

Workers Care Program

Support and Advocacy Service - Service Providers

What is the Support and Advocacy Service (SAS)?

We understand that sometimes it can be difficult for injured workers to speak up when they are unhappy about something. Sometimes they may want to make a complaint about us, the services we fund or the way we do things.

We want to provide injured workers with access to an impartial and external support and advocacy service to assist them to make a complaint to us. They do not need to navigate the complaint process alone.

There is no requirement for an injured worker to use a SAS provider if they want to make a complaint. If they feel comfortable and confident making a complaint and do not need this help, they do not need to use it. The use of a SAS provider to assist injured workers is entirely their choice.

Who can use the SAS?

Injured workers in the Workers Care program and their families can obtain assistance from the SAS providers.

How can the SAS help injured workers?

The SAS providers are intended to:

- provide injured workers with information about our complaint process
- provide injured workers with emotional and end-to-end support through this process
- minimise conflict throughout the complaint process by having an impartial person involved
- alleviate any misunderstandings injured workers may have about the process or the outcome of the complaint, and
- allow injured workers support and advocacy that is independent of Workers Care and that they can access anonymously (if they wish).

All SAS providers are impartial, independent from us and are not involved in an injured worker's service delivery.

Can the SAS provider help injured workers lodge a dispute?

No, SAS providers are not able to assist injured workers with lodging disputes.

If injured workers disagree with a decision we have made about their medical, hospital and rehabilitation treatment, and decide to lodge a dispute, it will be heard by the Personal Injury Commission (PIC). It is not considered appropriate for the SAS providers to provide injured workers with assistance regarding disputes that may be heard in the PIC.

If an injured worker wishes to dispute a decision that we have made, they should speak to their icare contact in the first instance.

How do injured workers access the SAS?

Information about SAS is included on the last page of all 'Notice of Approvals' issued by Workers Care. An injured worker may 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 injured worker's icare contact or a member of the Scheme Integration and Resolution team to touch base with a SAS provider who will contact the injured worker about the support they need.

How much does it cost?

There is no cost involved in injured workers taking advantage of the complaint advocacy services available from the SAS providers. This service is funded by Workers Care at no cost to injured workers or their families.

Can I refer an injured worker to a SAS provider for assistance with other issues?

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

The support provided by SAS providers, which is funded by Workers Care, is intended to be used exclusively to assist injured workers and their families with complaints they are involved with.

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

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

How does using the SAS benefit me?

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

Will Workers Care know if an injured worker has used the SAS?

Not always. The advocacy and support services can be provided to injured workers and their families on a totally confidential basis. They can receive support during the entire complaint process from a SAS provider without Workers 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 injured worker, 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 Scheme Integration and Resolution team on 1300 738 586 or at feedback.workers-care@icare.nsw.gov.au

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