEC)	<a href="http://adec.org.au">adec.org.au</a>
Action for More Independence & Dignity in Accommodation (AMIDA)	<a href="http://amida.org.au">amida.org.au</a>
Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)	<a href="http://acd.org.au">acd.org.au</a>
Blind Citizens Australia	<a href="http://bca.org.au">bca.org.au</a>
Communication Rights Australia (CAUS)	<a href="http://caus.com.au">caus.com.au</a>
Deaf Victoria	<a href="http://deafvictoria.org.au">deafvictoria.org.au</a>
Disability Justice Advocacy (DJA)	<a href="http://justadvocacy.com">justadvocacy.com</a>
Disability Discrimination Legal Service (DDLS)	<a href="http://communitylaw.org.au">communitylaw.org.au</a>
Disability Resources Centre (DRC)	<a href="http://drc.org.au">drc.org.au</a>
Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)	<a href="http://imha.vic.gov.au">imha.vic.gov.au</a>
Office of the Public Advocate	<a href="http://publicadvocate.vic.gov.au">publicadvocate.vic.gov.au</a>
STAR Victoria	<a href="http://starvictoria.org.au">starvictoria.org.au</a>
Valid	<a href="http://valid.org.au">valid.org.au</a>
Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council - VMIAC	<a href="http://vmiac.org.au">vmiac.org.au</a>
Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV)	<a href="http://www.wdv.org.au">www.wdv.org.au</a>
Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)	<a href="http://ydas.org.au">ydas.org.au</a>