

A Review into disability advocacy in NSW

Easy Read summary



How to use this document



The New South Wales (NSW) Ageing and Disability Commission wrote this document. When you see the word 'we', it means the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission.



We have written this information in an easy to read way.

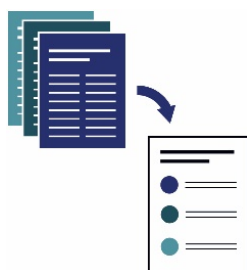
We use pictures to explain some ideas.



We have written some words in **bold**.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 34.



This Easy Read document is a summary of another document.



You can find the other document on our website at www.adc.nsw.gov.au.



You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

What's in this document?

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What is this report about?

2030 1.8 million



By 2030, there will be 1.8 million people in NSW with a disability.

590,000



590,000 people will have a **severe disability**.

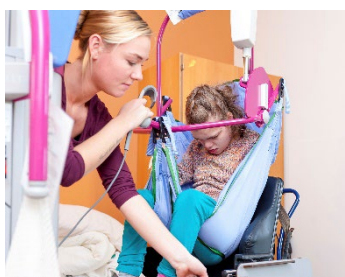


A severe disability affects a person's ability to do things in their daily life.



This can include the way a person can:

- move
- communicate
- take care of themselves.



A person with severe disability will need support in their daily life.



The NSW Government wants to make sure our community is **inclusive** for all people with disability.



If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.



This includes supporting **advocacy** services for people with disability.



Advocacy is when someone speaks up for someone who can't speak up for themselves.



In NSW, there are many organisations that provide disability advocacy services.



In 2019, we looked at the way that advocacy works in NSW.



This report explains what we learned, and ways to make advocacy better in the future.

What did we look at?

We looked at:



- why we have disability advocacy organisations



- what disability advocacy organisations do



- how the government pays for disability advocacy services – this is called **funding**



- how disability advocacy services should be paid for in the future



- how disability advocacy services should be delivered in the future.



As part of the review, we asked people what they thought about disability advocacy.



We also wanted to know about people's:

- ideas
- experiences.

70



70 people came to face-to-face meetings with us.

43



43 people told us what they thought on our website.



We also had people take part in:

- meetings
- workshops
- interviews.

What are the challenges?



We found out that disability advocacy:

- can be complicated
- can be confusing
- doesn't always work as well as it could.



This is because different people have different needs.



There are also lots of people and organisations who need to work together in disability advocacy.



Sometimes they don't always work well together.

6

During our review, we found 6 main challenges in disability advocacy in NSW.



1. There hasn't been enough funding for disability advocacy organisations.



This means they haven't been able to:

- keep staff
- train staff with new skills
- make sure programs are working.



2. We haven't been checking regularly to make sure things are going well.



3. Advocates have been busy helping people use and understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



This means they haven't been supporting people with other issues as much.



4. The government is asking for more help and feedback from disability advocacy organisations.



This is a good thing. But it takes up their time.



5. Not many people know what disability advocacy is and how it helps people with disability.



6. There hasn't been much support to get more people to work in disability advocacy.



People who work as advocates also need more support to help them in their daily work.

As we think about these challenges, it's important to also think about:



- changes that are taking place for people with disability



- funding for advocacy from the Australian Government.



The NDIS is now being used across NSW.



And the Australian Government runs the National Disability Advocacy Program.



This program funds disability advocacy organisations in all parts of Australia.



During our review, we found that there is still an important place for disability advocacy to be supported and funded in NSW.

What is working?



Disability advocacy organisations have helped many people with disability have their say.



They have also helped people with disability take part in government decisions.

Many disability advocacy organisations:



- have good supporters and members



- have good staff who know how to support people with disability



- have made sure they can get enough funding to keep supporting people with disability



- are respected by the government for their experience and knowledge.

What needs to change?



In our report, there are 11 groups of **recommendations** about disability advocacy.



Recommendations are ideas about changes that can be made.

We explain our recommendations in more detail below.

Recommendation 1



We recommend using the same language for disability advocacy in NSW that is used in other states and territories around Australia.



NSW should use the language in the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP).



The NDAP explains:

- disability advocacy
- **individual advocacy** – when someone speaks up for another person
- **systemic advocacy** – when a group speaks up for a group of people.

Recommendation 2



We recommend creating a plan to make sure disability advocacy in NSW can keep supporting people with disability in the best way possible.



