

What is Northcott's policy?

- ✓ We advocate with and on behalf of customers and families as an essential part of our product delivery.
- ✓ We enable systemic advocacy in response to wider social justice issues important to customers.
- ✓ We support customers with concerns about Northcott services.
- ✓ A flyer with information on advocacy and advocacy services is displayed at all Northcott sites and is available electronically.
- ✓ We support customers to make decisions based on these principles:
 - Every person can express their will and preference about what they want
 - A person with disability has the right to make decisions
 - A person with disability can expect to have appropriate support to make decisions

Who needs to know about this Policy?

- All Staff
- All customers

What are the procedures?

- The advocacy part of each worker's role is identified for front line employees, included in position descriptions and addressed during the employee orientation and training.
- Employees attend advocacy training relevant to their responsibilities and experience.
- Systemic advocacy may be carried out by Northcott on issues identified as important for customers. Employees and customers will be supported to participate in advocacy initiatives. All systemic advocacy initiatives must be approved by the CEO before being undertaken by Northcott employees.
- Northcott's **Individual Outcomes Policy** supports the involvement of independent advocates for customers. Independent advocates are mentioned in information such as the **Feedback and Complaints Brochure**.
- When customers first use Northcott services they are informed of the role of advocates, their rights to use advocates, advocacy services and how to contact and involve advocacy agencies.

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- The review of My Service Agreement and My Northcott Plan is used as an opportunity to review advocacy needs with customers.
- Customers are supported to access advocacy and self-advocacy training courses.
- When a customer wants a Northcott employee act as their advocate they need to give their authority to act, which is then recorded. The issues important to the customer and their goals will also be documented. Customers will be kept up to date with the progress of specific advocacy actions.
- Customers are supported if they choose to self-advocate, change advocates, or withdraw their authority.
- When customers need an advocate and a family member or carer cannot provide it, Northcott will attempt to introduce an advocate of the customer's choice. When an advocate assists a customer, their involvement will be documented. Employees will work with the advocate in line with the customer's wishes and support the involvement of the customer's advocate in all areas of service planning and decision making.
- Northcott is aware that customers may experience additional disadvantage and discrimination if they are:
 - Living in rural and remote areas
 - Veterans, refugees or undocumented migrants
 - Now experiencing or have experienced domestic violence or abuse
 - Care leavers or parents separated from children by forced adoption or removal
 - Homeless, living in temporary or insecure accommodation, or with relatives, or at risk of homelessness
 - Experiencing mental illness, experiencing drug and/or alcohol use and abuse or have in the past
 - Identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex

Where can I get help?

- Contact the Inclusive Practice Team

What other Northcott documents are related?

You may need to refer to these documents for more information:

[Individual Outcomes Policy](#)

[Feedback and Complaints Policy](#)

[Feedback and Complaints Procedure](#)

[Using Interpreter Services Procedure](#)

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Who is responsible?	What are they Responsible for?
Chief Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final review and approval of this policy and procedure Approval of all systemic advocacy initiatives.
Level 2 Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain this policy, its related procedures and documents.
Level 3 and 4 Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the policy and procedure is effectively implemented in their services. Ensure staff follow the policy and procedure.
Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure staff have read and understand the policy and procedure, and have sufficient skills, knowledge and ability to meet the requirements.
All Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the requirements of the policy and procedure.

Definitions, Legislation & Standards Compliance

Supported Decision Making: Supported Decision Making (SDM) is the process of assisting a person with disability to make their own decisions, so they can develop and pursue their own goals, make choices about their life and exercise some control over the things that are important to them. SDM empowers a person with disability and affirms their right to be in charge of their own life. SDM is supported in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (UNCRPD) [Article 12 - Equal Recognition before the law](#).

Official Advocate: An official advocate is a person who may work for advocacy agency. An advocate listens to the person so that they can accurately reflect their views and act fairly on their behalf. An advocate should act in the best interest of the individual at all times and aim to increase the person's independence and confidence. Disability advocates do not provide legal advice.

For other Definitions, refer to the Northcott Policy Dictionary.

For Legislation and Standards Compliance, refer to the Rights Policy.

Related References

- Advocacy and Information Services - Resources for Service Providers http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/delivering_disability_services/advocacy_information_service_s
- National Disability Advocacy Program <http://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/national-disability-advocacy-program>

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- NSW Advocacy Program Guidelines (Disability) http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/file/0009/296910/NSW_Information_Program_Guidelines_Disability1.doc
- Advocacy Fact Sheet <http://www.carersnsw.org.au/Assets/Files/Advocacy.pdf>
- Individual Advocacy Service <http://www.pwd.org.au/documents/orgdocs/IAS-Brochure.pdf>
- Individual Advocacy Service (ATSI) http://www.pwd.org.au/documents/orgdocs/ATSI-IAS_NSW.pdf
- Disability Advocacy Practice Manual <http://da.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Disability-Advocacy-NSW-Practice-Manual-V2013-2-current-at-11-6-13.pdf>
- Supported Decision Making: <http://www.publicguardian.qld.gov.au/adult-guardian/supporting-your-decision-making>
- Standards in Action (2017) NSW Family and Community Services https://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/sp/quality/standards_in_action
- [Addendum to the Standards in Action: Guide for services working with children and young people with disability and their families \(PDF\)](#) (2014) NSW Family and Community Service



Authorised by:

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