

DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 1 - Service Access

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
VISION AND CREATIVITY IN PROTEGE RECRUITMENT POLICY**

“Protege recruitment practices have a strong influence on the direction of the advocacy offices development. If protege recruitment is confined to a narrow group of people, it will make the development of an adequate range of advocate role options either impossible or reliant on significantly over or under serving some proteges.

If protege recruitment is essentially a passive process which relies on human service agencies for protege referrals, it is possible that many people most in need of citizen advocacy will be screened out as unsuitable for an advocate or even as a person for whom service providers are disinterested in active spokespersonship. It protege recruitment does not result in valid information which clearly defines protege needs, preferences and characteristics, advocate recruitment cannot be targeted precisely.”

(C.A.P.E. Page 27)

IDENTIFYING AND RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

CRITERIA: “Maintaining a balance across the program”.

The aim of the program is to seek out and respond to the needs of people with disabilities who reflect a diverse cross section of the community. In recognising and responding to these needs it is important to prepare a long term plan which presents a balance of protege needs across the program.

Checklist:

- | | | |
|----|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Vulnerability | “To have nothing or nobody”
other people in life, family etc.
open to exploitation, abuse
level of vulnerability |
| 2. | Advocacy Role | Long term, short term, crisis
Spokesmanship, expressive
Formal, e.g. Guardianship
Administration, Adoptive parents |
| 3. | Level of disability | Capacity to respond
Physical disability
considerations: wheelchair, mobility,
communication aides, personal care
e.g. toileting, feeding |
| 4. | Age/Sex | Under 20, 21 -30, 31 - 40,
41 - 50 51 and over |

5.	Living Situation	Home with parents Community Residential Unit Institution, hostel Private rental Special accommodation, private hotel Boarding house Nursing home
6.	Ethnicity, religion	Minority or oppressed groups
7.	Geographic area	Balance across two municipalities, being mindful of areas of greatest need
8.	Reciprocity	Capacity/incapacity to reciprocate relationship
9.	Formality of Relationship	Some few relationships will require formal recognition. (e.g. guardianship, adoption etc.)

PROCEDURE

STEP 1

The Citizen Advocacy office “seeks out” people with disability in need of advocacy in the following ways:

- i) Determine if/where imbalances exist in present relationships and establish priorities for
 - protege recruitment. e.g. children under 5, older persons unable to reciprocate.
 - Establish strategies for recruiting proteges based on their identity and life circumstances.
 - e.g. if under 5, visit playgroups for disabled children

- ii) Proactively visiting places where people are considered to be most vulnerable and most isolated, e.g.
 - a. Community Residential Units
 - b. Special Accommodation houses
 - c. Nursing homes
 - d. Private hotels, boarding houses
 - e. Finding “links” or “contacts” to people with disabilities who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, e.g. local council workers, accommodation support workers, St Vincent de Paul Society.

- iii) Reacting to information gained during course of our work, e.g. information from supporters of Citizen advocacy who may be direct care staff or service providers (much of this information is received unofficially/confidentially), speaking with

people with disabilities, advocates, visiting training centres, hostels, concerned neighbours etc.

- iv) Referrals from family members, service providers, caregivers. After initial telephone referrals, information may substantiate previous knowledge or staff will follow up with further enquiries. The coordinator will visit the person with a disability if they believe the initial criteria is being met or if they see an opportunity to gain access to a particular service or living situation.

STEP 2

The purpose of the initial meeting with the person with disability is to understand very clearly who the person is and what their life is like - what is their most pressing need.

After the initial meeting if the person with disability has been referred by another person the following decisions are made.

- a. There is no great need for a citizen advocate and the person with disability and referee are told sensitively and honestly. Coordinators may suggest another means of support if appropriate.
- b. Coordinators decide there is a need but it is not pressing, or may be if circumstances change. In this instance a record is kept for future reference.
- c. Coordinators decide the needs of the person with disability are pressing, there is a significant need and/or a sense of urgency and the person is appropriate for an active recruitment plan.

