

## Support and Advocacy Service

### What is the Support and Advocacy Service (SAS)?

icare lifetime care understands that sometimes it can be difficult to speak up when you are unhappy about something.

If you disagree with a decision we have made you may want to dispute it. Sometimes you may want to make a complaint about us, the services we fund or the way we do things.

We want to provide you with access to an impartial and external Support and Advocacy Service (SAS) to assist you to either dispute one of our decisions or make a complaint to us. The dispute or complaint process does not need to be navigated alone.

There is no requirement for you to use a SAS provider if you want to lodge a dispute or make a complaint. If you feel comfortable and confident with the dispute or complaint process and do not need this help, you don't need to use it. The use of a SAS provider to assist you is entirely optional.

### How can SAS help me?

The SAS providers are intended to:

- provide you with information about our dispute and complaint process;
- provide you with emotional support through each of these processes;
- provide end-to-end support to you through both the dispute and complaint process, including helping you understand what to expect at each stage;
- minimise conflict throughout the process by having an impartial person involved;
- alleviate any misunderstandings you may have about the processes or the outcome of the dispute or complaint; and
- allow you support and advocacy that is independent of icare lifetime care and that can be accessed anonymously (if you wish).

All SAS providers are impartial, independent from us and are not involved in your service delivery.

### How can I access SAS?

We have three providers you can choose from. Their contact details are the end of this information sheet. You can contact them at any time in order to start receiving advocacy support for dispute or complaints.

Alternatively, you can ask your case manager or someone at icare lifetime care (such as your coordinator or a member of our Assessment Review team (who handle complaints and disputes) to touch base with a SAS provider who'll then contact you about the support you need.

## How much does it cost?

There is no cost involved in taking advantage of the dispute or complaint advocacy services provided by the SAS providers. This service is funded by **icare lifetime care** at no cost to participants or their families.

## Can I use a SAS provider for help with issues other than complaints or disputes?

You are free to contact a SAS provider for help in relation to other issues, however such assistance will not be funded by **icare lifetime care**. It will be up to each SAS provider to decide if they can assist you and to advise you of any potential costs.

## Will icare lifetime care know if I have used SAS?

We won't know if you have used a SAS provider unless you want us to know.

The support and advocacy and services can be provided to you on a totally confidential basis. You can receive support during the entire dispute or complaint process from a SAS provider without **icare lifetime care** knowing about the service. Whether or not you want us to know is completely up to you.

## 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. It's their role to ensure that public money is spent on projects that promote inclusiveness, and to lobby for new programs and services that address unmet needs. All their advocates have lived experience with SCI and physical disability.

Contact SCIA on 1800 819 775 or see their website <https://scia.org.au/>

### Synapse

Synapse have 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 you, assist you and ensure your point of view is expressed.

Contact Synapse on 1800 673 074 or see their website <http://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 DANSW on 1300 365 085 or see their website <http://da.org.au/>

## **Who do I speak with for more information?**

For more information on the SAS you can speak with either your coordinator or a member of the Assessment Review team. The Assessment Review team can be contacted by phone on 1300 738 586 or email at [feedback.lifetimecare@icare.nsw.gov.au](mailto:feedback.lifetimecare@icare.nsw.gov.au).