

The Advocacy Service - a free and independent service

The Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service is a free service that operates independently from all health and disability service providers, government agencies and HDC. If you want to know more about your rights when using health or disability services, get questions answered, or make a complaint, we can help.

Freephone: 0800 555 050
Email: advocacy@advocacy.org.nz

Our role is to support you to express and try to resolve your concerns. Advocates are not investigators or mediators, nor do we make decisions on whether there has been a breach of the Code. We are here to support you, encourage you to take action (including making a complaint), and assist you to achieve resolution of your concerns.

Advocates follow an alternative dispute resolution process that has several advantages for consumers and providers. The Advocacy Service process is flexible and time-effective, and gives you, the consumer, more control over the process and the results. Generally, people who resolve their disputes through this process are more satisfied because they have been given the opportunity to participate directly in working out their own resolution. Often providers are also more satisfied with the Advocacy Service process, as they are given the opportunity to explain their actions fully and, if appropriate, to apologise directly to you. The Advocacy Service consistently has an annual resolution rate of over 90% (this includes complaint withdrawals), with high satisfaction rates. In the 2016/17 year, 88% of consumers and 86% of providers who responded to satisfaction surveys said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their contact with the Advocacy Service. This is particularly important when you will be having an ongoing relationship with your provider.

Please ask your advocate for more information if you require it. Also feel free to discuss with your advocate any special needs you have relating to communication.

Your privacy

Your advocate will not talk to the health or disability service provider involved in your care about your concerns without you being present. Any written communication from the service will be formal and on letterhead, and you will receive a copy. Providers are requested to address their communication to you. Advocates will receive a copy only if you have requested that the provider send them a copy.

When you use our service, we will collect a certain amount of information from you, to enable us to assist you in resolving your concerns, to protect the wider body of consumers and ensure the proper accountability of providers, and for monitoring and statistical purposes.

Information collected by advocates is stored in accordance with the Privacy Act. Advocacy Service managers, auditors, and the Director of Advocacy have access to that information. Information about you and your complaint may also be provided to the Health and Disability Commissioner, as required under the Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994.

You have the right to view and/or receive a copy of the information about you collected by the Advocacy Service, and to have alterations made to anything that is factually incorrect. If you have any questions or concerns about the access to, and the use of, your personal information, please discuss those with us.

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