The staff will visit the potential protegee on a few occasions in order to gain a very clear, honest view of what life is like for that person. During the initial meetings staff will explain clearly and honestly what citizen advocacy is and how an advocate could be of assistance. People with disabilities have a right to say "No" to advocacy and this is respected, however in some instances a person in desperate need of advocacy may be unaware that they have rights, or that their rights are being denied. In other instances they may be at great risk, in personal danger or unaware of implications of decisions being made about their lives. In these situations every endeavour will firstly be made to obtain the potential protegee's consent and address the potential protegee's lack of understanding perhaps through obtaining other assistance. eg. family assistance etc.

If, after these efforts, the concept of advocacy cannot be understood by the potential protegee it may be clearer to describe an advocate as "a friend who will help you".....

STEP 3

Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury actively recruits for five people at any one time. This enables the Coordinator to establish and approach "contact" people in particular neighbourhoods. Finding an advocate can be a very slow process requiring much ground work and waiting. Five people on a working list allows for active involvement in advocate recruiting without losing a clear picture of individual lives and situations.

HOW DO YOU BECOME A PROTEGE

Someone may tell the Coordinator about you.

- 1. You must have SPECIAL NEEDS**
- 2. You must LIVE IN SUNBURY OR THE DISTRICT**
- 3. You must WANT TO HAVE AN ADVOCATE**
- 4. The Committee and Coordinator must agree that you
NEED AN ADVOCATE after they:**
 - Talk to you**
 - Get to know you**
 - Listen to you**
 - See where and how you live**

CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS

MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

1. Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury will recruit persons with an intellectual disability and persons with multiple disabilities where the disability has been acquired before adulthood. Persons recruited must reside or have roots in the Sunbury and Districts area.
2. This policy applies to people regardless of ability, gender, religion, age or culture.
3. Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will endeavour to make people with an intellectual disability in the Sunbury area aware of its existence, its aims and its activities. In that regard, Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will clearly and persistently promote and explain its aims and activities.
4. To gain an understanding of the needs of people with an intellectual disability, and to meet those needs, Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will endeavour to involve people with an intellectual disability in its management by encouraging them to become members of the Committee or of its sub-committees, and by encouraging members of the organisation to propose and to second members with an intellectual disability to become members of the Committee or of its sub-committees.
5. Citizen Advocacy Sunbury abides by the principles of Citizen Advocacy as written in CAPE(Standards for Citizen Advocacy Program Evaluation - O'Brien and Wolfensberger)./ The staff of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will, with the assistance of the Committee of Management, actively seek out and identify people with an intellectual disability or with multiple disabilities who may need a citizen advocate.
6. The effectiveness of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury is rated by an external evaluation team against the standards of CAPE. The standards which specifically apply to meeting the needs of proteges in protege/advocate relationship:

R1411	The protege's age
R1412	The protege's capacity for relationship reciprocity
R1413	The protege's need for spokespersonship to defend human and legal rights
R1421	The diversity of advocacy roles
R143	Avoiding social overprotection
R21	Vision and creativity of protege recruitment
R22	Advocate recruitment
R23	Advocate orientation
R24	Advocate-protege matching
R25	Follow-along and support to relationships
R26	Ongoing training for advocates
R27	Advocate-associates emphasis

7. People with an intellectual disability have a great variety of needs for representation and relationships which can be met by citizen advocates. Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will be flexible in its recruitment to establish and to support relationships which will best suit the persons and their changing circumstances. The staff of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will get to know potential proteges, their needs, preferences and their characteristics on a personal level, and will consciously and systematically recruit citizen advocates to meet their needs.
8. Citizen Advocacy Sunbury recognises that, with present resources, only a small number of people with an intellectual disability can be matched. In order that as wide a range of

advocacy needs as possible can be met, Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will ensure that proteges are recruited from both sexes and from a wide range of ages (birth to old age), living environment, ability, types of advocacy, duration of relationship, and the levels of demand that proteges make of their advocates.

9. Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will take particular care to seek out people with intellectual disability who:
 - are at risk of social exclusion
 - have difficulties in forming reciprocal relationships
 - have challenging behaviour
 - are at risk of abuse of their personal and human rights
 - are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and inappropriate or unethical treatment.

Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will then carefully and systematically plan and implement recruitment, orientation, matching, support and follow-up to ensure that advocates likely to meet these needs are found and given every encouragement to meet each protege's needs and wishes.

