

Advocacy

Policy Statement

Burke and Beyond is dedicated to upholding the human and legal rights of individuals with disabilities, acknowledging their autonomy to self-advocate, seeking assistance from our staff to advocate for them, or to access external advocacy support.

We commit to supporting participants in accessing advocacy services upon direct request or identification of the need for advocacy.

Objective

The Advocacy Policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff on the significance of advocacy and the right of participants to request an advocate at any time. This policy outlines the steps employees should take when a participant requests an advocate.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, management, and volunteers of Burke and Beyond.

Definitions:

Advocate:	A person authorised to represent the interests of another individual, advocating for their welfare, rights, and justice, with minimal conflict of interest.
Informal Advocate:	Individuals such as parents, siblings, relatives, or friends who undertake advocacy roles.
Formal Advocate	Typically refers to organisations employing individuals to perform advocacy roles.
Systems Advocate:	An organization or professional advocating for a disadvantaged individual or group within institutional settings.
Legal Advocate:	A designated advocate with legal status, such as holding an Enduring Power of Attorney or a Guardianship Order.

Burke and Beyond is committed to respecting the rights of participants, ensuring they are free from discrimination, and actively participate in decision making. We strive to provide services that empower participants to exercise full choice and control over their lives.

All participants will be informed of their right to seek an advocate, the role of advocates, and available advocacy services through the Participant Handbooks.

We support clients in addressing concerns, issues, and complaints about our services through our organisation's complaints procedure.

If the need for an advocate is identified or requested a decision with all relevant stakeholders will be made to identify the most appropriate person to act as an advocate.

Burke and Beyond staff are responsible for ensuring advocacy services are available to all participants upon request. If a participant or their representative requests an advocate outside of Burke and Beyond's services, staff will:

- Assist in finding an appropriate advocate and providing necessary support.
- Always promote participants' rights
- Maintain positive relationships with advocacy agencies.
- Work collaboratively with all parties, focusing on the participant's best interests.
- Obtain consent before making referrals or releasing information.
- Refer requests for personal information to the General Manager Service Delivery or Services and Outcomes Manager.

Implementation and Review:

This policy will be available on SupportAbility and publicly available on the website, this policy is made available to participants in conversation groups and via the website.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years and following significant incidents if they occur. Improvements to this document can be made by completing a suggestion and improvement form, attaching any suggested amendments and forwarding to your Key Worker/ Manager and/or the Quality Manager for review.

Administration:

Standards related to:	Human Service Standards- Empowerment, Access and Engagement, Well Being & Participation. National Disability Standards- Rights, Participation & Inclusion, Individual Outcomes, Feedback & Complaints	
Legislation or external reference documents:	United Nations Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/united-nations-convention-rights-persons-disabilities-uncrpd National Standards for Disability Services National Standards for Disability Services Department of Social Services, Australian Government (dss.gov.au) National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers/programs-services/for-people-with-disability/ndis-quality-and-safeguarding-framework-0	
Related Policies or Procedures:	Model of Support, Access, Planning, Provision & Review procedures. Participant Handbook.	
Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Every 3 years	Manager Quality and Risk	CEO

Indexing:

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	21/09/2020	Bruno Cyr	2023
2	07/02/2024	Lisa Sawatzky	2027