The plan should explain:

- what disability advocacy is
- the different roles in disability advocacy
- how disability advocacy should be funded
- a way to check if disability advocacy is going well.

Recommendation 3



We recommend that funding for disability advocacy services follows some rules.

When they receive funding, it is important for disability advocacy services to:



- show how they will use the money for people with disability and the community in the right way



- be open about how the money is being shared and used for a longer time



- make sure people in different areas of NSW can use their services



- understand that every person with any disability can use disability advocacy services in NSW



- deliver their services to people with a different:

- culture
- gender
- disability



- understand how different disability advocacy organisations can work together



- support and work with other organisations to make sure they can meet the needs of people with disability.

Recommendation 4



We recommend that the NSW Government create a new funding program.



This program will be called the NSW Disability Advocacy Futures Program (DAFP).



The DAFP will make sure funding for disability advocacy is used in the best way.



The DAFP will also be the main way that the NSW Government will give funding to disability advocacy services.

The DAFP will:



- use the funding rules from Recommendation 3



- be more focussed on:
 - individual disability advocacy
 - systemic disability advocacy



- include people with disability who have extra needs, such as people with disability who:
 - speak a language other than English
 - are Indigenous



- make sure disability advocacy organisations can show how they have spent their money and they are working well



- respect people with disability and support a better way to provide advocacy services.

Recommendation 5



We recommend that the NSW Government makes sure the DAFP focuses on the following key ideas.

The DAFP needs to support:



- people with disability to take part in the government



- people with disability to take part in their community



- people with disability to protect their own rights



- people with disability to have a say about issues that affect them



- disability advocacy to grow and improve over time



- a better relationship between disability advocacy organisations.



- other projects and work being done, including by the NDIS.

Recommendation 6

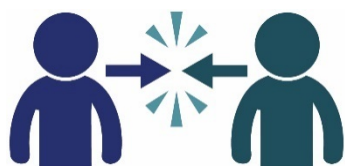


We recommend that the NSW Government supports a list of rules for how disability advocacy organisations should act.

Disability advocacy organisations should:



- respect what each person with disability wants



- not have any **conflicts of interest** – this is when someone could affect a decision so the result is better for them



- understand how important local advocates are



- support the person with disability to choose their own advocate

- build the **capacity** of the people they support.



Your capacity is:

- your ability to do something
- the skills you have



- have a fair way of deciding which clients need their support the most



- show how well their services are being delivered



- be ready to work with other disability advocacy organisations to support people with disability in the best way.

Recommendation 7

6



We recommend that the DAFP fund 6 key areas to support disability advocacy.

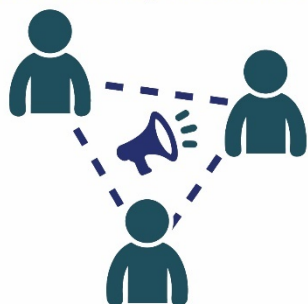
1. NSW Centre for Disability Advocacy Development

This centre will aim to:



- help make disability advocacy services better
- tell the community about what disability advocacy services are available where they live
- help disability advocacy services to work together
- support **self-advocacy** – when you are your own advocate.

NSW Disability Advocacy Network



The centre will also support the NSW Disability Advocacy Network.

2. NSW Disability Advocacy Network



The NSW Disability Advocacy Network will include members from disability advocacy organisations.

It will aim to:

- help make disability advocacy services better
- give people who work as advocates ways to learn new skills
- help disability advocacy services to work together and learn from each other
- create a plan to check how well disability advocacy organisations are doing.



3. Systemic disability advocacy

Systemic disability advocacy will aim to:

- tell the government and other services about the best ways to:
 - protect the rights of people with disability
 - improve the lives of people with disability.



It will be delivered through different advocacy organisations around NSW.

4. Individual disability advocacy



Individual disability advocacy will aim to:

- support individual people with disability advocacy
- support self-advocacy where it is needed.



It will be delivered through a range of disability advocacy organisations around NSW.

5. Representative disability activity

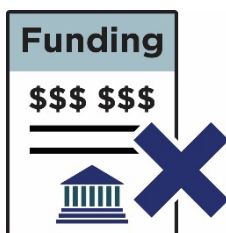
Representative disability activity aims to:

- support the needs of people with certain disabilities, their families and carers
- share the ideas of its members who have similar disabilities.



6. Special purposes and projects

Special purposes and projects aim to support people with disability to take part in their community.



This option will be used when there is no other funding available.