10. Advocates will be given advice and assistance to locate and use the community and service resources necessary to meet their protege's needs and wishes, and assistance in campaigning to have these provided if they are not readily available.
11. Crisis advocates and advocate-associates with a wide range of knowledge and experience will be recruited so that the needs of people with an intellectual disability in crisis may be met, and so that advocates may be given professional advice by the advocate-associates.
12. For each protege and protege/advocate relationship Citizen Advocacy Sunbury will have a written record of:
 - The Protege's life experiences, characteristics, aspirations, needs and the potential advocacy role.
 - Strategies for an implementation of advocate recruitment and orientation to meet the needs of each protege.
 - The orientation of advocates both generally, and for each protege's needs;
 - The matching process, and the responsibilities and expectations explained to the protege and to the advocate, and any ideas given to stimulate each advocate to meet his or her protege's needs.
 - The follow-along and support, advice and help given to advocates to meet the needs of the protege as originally defined and as they change with time, and the progress of the relationship.
 - The Annual Internal Relationship Review
 - The regular review of all protege/advocate relationships by staff to evaluate, with the assistance of the Committee, the strategies of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury.
 - The review by staff and at least one Committee member of any matches which have discontinued to ascertain the causes of the discontinuation and, if necessary, to amend policies and practices as indicated by the review.

All records and documentation will be confidential in accordance with the Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality Policy of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury.

DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 2 - Individual Needs

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS POLICY:
A GUIDE FOR PROTEGES**

When we try to find an advocate for you, it is important for us to know what your needs are. Your needs are very important and we will find someone who will make sure that your needs are cared for.

- Any information about you will be kept private. The information you give us will help us to find the best person to act as an advocate for you.
- We will talk with you and make a plan that will help us to find the best advocate for you.
- We will find an advocate who will meet your needs and who is the best person to help you.
- We will make sure that your advocate understands and respects your needs.

If you have a problem at any time, your advocate is there to help you.

DISABILITY SERVICES STANDARD 3: Decision Making & Choice

DECISION MAKING & CHOICE POLICY

From the outset proteges(consumers) will receive a protege policy handbook which explains the concept of an advocate/protege relationship. This handbook also describes policies and procedures of the program, and its scope and limitations. For those who cannot read the coordinator will ensure an independent person will explain the program to the protege enabling them to determine the type of service best suited to him/her.

During advocate orientation and follow along support, a strong emphasis is placed on advocates not only helping proteges make decisions but presenting options to proteges; helping proteges become aware of their rights and life's possibilities and options.

Proteges have the option of becoming a consumer representative on the committee of management, elected at an the annual general meeting.

Information about Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury's organisational decisions are distributed via the newsletter, annual reports, memo's and letters to advocates and proteges.

Protege's are given information about relevant disability agencies and other community services such as those listed below:

The Office of The Public Advocate
436 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne Phone: 9603 9500

Able Community Services
30 Station Street
Sunbury 3429 Phone: 9740 7100
Able Employment Services: 9740 7244

V.A.L.I.D.
1st Floor, Unit 1, 2 Walmer Street
Abbotsford 3067
Phone: 03 9427 8299 Fax: 03 9427 8739

STAR Victoria Inc.
2nd floor, Ross House 247 -251 Flinders Lane
Melbourne 3000
Phone: 9650 2730 Fax: 9650 6972

CHOICES YOU HAVE

YOU can be involved in:

- **The Committee of Management**
- **Citizen Advocacy Evaluations**
 - **The Newsletter**
- **Working Groups at Citizen Advocacy**
- **Important decisions at Citizen Advocacy**

YOU can contact a Committee Member with your:

- **Suggestions**
- **Requests**
- **Queries**

Other services which may be able to help you are:

The Office of The Public Advocate
436 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne 3000. Phone: 9603 9500

Able Community Services
30 Station Street
Sunbury 3429 Phone: 9740 7100
Able Employment Services: 9740 7244

STAR Victoria Inc.
2nd floor, Ross House 247
251 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000
Phone: 9650 2730 Fax: 9650 6972

DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 4 - Privacy, Dignity and Confidentiality

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
CONFIDENTIALITY, PRIVACY AND DIGNITY POLICY**

A Citizen Advocacy relationship is a unique relationship in which a person with a disability can expect to be treated with respect and dignity; not just respect for the person but also for their dreams and aspirations, their wishes, plans and problems. Advocates are in a position of trust and must be aware of the right to privacy and confidentiality involved in such a personal relationship. This is of great importance when advocating on behalf of your protege, e.g. obtaining a service, negotiating with government departments, etc. We all have a right to privacy and proteges should be consulted before divulging information of a personal nature. It is the responsibility of the advocate to determine what is to be regarded as confidential in consultation with the protege, and how and with whom the non-confidential information is to be shared. It could be necessary at times to act on confidential information. In this case this needs to be explained to the protege and their permission obtained before acting on this.

The coordinator is also aware of the need for confidentiality and any information of a personal nature is treated with respect. The Coordinator will not pass on personal information about proteges or advocates to any other agencies or individuals without the consent of the people involved and then only through specific written consent using a CASD release form prior to information release. In the case of an evaluation or review of the program, permission from the advocate and protege will be sought before any information is used.

A record of relevant information, e.g. names, addresses, phone numbers, contact and brief notes from phone conversations or discussions to be followed up on behalf of advocates and proteges, etc. are kept at the office, and accessible only to the Coordinator. Both advocates and proteges have a right to see such office records at any time.

Information held about proteges on their CASD file may include:

- the protege's life experiences, characteristics, aspirations, needs and the potential advocacy role;
- the follow-along and support, advice and help given to advocates to meet the needs of the protege as originally defined and as they change with time and the progress of the relationship;
- services being received;
- other allies e.g. family, friends;

CONFIDENTIALITY

Anything you tell your Advocate is CONFIDENTIAL.
They must ask you if it is OK to tell others about your news.

- **Citizen Advocacy asks about and writes down only the things about you it really needs to know.**
- **Citizen Advocacy tells you what things are written down about you and why. These are put in your file.**
- **You are able to see your file any time you wish.**
- **Your file contains information such as your name, address, phone number, your needs, wishes, interests and why you need an advocate.**
- **Your file also has details of your advocates contact with the staff of the program.**

All information about you and your advocate is

CONFIDENTIAL

this means

NO ONE ELSE

is told about it

UNLESS YOU SAY SO!!!

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
INC.**

36 Macedon Street, Sunbury 3429 Ph: 9744 7378

PROTEGE CONSENT FORM

Authority to Obtain and Release Information

I (full name).....

of (address).....

give permission for Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury & Districts Inc. to recruit an
advocate for me.

I understand that staff will need to talk about my needs and life experiences with
potential advocates and that when doing this staff will respect my privacy and dignity.

Full Name:

Signed: Date:.....

DISABILITY SERVICE STANDARD 7 - Complaints and Disputes

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
GRIEVANCE POLICY**

The purpose of a Grievance Policy is to provide a framework through which an advocate or protege can register a grievance in the knowledge that a resolution will be pursued in the best interest of all parties.

The policy allows for participation in the resolution of complaints through mediation. All procedures are based on conciliation not confrontation, negotiation rather than conflict, with resolution being the objective.

The formalised Grievance Policy is the final stage of resolution where normal processes to resolve problems have not been effective.

The rights of all parties will be respected and a fair and reasonable solution to the grievance will be sought.

The aim is to ensure that all proteges or advocates who feel concerned with an issue are given a fair and equitable opportunity to air their grievance and have it addressed in a fair and equitable manner.

