ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FACT SHEET

REF No. SP-DOC-003

What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who will listen to you and help you make decisions about the support and services you receive.

An advocate will speak on your behalf when choices are being discussed and make sure that organisations providing you support understand your needs and respect your rights. An advocate will speak out for you if you have concerns or your needs are not being met.

You can ask anyone that you know well and trust to be your advocate, this may include a member of your family or a friend. You may want someone independent, a professional from a formal advocacy service.

The Australian Government, and some state and territory governments, fund independent advocacy to help people with disability who face complex challenges or are unable to advocate for themselves, and do not have family, friends or peers who can support them as informal advocates, to access advocacy support.

An independent advocate, in relation to a person with disability, means a person who:

(a) is independent of the organisations providing supports or services to the person with disability; and

(b) provides independent advocacy for the person with disability, to assist the person with disability to exercise choice and control and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them; and

(c) acts at the direction of the person with disability, reflecting the person with disability's expressed wishes, will, preferences and rights; and

(d) is free of relevant conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest can happen in many situations, for example, a support worker helping a person with disability to resolve a complaint about the disability service that they work for.

How do we work with advocates?

With your permission,

- We will provide your advocate with all the information they need to ensure that we are acting in your best interest.
- Work closely with your advocate and involve that person in the planning of services that will be provided for you.
- Ensure team members understand the role of an advocate and promote the use of advocates as a support person for people who receive services from us.

- Invite your advocate to:
    - consultation meetings
    - Person-centred planning meetings
    - Reviews
    - Other relevant meetings or conferences

How do I find an Advocate?

These organisations can provide assistance to find an independent advocate.

We can help you to contact these organisations. Ask a staff member for assistance.

Disability Gateway
Phone: 1800 643 787
Website: https://www.disabilitygateway.gov.au/legal/advocacy

AskIzzy Disability Supports Directory

Website: Disability Advocacy Finder

Synapse – Australia's Brain Injury Organisation

Phone: 1800 673 074

Website: http://www.synapse.org.au/

Family Advocacy

Phone: 1800 620 588

Website: http://www.family-advocacy.com/

This Fact Sheet is a summary of Fairhaven's Providing Advocacy and Support Policy and Procedures. If you would like a full copy of the policy please contact the People and Culture Manager Phone: (02) 4349 5500 Email: AskHR@fairhaven.org.au