

Advocacy and Support POLICY
SD - 7



Policy Number	SD-7
Version Control	4
Approved by/date:	Belinda Player/ 28/3/17
Review Due	28/3/18
Consultation Mechanism	Policy Review Team

Relevant Legislation	Anti – discrimination Act 1977, Guardianship Act 1987, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Carers (recognition) Act 2010.
Relevant Disability Service Standards	1.1, 3.1, 3.2
Relevant Home Care Standards	2.1, 2.3, 3.2, 3.4
Relevant Internal Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Authority to Act as an advocate form• Guidelines for Advocates form

This document is intended for internal use only and should not be distributed outside of Biala without the express permission of the General Manager.

POLICY STATEMENT

Biala Services is committed to the principles of respecting and protecting the legal and human rights of individuals and their right to services.

Clients have a right to use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service.

Definition:

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the client, represents the client's interests. Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews and complaints

To this end Biala Services supports the right of clients 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 client and this organization. Biala Services will work co-operatively with any advocate nominated by a client and treat them with respect.

Biala Services is also committed to providing clients with advocacy and support when it is required.

RATIONALE

Biala's Advocacy and Support policy aims to provide guidance and structure for clients who wish to use an advocate and staff who are involved with advocates being used. Staff will follow this policy and its procedures for any advocate to be used for a client of Biala Services Inc.

PROCEDURES

- Information is maintained on available advocacy agencies in policies and procedures and the Client Handbook.
- Clients are advised of their right to an advocate and of advocacy agencies through the client handbook.
- Information is explained at assessments and reviews
- Information is also provided as part of the complaints process
- Assistance to access an advocate is available
- Staff and Volunteers understand the role of advocates and how to access advocates for clients as required
- Advocacy processes are regularly audited and improvements identified on an ongoing basis

Supporting advocacy

The Manager Operations and Marketing will be responsible for ensuring:

- All staff receive training in the use of advocates
- Ensure services/programs maintain printed material on relevant advocacy and advocacy services for example Stroke and Disability Information Inc.
- Maintain local advocacy resource/contact list

Providing clients with information

Manager Operations and Marketing will ensure clients and potential advocates are informed via appropriate formats (including verbally and in writing) about their right to use an advocate and the role of the advocate when the client is:

- Assessed and reassessed for services
- 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 client

Manager Operations and Marketing is required to ensure that clients 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 organization.

It is the responsibility of the Manager Operations and Marketing at the time of first contact with the client to discuss any communication issues or requirements.

If a client wishes to nominate an advocate it is the Manager Operations and Marketing responsibilities to discuss and document any specific communication issues or protocols to be used between the service and the client's advocate. The name and contact details of the advocate are to be included in the client's personal file.

Staff are informed not to disclose any information about the client to an advocate when the client is not present, unless the client has provided their permission to do so.

Working with advocates (when a client has nominated an advocate)

Where a client has identified or nominated an advocate the Manager Lifestyle Operations and Marketing must:

- Ensure the “Authority to act as an Advocate” form has been completed and signed by both the client and the person acting as an advocate.
- Ensure the person acting as an advocate has been given a copy of the “Guidelines for Advocates” which is included in the Authority to Act as an Advocate form and understand their responsibility by signing.
- Ensure any designated advocate is present at assessments and meetings
- Communicate and work co-operatively with the advocate to involve them in the clients care and service planning
- Ensure that the client knows they have the right to change their advocate at any time. Any changes should be documented with written confirmation from the client using the “Authority to act as an advocate” form.

If an authorized representative is acting on behalf of a client, the organization will require proof of representative authority.

Authorized representatives include:

- Guardians
- 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 client file. Proof of authority includes guardianship or administration order or Enduring Medical Power of Attorney.

Providing advocacy and support

Where a client does not have an identified or nominated advocate and they request assistance from the organization the request will be considered by the Manager Lifestyle Programs & Activities. The type of individual advocacy and support that can be provided will be dependent on the organization’s capability and resources.

AUTHORISED BY

Signed: ***Belinda Player***
Position: Manager Operations and Marketing
Date: 28th March 2017