

What to Do if You Want an Advocate or Support Person

Our Commitment

Stride's aim is to give you the best quality service. If you have found our service helpful or have any ideas on how something can be done better, please let us know. We also want to know if you are not happy or have concerns about any part of our service.

We take your feedback or complaint seriously and address the matter promptly. Importantly, your feedback or complaint is welcomed, without fear or adverse consequence or loss of your rights to access Stride services.

Particularly when making a complaint, you may not feel comfortable dealing directly with Stride. If so, you may wish to engage a Support Person or an Advocate. If you feel unable to make a complaint yourself, an advocate can do it for you.

Can I have someone to help me?

Yes! It is OK to have a friend or person you trust to help you in any of your dealings with Stride. Or, you may wish to get the help from someone independent that will support you.

This independent Support Person or Advocate can help you put your concerns or comments in writing, be with you when you put forward your concerns or comments, or attend any meetings.

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy can be defined as:

- standing up for the rights of people who are being treated unfairly; and
- standing alongside an individual who is disadvantaged and speaking out on their behalf in a way that represents the best interests of that person.

What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who can act on your behalf to support and assist in protecting your rights and responsibilities with regard to any issue or problem you may have with another person or organisation.

An advocate may be a person who is specially trained as an advocate, or another person who may be able to help you such as a member of your family, a friend, a personal adviser, or a mentor.

What does an Advocate do?

An advocate will listen to your concerns, give you information and, with your permission, speak on your behalf. Advocates and Support Persons can assist you by:

- Asking for more suitable services
- Navigating services and systems
- Support person at important meetings
- Help you to make a complaint
- Represent your needs to government agencies, service providers, hospitals

What are my rights?

Your Feedback, Compliment or Complaint is important to us and will be treated with fairness, transparency, respect and accountability.

You have the right to provide Feedback, a Compliment or a Complaint that will be welcomed without fear or adverse consequence or loss of your rights to access Stride services.

You have the right to engage an independent Support Person or Advocate to help you through the Feedback or Complaint process.

If you need help or an Interpreter, please contact your Support Worker or Stride's Head Office on Phone 1300 00 1907. There is no cost to you for this service.

What if I don't feel right about dealing directly with Stride?

Various state and territory organisations offer Advocacy services, such as:

- The Mental Health Carers ARAFMI Australia, www.arafmiaustralia.asn.au
- The Mental Illness Fellowship of Australia, www.mifa.org.au
- Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI), www.copmi.net.au
- The Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre 1800 242 636 (free call)
- Other state and territory based organisations
- Mental Health Advocacy Service:
 - NSW (02) 9745 4277, www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/civil-law/mental-health-advice
 - VIC 1300 792 387, www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/independent-mental-health-advocacy
- Other state and territory-based organisations
- The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission - www.ndiscommission.gov.au/about/complaints
- The Office of Public Guardian Community Visitor (QLD) - www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au
- Office of the Health Ombudsman (QLD) - www.oho.qld.gov.au
- Health Care Complaints Commission (NSW) - www.hccc.nsw.gov.au
- Disability Advocacy:
 - NSW 1300 365 085
 - DANA Disability Advocacy Network Australia - www.dana.org.au
- Mental Health Complaints Commissioner (VIC) - 1800 246 054
- A State Anti-discrimination agency
- A State Ombudsman:
 - NSW Ombudsman (02) 9286 1000 or Free call 1800 451 524
 - QLD Ombudsman (07) 3005 7000 or Free call 1800 068 908
 - WA Ombudsman (08) 9220 7555 or Free call 1800 117 000
 - VIC Ombudsman (03) 9613 6222 or Free call 1800 806 314