

Support and Advocacy Service – Service Providers

What is the Support and Advocacy Service (SAS)?

We understand that it can sometimes be difficult for participants to speak up when they are unhappy about something. If participants disagree with a decision we have made they may want to dispute it. Sometimes they may want to make a complaint about us, the services we fund or the way we do things.

We want to provide participants with access to an impartial and external support and advocacy service to assist them to either dispute one of our decisions or make a complaint to us. They do not need to navigate the dispute or complaint process alone.

There is no requirement for a participant to use a SAS provider if they want to lodge a dispute or make a complaint. If they feel comfortable and confident with the dispute or complaint process and do not need this help, they do not need to use it. The use of a SAS provider to assist participants entirely their choice.

Who can use the SAS?

Scheme participants and their families can obtain assistance from the SAS providers.

How can the SAS help participants?

The SAS providers are intended to:

- provide participants with information about our dispute and complaint processes
- provide end-to-end support to participants through both the dispute and complaint process, including helping them understand what to expect at each stage
- minimise conflict throughout the dispute or complaint process by having an impartial person involved
- help the participant understand the process and the outcome of the dispute or complaint, and
- allow participants support and advocacy that is independent of Lifetime Care and that can be accessed anonymously (if they wish).

All SAS providers are impartial, independent from us and are not involved in a participant's service delivery.

How do participants access the SAS?

The contact details of SAS providers are included on the last page of all certificates issued by Lifetime Care. Similarly, all our Fact Sheets about disputes and complaints contain this information.

A participant may also ask you to connect them to a SAS provider if they are unhappy with something. The contact details for the SAS providers are contained at the end of this information sheet.

Alternatively, you can ask the participant's coordinator or the Customer Resolution Team to touch base with a SAS provider who will contact a participant about the support they need.

How much does the SAS cost?

There is no cost for participants or their families taking advantage of the dispute and complaint advocacy services provided by the SAS providers. This service is funded by Lifetime Care.

Can I refer a participant to a SAS provider for assistance with other issues?

You are free to refer participants and their families to the SAS providers for assistance in relation to other issues, however such assistance will not be funded by Lifetime Care. It will be up to each SAS provider to determine if they are able to provide this additional help.

The support provided by SAS providers is intended to be used exclusively for the purpose of assisting participants and their families with disputes and complaints they are involved with.

How is the role of the SAS different to my role as case manager?

While you often assist a participant to identify a potential dispute or complaint, SAS providers are intended to be by the participant's side throughout the entire process. The focus of the SAS providers is to ensure that participants and their families feel prepared, informed and engaged in the dispute and complaint process. This ensures that once a dispute has been lodged or a complaint has been made, you, as the case manager, do not need to take an active role in the process.

How does the SAS benefit me?

The issues surrounding disputes and complaints can be highly emotional and distressing for participants and their families. The use of an impartial and independent SAS provider will enable you to ensure that the participant remains supported by an experienced advocacy professional while enabling you to continue focusing on their care coordination.

Will Lifetime Care know if a participant has used the SAS?

Not always. The advocacy and support services can be provided to participants and their families on a totally confidential basis. They can receive support during the entire dispute or complaint process from a SAS provider without Lifetime Care knowing that they are accessing the service. Whether or not they want us to know is completely up to them.

Who are the SAS providers?

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia's policy and advocacy team address many issues that affect people living with a spinal cord injury (SCI) and physical disability. They ensure that public money is spent on projects that promote inclusiveness, and lobby for new programs and services that address unmet needs. All their advocates have lived experience with SCI and physical disability.

Contact Spinal Cord Injuries Australia on 1800 819 775 or visit at www.scia.org.au

Synapse

Synapse has assisted, supported and advocated for people with a brain injury, their families and carers for over 30 years. Synapse's vision is that those affected by brain injury and profound disability in Australia are able to lead a life of quality, based on their own decisions and choices. Synapse has a team of highly qualified advocacy staff that will stand beside the participant, assist them and ensure their point of view is expressed.

Contact Synapse on 1800 673 074 or visit at www.synapse.org.au

Disability Advocacy NSW Inc (DA NSW)

DA NSW provides advocacy to people with disabilities who experience unfair treatment or are experiencing disadvantage. DA NSW believes that people with disability have the same rights (and responsibilities) as people without disability. DA NSW aims to ensure that people with a disability realise these rights in practice by advocating with and for them. DA NSW will ensure that each person has access to the service and adopt, apply and promote non-discriminatory advocacy in respect to age, gender, race, culture, religion or disability.

Contact DA NSW on 1300 365 085 or visit at www.da.org.au

Who do I speak with for more information?

For more information about the SAS you can speak with a member of the Customer Resolution Team on 1300 738 586 or at feedback.lifetimecare@icare.nsw.gov.au

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