

ADVOCACY POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and practices that Down Syndrome NSW (DS NSW) follows in ensuring that the rights and interests of its Members are respected and realised through the provision of advocacy support.

Policy Statement:

Advocacy is the process of promoting and enhancing the rights of people with disabilities, preventing abuse, discrimination, or negligent treatment, and facilitating equitable participation in community life.

DS NSW is committed to promoting and enhancing the rights of its members through advocacy and ensuring that all members have appropriate supports in place to raise concerns regarding services without fear of retribution. DS NSW recognizes that specific groups, such as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities, may require additional assistance to understand and participate in the advocacy process.

Applicability:

All DS NSW Workers, Board Members and Members.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Board	Promote best practice, continuous improvement and a service delivery culture that promotes and supports this policy and procedure.
CEO	Oversee the implementation of this policy and procedure. Ensure compliance of this policy and procedure. Manage non-compliance of this policy and procedure.
Management	Ensure compliance of this policy and procedure. Report non-compliance to the CEO.
Workers	Comply with this policy and procedure.
Members	Comply with this policy and procedure.

Procedure

- DS NSW will endeavour to provide advocacy support to its members, which may include the assistance of an advocate or linking individuals with external agencies to facilitate effective communication and information exchange.
- Advocacy services may or may not come at a cost to members. Each provision of service will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by DS NSW. Any costs associated will be provided in writing to members prior to the provision of service.
- Members of DS NSW have the right to privacy, access to personal information, respect for their cultural and linguistic diversity, receive a good quality service, and provide feedback without fear of retribution.
- The right to raise service issues or complaints extends to interested parties such as the person's family, friends, advocate, guardian, and other members of the community who have a genuine interest in the life and circumstances of the person.
- DS NSW will assist individuals in understanding and participating in the advocacy process by providing access to advocates of their choice and interpreter services if required.

Associated Documents

Definitions:

Term	Definition
Advocacy	the process of standing beside an individual or group and speaking out on their behalf to protect and promote their rights and interests.
Interested parties:	the person's family, friends, advocate, guardian, and other members of the community who have a genuine interest in the life and circumstances of the person.
Members	Members are individuals or families that register with DS NSW. Their details are uploaded onto the client database, and they gain access to our services as participants, as well as receive DS NSW external communications.

Document Control

Policy review every: 3 years



Version	Date Commenced	Policy Owner	Change Description	Review Date	Policy Approver
V1	2019	CSO	New Policy	2022	CEO
V2	June 2023	Specialist PCC	Updated Policy	2026	COO