

Policy 32

RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOC SA INC

ADVOCACY POLICY

Policy

RDASA is committed to ensuring that clients are supported with information on accessing advocacy, are regularly informed of their right to use an advocate and are encouraged to exercise this right.

What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the client, represents the client's interests. Clients may use an advocate, of their choice, to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service.

Advocates will be accepted by RDASA as representing the interests of the client, and may be used during assessments, reviews, complaints or for any other communication between the client and RDASA.

Procedure for Appointing an Advocate

- Staff/volunteers will inform clients that they have the right to use an advocate, and will regularly remind clients of this option.
- Clients wishing to use an advocate should inform RDASA (either the Centre Management or State Office) in writing of the name of the person they wish to negotiate on their behalf.
- Clients may access advocacy from service agencies including:
 - **Disability Information Resource Centre** – www.dircsa.org.au or Free call 1300 305 558
 - **Enablenet** - www.enable.net.au. A website which lists over 90 organisations that provide advocacy for people with disabilities.
- The client has the right to change their advocate at any time and should inform RDASA in writing of any change.
- RDASA understands that a client may choose to self-advocate, change advocates, or revoke an advocate's authority to act on their behalf at any time.
- This information is available in the Client's Handbook and should be explained at formal assessments, reviews and through informal discussion.
- RDASA staff/volunteers will receive training in the use of advocates.

Signed:

Date:

Policy Established: May 2004, Jul 2006
Next Review Date: Jul 2008