



Service User Policy: Who can ask STAR for advocacy support?

Introduction

STAR has a number of service user policies that help us do our job in a way which is fair. This policy is about who can ask STAR for advocacy support.

What does STAR do?

STAR is an independent advocacy organisation that works with people with intellectual disability and their families to speak up for their rights, change community attitudes, and fix the laws that stop them from living fully inclusive lives of their own choosing.

We share information, skills and build capacity with people with intellectual disabilities, their families and support networks.

We advocate for change using evidence-based research, case studies, policy proposals and presenting the case for change to decision makers, including government, agencies and service providers.

We share the stories of real people from our individual advocacy to highlight the barriers that people with intellectual disability experience, and their successes and contribution to society.

We encourage champions for change to help us change the views of those who don't realise that discrimination and exclusion are making our communities weaker.

STAR supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability.

What we don't do

- STAR is not a crisis or emergency care service
- We are not case workers
- We don't do NDIS appeals
- We are not guardians or decision-makers

Who can use STAR?

Any person with intellectual disability, a family member or a disability support worker can call us and ask for our help and advice. A decision about how much assistance we can provide is decided on a non-discriminatory basis and we are

sensitive to the age, gender, sexuality, marital or employment status, cultural, linguistic and religious background of each person with intellectual disability.

If we think another advocacy group has more experience than STAR and would be better placed to help you, we may refer you to them.

How does STAR decide what to work on?

Here are the things we think about when someone asks for our help and advice:

- Does the person who has the problem or question have an intellectual disability?
- Does the issue fit with our current priorities?
- How urgent is the problem?
- Is this an advocacy issue or can another government or community service meet the person's need – for example, is this something that a support coordinator for an NDIS participant could or should do?
- How much time and effort will the work take and do we have the time and resources to do the work?
- Are there any potential conflicts of interest and can they be transparently resolved?

How does STAR's advocacy work?

STAR's advocates work with people to try and fix a problem as soon as possible. We don't stay involved for a long time, but we know some things take longer than others to sort out.

When you call or email STAR, we try to get some basic information, such as name, contact details and brief summary of the issue. We will talk with or email you about your question or problem and make sure we have the information we need to assess whether we can assist.

We ask ourselves the questions listed in the section above to make sure the problem is something STAR has the expertise and capacity to help with. If we can give some advice on the spot, we will do so, and invite you to call us back if you get stuck.

Sometimes we want to talk about the matter with STAR's other advocates to see if there is some additional advice we can get for you. This means we take the request to our Advocacy Intake meeting. These meetings are held once a week.

After that meeting, we contact you with the advice agreed by the advocacy team, if we think that this will be enough.

If we think this is something we can help with directly, then we tell you that we will support you. STAR will start a file which will include your consent to advocacy, your consent to let STAR talk to relevant people on your behalf and

development of an individual advocacy plan which will include what your issue is, the strategy we agree to, what action we both agree to take, when we will do it by and follow up times. Any other documents or information we might need that will help carry out the plan will be stored in this file. This information is all confidential and you can see more information about that in our Privacy, Confidentiality and Dignity service user policy.

STAR will only do work that you, or your guardian, understand and agree that we can do. You are very welcome to have a support person with you when you meet with STAR. You can ask us to change what we are doing at any time, and you can stop using STAR at any time for any reason.

If you do decide to stop using STAR, for any reason, you can talk to us about this and let us know what you want to do. Whenever possible, we will decide together how and when to end the active advocacy support.

We will set a date for reviewing your Advocacy Plan. At this time we will discuss whether the advocacy will continue or finish. If either you or STAR or both of us decide it should finish we will write this in the file and write to you telling you the file is closing. If at any time in the future you think you may need our advocacy assistance again you can contact us.

We will give you the opportunity to tell us what you liked about STAR and how we could improve. Your feedback is welcome as it helps us improve our advocacy support.

STAR will keep copies of files for at least 7 years from the date on which the file is closed. After this time and if the file is no longer needed for the advocacy purposes for which it was created, we will take reasonable steps to destroy or permanently de-identify personal information.

Complaints

If you are not happy with the way privacy, confidentiality and dignity is managed, you can make a complaint. We will give you information about how to make a complaint and also let you know about other groups or organisations that can help you make a complaint.

Related documents

- Your Rights & Responsibilities policy
- Individual Needs policy
- Privacy, Confidentiality & Dignity policy
- Vulnerable People policy
- Complaints policy
- Compliments, Complaints & Feedback form

Last reviewed: 2022