

## Advocacy

### What is advocacy?

Advocacy is when another person is on your side to help you solve a problem. An advocate can speak on your behalf to protect and promote your rights and interests. Advocacy might help you when you feel you can't speak out on your own about something, or you want some support along the way.

An advocate is independent of all other people who might already be working with you, such as your family members, physiotherapist, attendant care worker or Case Manager.

### What does an advocate do?

An advocate can help you sort out a problem, or do other things such as:

- Help write letters
- Help make phone calls
- Go to meetings with you or on your behalf

Usually an advocate will work with you only short term, for a particular issue or problem, and will stop when the issue is resolved. An advocate can't give legal help, but they may be able to tell you where to get legal help if you need it.

### Does it cost me anything?

Advocacy is free. There is no limit on the number of times you can seek help from an advocate, but there has to be a particular issue or problem the advocate can help with. You can't just get them to help with day to day issues.

### Why would I want an advocate?

An advocate might help if you feel you can't talk to the ACT Lifetime Care and Support Commissioner or our partner NSW LTSCA or a service provider in the following types of situations:

- To change your coordinator
- To change service providers, such as your case manager or attendant care provider
- To change your living arrangements (for example to move out of home)
- To lodge a dispute – an option when you don't agree with a decision the Commissioner has made (see information sheets P02 and P03 which are all about resolving disputes)
- To make a complaint about the Scheme or a service provider (see information sheet P05 Making a Complaint)

## **Is an advocate different to a Case Manager and other I work with?**

An advocate gives you a different kind of help from a Case Manager and other people involved in your treatment, rehabilitation and care. An advocate is not involved in your ongoing treatment, rehabilitation and care or in requesting services for you. They are an independent who can help you deal with particular issues.

## **How do I find an advocate?**

The Scheme can help you find an advocate or you can contact the following services, which provide advocacy for people with disabilities:

- ACT Disability, Aged and Carer Advocacy Services - (02) 6242 5060
- Advocacy for Inclusion – (02) 6257 4005
- Public Advocate - (02) 6207 0707
- Disability Advocacy Network Australia - 02 6175 1300

There are other advocacy services not included on this list. The following government department has further information:

- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs 1300 653 227

**For more information or to obtain copies of information sheets or the Lifetime Care and Support Guidelines, contact the Lifetime Care and Support Commissioner.**