

## Advocacy Policy and Procedures

### Policy

Matchu Pty Ltd supports clients to make decisions based on these principles:

- Every person can express their will and preference about what they want
- A person with disability has the right to make decisions
- A person with disability can expect to have appropriate support to make decisions

Matchu therefore supports clients to use an independent advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend, trusted decision-maker or appropriate advocacy service. Advocates will be accepted by Matchu as representing the interests of the participant. Advocates may be used during assessments, reviews, incidents and complaints or for any other communication between the client and the organisation.

### Definition

The *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* defines an **independent advocate**, in relation to a person with disability, to mean a person who:

- is independent of the Agency, the Commission and any NDIS providers providing supports or services to the person with disability
- provides independent advocacy for the person with disability, to assist the person with disability to exercise choice and control and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them
- acts at the direction of the person with disability, reflecting the person with disability's expressed wishes, will, preferences and rights
- is free of relevant conflicts of interest.

### Background

Matchu understand independent advocates:

- will listen to and follow the participant's instructions
- will fairly and impartially articulate the participant's wishes
- is independent and free of conflict of interests
- will assist the client to be better informed, to achieve desired change and to meet the participant's needs
- will increase the participant's confidence, independence, power and achievement of desired outcomes.

### Procedures

When clients first use Matchu services they are informed of the role of advocates, their rights to use advocates, advocacy services and how to contact and involve advocacy services. This is included as part of the NDIS Service Agreement.

Clients are supported if they choose to self-advocate, change advocates, or withdraw their authority.

The Provider actively works with the Client to identify their wishes, will, preferences and rights to establish goals and needs and subsequently develop a Support Plan.

The Provider works with the Participant's advocate, trusted decision maker and/or family member to assist the client to exercise choice and control and to have their voice heard in matters that affect them. This can occur at any time while the client is using Matchu's services

The review of Service Agreements and Support Plans may be used as an opportunity to review advocacy needs with participants.

When a client needs an advocate and a family member or carer cannot fulfill the role Matchu will assist the client to obtain an advocate of the participant's choice. This may include using services such as [Disability Advocacy Finder](#),

When an advocate assists a participant, their involvement will be documented in the participant's file. The PBS practitioner will work with the advocate in line with the participant's wishes and support the involvement of the participant's advocate in all areas of service planning and decision making.

Wherever possible, as per all services, Matchu will include participants' wishes / preferences into service planning and delivery.