Recommendation 8



We recommend that the NSW Government creates a group to manage putting the recommendations in place.



All recommendations should be in place by 1 July 2023.



The NSW Government should set up a plan to make sure this can be achieved.



An organisation that is separate from the government should check to make sure the recommendations are being put in place in the best way.

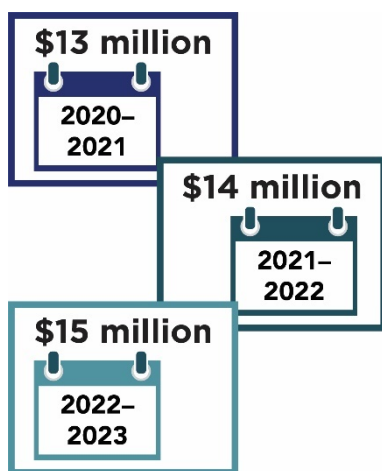


This organisation should also be able to make sure things are going well in the future.

Recommendation 9



We recommend that the NSW Government provide enough money to support these changes.



We recommend:

- \$13 million for 2020–2021
- \$14 million for 2021–2022
- \$15 million for 2022–2023.



Individual disability advocacy should get 50% of this money.



Systemic disability advocacy should get 25% of this money.



Representative disability activity should get 15% of this money.



NSW Centre for Disability Advocacy Development should get 5% of this money.



Special purposes and projects should get 5% of this money.

Recommendation 10



We recommend that advocacy organisations should be able to sign a longer **contract**.



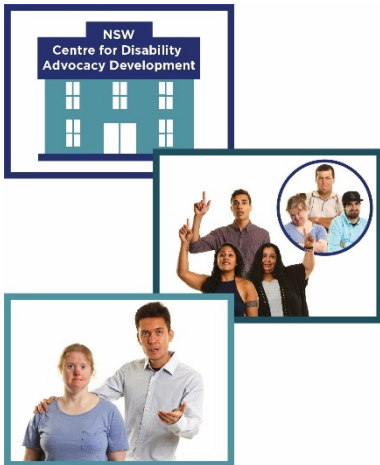
A contract is a legal agreement between people and organisations.



The contract is between the government and the disability advocacy organisation.



A 3-year contract should be given to:



- the Centre for Disability Advocacy Development
- systemic disability advocacy organisations
- individual disability advocacy organisations.



After 3 years, the organisations should be able to get a 5-year contract.



Representative disability activities should be able to get a 3-year contract.

Recommendation 11



We recommend that the NSW Government has a plan to check if the DAFP is going well.

The plan should:



- think about what is best for clients, advocacy services and the community



- make sure the clients, advocacy services and the community are included in the review



- make sure collecting information and writing reports is only done when it needs to be



- make sure services have what they need to collect information and write reports when they need to.

How will these changes improve disability advocacy?



As these changes are put in place, there will be many benefits to people who:

- use disability advocacy services
- provide disability advocacy services.



People with disability will be able to:

- more easily use disability advocacy services where and when they need them
- get quicker service
- use a service where staff can do their jobs well.



Disability advocacy organisations will:

- have enough money to provide their services and build their skills
- better understand what is expected from them
- be able to work with other disability advocacy organisations and the NSW Government more easily.



The community will know that people with disability are being supported in the way they should be.

The government will be able to:



- have a better relationship with:
 - disability advocacy organisations
 - people who use disability advocacy organisations



- get information about the best ways to provide disability advocacy services and support disability advocacy organisations



- make sure people with disability get what they need from disability advocacy.

Word list



Advocacy

When someone speaks up for someone who can't speak up for themselves.



Capacity

Your capacity is:

- your ability to do something
- the skills you have.



Conflicts of interest

When someone could affect a decision so the result is better for them.



Contract

A legal agreement between people and organisations.



Funding

How the government pays for disability advocacy services.



Inclusive

If something is inclusive, everyone can take part.



Individual advocacy

When someone speaks up for another person.



Recommendations

Ideas about changes that can be made.



Self-advocacy

When you are your own advocate.



Severe disability

A severe disability affects a person's ability to do things in their daily life.

This can include the way a person can:

- move
- communicate
- take care of themselves.



Systemic advocacy

When a group speaks up for a group of people.

Contact us



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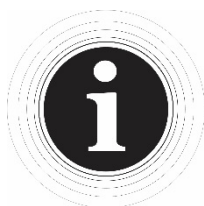
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