



Advocacy Support

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Easy iCare Pty Ltd recognises the importance of ensuring participant's rights to use an advocate or representative of their choice is maintained, and that all participants and potential participants have the right to choose and involve an advocate or other representative of their choice to participate or act on behalf of his or her interests at any time.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

POLICY

It is the policy of Easy iCare Pty Ltd that Participants have the right to use an advocate of their choice to represent their interest and speak on their behalf regarding any aspect of the supports that they receive.

It is also Easy iCare Pty Ltd' policy that services will work cooperatively with any nominated advocate chosen by the Participant and will show the same respect to the advocate as is shown to the Participant. Where Participants cannot advocate for themselves, it is Easy iCare Pty Ltd' policy to ensure that Participant's interests are represented and supported using a substitute decision-maker.

DEFINITION

Advocacy: is 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 well-being, prevention of

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abusive or discriminatory treatment, stopping unjust and unfair treatment, so that a person's fundamental needs and interests can be met.

Types of advocacy include:

- **Individual Advocacy:** a one-on-one approach, aiming to prevent or address instances of discrimination or abuse.
- **Systemic Advocacy:** working to influence or secure long-term changes to ensure the collective rights and interests of people with disability.
- **Family Advocacy:** when a parent or family member advocates with and on behalf of a family member with disability.
- **Citizen Advocacy:** matches people with disability with volunteers.
- **Legal Advocacy:** upholds the rights and interests of individual people with disability by addressing the legal aspects of discrimination, abuse and neglect.
- **Self-Advocacy:** supports people with disability to advocate for themselves, or as a group.

PROCEDURE

Advocacy Principles

- Easy iCare Pty Ltd will ensure that all staff receive training in the use of advocates.
- Easy iCare Pty Ltd will maintain printed material on advocacy and advocacy services.
- Easy iCare Pty Ltd will maintain local advocacy resource/contact lists.
- Easy iCare Pty Ltd 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.
- Easy iCare Pty Ltd will utilise a governance system to enable Easy iCare Pty Ltd to identify where a Participant is in need of advocacy.

Initial Assessment (Participant without an Advocate)

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- Discuss advocacy with the Participant, pointing out their rights to nominate an advocate at any time and have an advocate present to speak on their behalf.
- Provide the Participant with advocacy information and explain their rights regarding advocacy as per the Easy iCare Pty Ltd' Service Agreement *and the* Charter of Rights, and the NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018.
 - Advise the Participant that if they wish to utilise advocacy services, then Easy iCare Pty Ltd can assist them to contact any of these services.
 - Provide the Easy iCare Pty Ltd' form; "Authority to Act as an Advocate" to Participant, in the event they should decide to use an advocate. This is kept in the participant's file.
 - Discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used; between the service and the advocate.
 - Inform the participant that they can withdraw approval for advocate to act on their behalf at any time.

Initial Assessment (Participants with Advocates/Representatives)

- At initial contact with the Participant, record the advocate's details.
- 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 the Participant and Easy iCare Pty Ltd.
- Advise the Participant of the need to complete Easy iCare Pty Ltd' form; "Authority to Act as an Advocate," and provide this form to the Participant. Contact advocate to ensure they know they have been nominated as an advocate and agree to this.
- Schedule the Participant's initial assessment at a time and date that will enable the advocate to be present.
- Ensure an identified Advocate is present at the assessment.
- If not already received, request the completion of the "Authority to Act as an Advocate" form. Explain that this must be completed for Easy iCare Pty Ltd to formally recognise the nominated person as the Participant's advocate.

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- Explain that the Participant has the right to change their advocate at any time. Changes should be documented with written confirmation from the Participant using the "Authority to Act as an Advocate" form.

Working with Advocates

- Clearly identify the existence 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.
- Communicate with a Participant's chosen advocate involving them with:
- Ensure all On-Call staff are aware of Participant's Advocate/s.
- Setting goals, planning service responses, and / or referrals for additional or alternative services.
- Provide them with ongoing information regarding health and well-being of the Participant; as agreed.

Ongoing

- Remind Participants of their right to have (or change) an advocate by providing them written and verbal information during reassessments, visits or meetings.
- Remind Participants of their right to have (or change) an advocate, on annual basis during each Case conference or via written communication.
- Communicate and work cooperatively with the advocate.
- Refer Participants who are assessed as "not able to manage their service" and who have no other advocate to the Victorian Officer of the Public Advocate, Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), as appropriate.
- Easy iCare Pty Ltd will guide and assist participants by assisting them to access Office of Public Advocate Advice Service for additional support. Details include:

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Website: <https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/>

Phone: 1300 309 337

TTY: 1300 305 612

Email: lopa_advice@justice.vic.gov.au

Opening hours: 9am to 4:45pm

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Authority to Act as an Advocate

REFERENCES

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
- Disability Services Act 2006 (Victoria)
- Guardianship and Administration Act 1986 (Victoria)
- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2018
- Disability Inclusion Act and Regulation 2014
- Privacy Act (1988)

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