




Client – Advocacy Policy and Procedures

STATEMENT

The Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Ltd (PQSA) respects the right of all clients to engage an advocate. On the request of the client PQSA will provide assistance to clients to help them locate an appropriate advocate that will ensure the client has support that is meaningful and allows them the right to participate and make decisions that ensure they obtain quality outcomes.

<p>Approved by:</p>  <p>Chief Executive Officer</p>	<p>Date: May 2021</p>
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In this policy, 'us' 'we' or 'our' refers to The Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of South Australia Ltd ACN 644 670 977, which is a Company Limited by Guarantee and conducts its business through Lifestyle Support and HomeCare+ services.

Please note that printed copies are not able to be controlled and the Shared Drive should always be referred to for the most current version.

SCOPE

Compliance with this policy is a condition of appointment for all workers engaged to provide services on behalf of PQSA.

DEFINITIONS

Refer to the PQSA Policy and Procedure Definition Glossary

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is our responsibility to communicate our policies and procedures to all workers on a systematic basis. Individual Directors and Supervisors are responsible for monitoring workers' understanding of their obligations and need for compliance with policies and procedures. Workers are responsible for complying with our policies and procedures.

POLICY

PQSA accepts and promotes the rights of a client to appoint an advocate.

Where the client wishes to be assisted or represented by an advocate, PQSA are committed to supporting them in that decision, and will assist, if appropriate, to engage an advocate.

PROCEDURES

In the event of a client requesting an advocate, the worker will:

- reinforce that PQSA supports the use of an advocate and will provide timely information in an appropriate format, to help the client make an informed decision and understand their rights in relation to the appointment of an advocate
- ask for the name of the person or the agency that will be advocating on behalf of the client and record this information on the client's file
- make the appropriate referral to a recognised advocacy agency if the client does not know how to do this
- obtain confirmation from the client, either in writing or over the telephone, that they are happy to be contacted by the advocate to ensure that there is no breach of privacy; this information is to be recorded in the client's file.

The role of an advocate

An advocate can be involved in supporting and assisting a client, or contacting PQSA directly with the client's permission, in a variety of ways, including:

- supporting the client to ensure their rights are upheld
- accessing information about the client from PQSA
- attending meetings or discussions which may impact on the services the client receives
- assisting the client to provide accurate information to PQSA
- assisting the client to make a complaint about the services provided by PQSA.

Advocacy services in South Australia

Vulnerable adults can access local principal advocacy service providers with the assistance and support of PQSA as detailed in PQSA's client complaint policies and procedures.

<https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/care-and-support/carers/complaints-and-advocacy>

South Australians who are seeking support to navigate the NDIS, including help to understand their rights and resolve issues, can call the Disability Advocacy Service on **1300 886 220**.

Delivered by Uniting Communities, the Disability Advocacy Service, provides free legal representation for people to challenge NDIS decisions, as well as educating and empowering people with disability to advocate for themselves. Further details about this service can be found on the [Disability Advocacy Service website](#).

Anyone with concerns that an adult with disability, including themselves, is at risk of or is being neglected or abused can call the South Australian Abuse Prevention phone line on **1800 372 310**. Further information about the role of the Adult Safeguarding Unit can be found on the [SA Health website](#).

Clients of PQSA who receive funding and supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in particular, or who need access to effective disability advocacy that promotes their human rights can also seek this support through the Department of Social Services National Disability Advocacy Program:

<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-advocacy-program-ndap>

RELATED LEGISLATION

- Australian Privacy Principles
- Disability Service Act 1993
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- National Standards for Disability Standards
- Privacy Act 1988
- Privacy Regulations 2013

SUPPORTING PQSA DOCUMENTATION

- Client – Client Choice and Control Policy and Procedures
- Client – Rights and Responsibilities Statement
- Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour
- Complaints - Concern Management Policy and Procedures (Client Complaints)
- Information Sharing Guidelines
- Privacy - Private Information Management Statement and Procedures
- Vulnerable Adult – Client Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- WHS&E Duty of Care Policy and Procedures
- Worker Confidentiality Policy

BREACHES OF THIS POLICY

A **breach** of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Ignorance of these procedures will not generally be accepted as an excuse for non-compliance. Only in extreme circumstances and where such ignorance can be demonstrated to have occurred through no fault of the individual concerned will PQSA accept such an argument.

DISTRIBUTION AND REVIEW

PQSA will ensure all persons engaged to provide services either paid or unpaid will be aware of this policy and will have easy access to it in an appropriate format. All policies are to be reviewed on a periodic basis or when legislation or government policy determines.