

3.4	ADVOCACY POLICY
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Applies to: Board Members, All Staff and Volunteers	Version: 1
Specific responsibility: CEO	Date approved:
	Next review date:

Policy context: This policy relates to	
Standards or other external requirements	Home Care Standards, Tasmanian Quality and Safety Standards,
Legislation or other requirements	
Contractual obligations	

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

A client, volunteer or staff member may want another person to speak to Meals on Wheels (or any other service provider) for them, this is known as Advocacy. Advocacy is therefore about helping a person to speak up for themselves, to make sure their views, complaints and opinions are heard and understood. If they find it hard, or are unable to speak for themselves then they may need an "Advocate" who will speak for them, either for a one off situation or under some more long term basis. Advocacy is a right under Meals on Wheels Rights and Responsibilities policies.

Advocacy is when someone supports another person to speak up, or speak on their behalf to help them address a need to get what they are entitled to.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is Meals on Wheels' policy to support, and work in partnership with nominated individuals or an advocate service for people requiring or seeking to receive our service. We also have a duty to recognise and make advocacy services available without prejudice if required to for any service user, who is making or intending to complaint.

Meals on Wheels will accept any person chosen by the client, volunteer or staff member as their advocate. Anyone can act as an advocate, either on a one off basis to address a particular situation or over a longer period of time covering all or more general issues. An advocate can be a friend, family member, neighbour, legal representative or a formal advocacy service such as Advocacy Tasmania. If a client, staff member or volunteer has chosen an advocate to represent them, that advocate must be registered with Meals on Wheels, personal information will not be released or discussed with any persons or organisation without the person's express permission. Once a person has chosen an advocate to represent them, that person or agency must register with Meals on Wheels.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ADVOCACY?

For the person:

- It will better enable them to speak for themselves.
- It will provide them with access to information, professional support, complaint procedures and services.
- It will help them see what other services are available, such as local community services, self-help groups and other support networks.
- It can make it easier for them to get information in a way they can understand.
- It will help them choose what they want to do.
- It will help them to get us to better understand their point of view.
- The advocate will only speak for the person.
- The advocate will listen to them without judging them.

For Meals on Wheels:

- Clarifying a person's views and wishes.
- Assisting with expressing their views effectively.
- Representing their views faithfully and effectively.
- Providing independent advice and accurate information.
- Enabling negotiation and resolution of conflict to take place. Eg, between a client and his or her carer.

Advocacy is NOT about:

- Persuading the person to agree with you or with others.
- The advocate deciding what is in the person's best interest.
- Complaining – Advocacy is not an alternative complaints procedure but may involve the advocate in supporting the person in making a complaint effectively.
- Campaigning – although it may highlight the problems and gaps in particular services.
- Providing social support – for example managing someone's financial affairs or organising transport or shopping.
- Interpreting for a person whose first language is not English.

DEALING WITH ISSUES BETWEEN CLIENTS AND THEIR CARERS

Occasionally A Meals on Wheels volunteer or staff member will become aware of a conflict between a client and his or her carer and these conflicts may be severely impacting on the clients quality of life. Care must be taken in these circumstances and while it may be tempting to act as an advocate for either party, at all times the principles of advocacy as detailed above should be followed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

[MoWTAS Policy 3.4 Advocacy Policy \(Board Approved March 2016\)](#)

Further information about Advocacy and the registration of an advocate with Meals on Wheels is available from State Office 1800 696 325 or from Advocacy Tasmania 1800 005 131.

DOCUMENTATION

Documents related to this policy	
Related policies	
Forms, record keeping or other organisational documents	Registration of an Advocate form

Reviewing and approving this policy		
Frequency	Person responsible	Approval
Annually	CEO	Board

Policy review and version tracking			
Review	Date Approved	Signed	Next Review Due
1			
2			
3			