What is an Advocate?

Q. What is an advocate?
A. An advocate is any person you choose to represent your interests and act on your behalf.

Q. Who can be an advocate?
A. You can ask a family member, friend or other person to speak on your behalf. They are known as “informal advocates”. There are also special advocacy groups that can become involved to help you if you like. They are known as “systems advocates”. You may also choose to give a member of your family or a close friend an Enduring Power of Attorney (a “legal advocate”).

Q. What are the Advocacy organisations?
A. We can provide you with a list of Services.

Q. How do I get in touch with the Advocacy Services?
A. The staff at Diversicare will either make contact for you, or will provide you with the phone number and contact person to speak to.

Q. When would I use an Advocate?
A. An advocate is good to have when you are discussing your support needs with Diversicare. You might want your advocate to speak on your behalf of just to be there with you to provide some moral support. The level of involvement of your chosen advocate is entirely up to you.

Q. If I nominate someone as my advocate for this instance, do I have him or her if the need arises again in the future?
A. Only if you want to. You may feel that someone else is more suitable to deal with a particular issue.
GUIDELINES FOR ADVOCATES

If a client of Diversicare has asked you to be their advocate, this means that they would like you to act on their behalf in their dealings with Diversicare. You may be a family member or friend of the individual, a member of an advocacy service, or you may have legal authority to act in their interests, e.g. hold an Enduring Power of Attorney.

Being an advocate may mean your attendance or involvement will be required during assessments and reviews of the individual’s personal life situation, his/her service delivery plan, or if the person wishes to communicate or negotiate anything with Diversicare or lodge a complaint about the service.

We ask that our clients complete an “Authority to Act as an Advocate” Form when they wish to appoint or change their advocate. Clients are free to change their informal or systems advocates whenever they wish, however, we request that a new Authority Form be completed each time so that Diversicare staff are always clear on who the individual’s advocate is.

As an advocate of a Diversicare client, we ask you to be aware of the following and ensure that:

- The individual has given their written authority for you to act as their advocate.
- Diversicare is aware that you are acting as the individual’s advocate
- You always act in the best interests of the individual.
- The individual is aware of any issues and developments in relation to the services they receive and which you, as their advocate, may be involved in.
- The individual is kept informed of any development relating to his/her service delivery plan.
- You be familiar with the details of the individual’s service delivery plan.
- You encourage the individual to provide feedback to you about the services they are receiving.
- You advise Diversicare about any changes to the individual’s circumstances and any concerns you have about changing needs.

Be prepared to relinquish the role of advocate should the individual wish this.