

Individual Advocacy Client Handbook



Empowerment of people with intellectual disability and their families

1. About VALID's Individual Advocacy Support

The Victorian Government funds VALID to provide free individual advocacy support to adults with an intellectual disability and their families.



Individual advocacy supports people to exercise their rights and to be included within their local communities.



VALID's individual advocacy support:

- is available to adults with an intellectual disability who have a disability as defined by the Victorian Disability Services Act 2006
- is usually on a short term basis
- can be provided in a range of ways including,
 - information
 - advice
 - referral
 - direct support (i.e. attending a meeting)
 - representation (see next page)
- is provided in a way that is consistent with the 'To Stand Beside' method (see page 4)
- assists people to address specific problems and challenges that they may have with either disability or community-based services.



Principles

VALID provides free Advocacy support to people who have a disability as defined in the Victorian Disability Act 2006.

The VALID advocacy service:

- respects the right of people who use its services to privacy and confidentiality.
- works with individuals/families in the least intrusive way as possible e.g., only ask the info we need.
- works with individuals/families in a manner which seeks to empower them.
- advocacy service is provided to people in a non-discriminatory manner.



Priority criteria for Individual Advocacy

VALID must manage demand (i.e., when there are more people asking for support than we have staff to assist) for its services.

To do this VALID will respond first to people who are either:

- at risk of harm, abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and/or,
- without any alternative form of advocacy support or representation.



Cost of Advocacy

VALID advocacy is a free service funded by the Victorian State Government Office for Disability.



2. Types of Advocacy Support

Standing Behind:

VALID provides advice and information to support people with intellectual disability to self-advocate and speak up about their rights and achieve their goals.



Standing Beside:

VALID works alongside people with intellectual disability to support them to sort out their concerns and problems.



Standing Before:

VALID represents the interests of people with intellectual disability by defending and promoting their rights.



Family Advocacy

VALID provides advice and assistance to support the natural role played by families advocating for a family member with a disability. However:



- we do not advocate for the needs of the family itself
- our advocacy is always directed towards the VALID Vision
- guided by the principles of the Disability Act 2006.



Advocacy Support

VALID will provide advice if an advocate from another advocacy service asks for advice to assist a person with intellectual disability.



Where a person with intellectual disability has another advocate, VALID will provide advice to the advocate rather than to the person. This is to avoid potential confusion or conflict.



Referral

Where VALID is unable to provide advocacy support, we will refer people to other relevant services. For example:

- families of children are referred to Association for Children with a Disability
- people with legal issues are referred to a legal advocacy service like Villamanta



3. Other VALID programs you may wish to join.

Community Team

The Community Development Team is about inclusion for people with intellectual disability through funded projects, workshops and events.

CD promotes and builds skills, self-confidence and community participation through codesigned activities empowering individuals to advocate for themselves and their local communities.

CD also foster diverse partnerships to enhance accessibility, support and inclusion across local, regional and statewide networks and communities, organisations and levels of government.

More Info contact: Michele@valid.org.au or phone 03 9416 4003



Self-Advocacy Networks

There are four Self-Advocacy Networks across metro Melbourne. One in each region: southern, northern, eastern and western. They meet each month and aim to ‘strengthen the voices’ of people with intellectual disability to:

- Speak up about our rights
- Assist members to develop and use their advocacy skills
- Assist members to learn new things and gain information
- Meet new people and socialise with participants from other services
- Provide a Network that the Department of Health and Humans Services and other key bodies can talk to about participant issues

More info contact:

Sara.de@valid.org.au or phone 03 9416 4003



Rights and Responsibilities



When you use **VALID** support
You have the **RIGHT** to...

Make your own choices

Have a Say

Feel safe

Be listened to

Access information about you

Be respected

When you use **VALID** support you need to be **RESPONSIBLE** by...

Keeping appointments

Working together

Respecting confidentiality (not gossiping)

Being polite

Listening to others

Respecting privacy

Privacy & Confidentiality Policy



VALID does keep some information about you, but we will not tell other people your private information.



Information you give to VALID will be kept secure and confidential.



In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act you may access your file.



The only exception to this policy is where staff are bound by a law to report (e.g., physical abuse) information to the police or government.

Consent to Referral policy



VALID will not accept referrals for service if the individual or family have not given consent for the referral to be made.



The only time we will vary this is where a guardian/carer of a person who is unable to give informed consent due to illness (e.g., dementia) or disability (e.g., intellectual, psychiatric, brain injury) requests assistance for that person.



VALID will still seek to respect the individual privacy and rights of everyone involved.

SPEAKING UP ABOUT YOUR CONCERNS

IF YOU



have a problem

or



**are unhappy about
VALID services**



It's okay



to talk to



**Family/
Advocate**



Key Worker



Coordinator



**It's
OK
to complain**

**Disability Services
Commissioner (Vic.)**



to sort it out, so you are happy

Useful numbers



NDIS (National Disability Insurance Scheme)

Phone: 1800 800 110 TTY: 1800 555 677 and ask for 1800 800 110

Website: www.ndis.gov.au



Linking Australian Government services

Carer Gateway Service 1800 422 737

Centrelink 1800 050 004



Statewide Advocacy Organisations:

Association for Children 03 9818 2000

Advocacy for children under 18 yrs old 1800 654 111

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service 03 5229 2925

Legal advocacy toll free 1800 014 111

Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS) 03 9267 3733

Advocacy for young people 12 - 25 yrs old 1300 727 176



Association for
Children with a
Disability



Villamanta Disability
Rights Legal Service Inc.



NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission T: 1800 035 544

Complaints about any service purchased with NDIS funding

E: feedback@ndiscommission.gov.au

W: www.ndiscommission.gov.au



NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission

Disability Services Commissioner 1800 677 342

W: www.odsc.vic.gov.au



Disability
Services
Commissioner



For a full list of advocacy services visit the VALID website: www.valid.org.au

Contact Information



VALID provides free independent advocacy for people with an **intellectual disability** who are over the age of 18 and reside in Victoria.



We have limited capacity to take on new cases and we prioritise situations where a person with an intellectual disability is experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation.



All service providers and other professionals, please send us an email to intake@valid.org.au with information about your enquiry.



If you are a person with an intellectual disability, a family member or a friend of a person with an intellectual disability you can call us on **03 9114 9415** and leave a message, or you can email us on intake@valid.org.au