- If an advocate or protege have a grievance with a coordinator (or coordinators) they need to first talk to the persons involved.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, or feel you are not able to do this, a member of the committee of management can be approached as a facilitator.
- If at all possible, put your complaint in writing
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times.
- If still unresolved then the matter will be referred to the Committee of Management. This will be done as quickly as possible so that there is not great lapse of time.
- If you are still not satisfied with how your complaint was handled you can lodge a complaint about Citizen Advocacy, its coordinators or its committee of management with the funding body. Contact the Project Officer, Disability Programs, Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 5th Floor, 2 Casselden Place, Cnr. Spring & Lonsdale Streets, Melbourne 3000. Phone: 9285 8523

Alternatively you can contact:

The Office of the Public Advocate:

436 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Phone: 9603 9500

The Local Police:

Sunbury: Phone 9744 8111 Gisborne: Phone 54 282640

Chairperson of Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury:

John Armstrong Phone: 9744 6559

**WHAT DO I DO IF I'M UNHAPPY
WITH MY ADVOCATE OR
CITIZEN ADVOCACY?**

If you are unhappy with your advocate or anything else with citizen advocacy:

SPEAK UP to your advocate and try to sort it out

or

SPEAK UP to one of the coordinators

or

SPEAK UP to the committee

Talking about problems is one of the best ways to fix them up.

Other People who may help you are:

The Office of the Public Advocate:

436 Lonsdale Street Melbourne Phone: 9603 9500

The Local Police: Sunbury: Phone 9744 8111

Gisborne: Phone 54 282640

Chairperson of Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury:

John Armstrong Phone: 9744 6559

REMEMBER:

**YOUR COMPLAINT IS ONLY BETWEEN
YOU AND THE PEOPLE YOU TELL.
WHOEVER YOU TELL WILL MAKE SURE
IT IS SORTED OUT IN AN AGREED TIME
FRAME.**

DISABILITY ENHANCED SERVICE STANDARD 8.9

CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS GRIEVANCE POLICY FOR STAFF

The purpose of a Grievance Policy is to provide a framework through which a staff member can register a grievance in the knowledge that a resolution will be pursued in the best interest of all parties.

The policy allows for participation in the resolution of complaints through mediation. All procedures are based on conciliation not confrontation, negotiation rather than conflict, with resolution being the objective.

The formalised Grievance Policy is the final stage of resolution where normal processes to resolve problems have not been effective.

The rights of all parties will be respected and a fair and reasonable solution to the grievance will be sought.

The aim is to ensure that all staff who feel concerned with an issue are given a fair and equitable opportunity to air their grievance and have it addressed in a fair and equitable manner.

- If a staff member has a grievance with the Committee of Management they need to first talk to the persons involved.
- If you are not satisfied with the outcome, or feel you are not able to do this, an independent third party acceptable to both parties can be approached as a facilitator.
- If at all possible, put your complaint in writing
- Confidentiality will be respected at all times.
- Staff are advised to refer to Social & community Services Award 1995 Grievance procedures.
- If still unresolved then the matter will be referred to the Committee of Management. This will be done as quickly as possible so that there is not great lapse of time.
- If you are still not satisfied with how your complaint was handled you can lodge a complaint about Citizen Advocacy, its Coordinators or its Committee of Management with the funding body. Contact the Project Officer, Disability Programs, Commonwealth Department of Human Services and Health, 5th Floor, 2 Casselden Place, Cnr. Spring & Lonsdale Streets, Melbourne 3000. Phone: 9285 8523

CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS DISCONTINUATION POLICY

RATIONALE

When an advocate becomes involved in the life of a person with a disability, in many instances they are the first and only person who is not a paid caregiver or a service provider. Sunbury Citizen Advocacy is very aware of the lifetime of wounding which occurs with the 'revolving door' syndrome where workers, pseudo friends come and go in rapid succession. The program has a responsibility and a firm commitment not to add to this wounding process and consequently any relationship that breaks down is seen as an additional potentially wounding experience and an occurrence that needs to be treated with appropriate sensitivity.

A DEFINITION

Discontinuation is the term used to describe an advocacy relationship which ends or discontinues.

As the program had been in operation for many years several relationships have "outgrown" an advocacy role. Our experience has been that advocates and their proteges enjoy the sense of "belonging to Citizen Advocacy" even if they no longer are actively supported by the program. These relationships continue to receive a newsletter. They are invited and welcome to attend any support nights or functions which may be of interest to them.

In our experience discontinuations occur for the following reasons:

1. Occasionally the advocate and the protege together decide that there is no longer a need for advocacy and they continue to see each other in a friendship or acquaintanceship capacity, no longer involved with or supported by the Citizen Advocacy office .

Action: When a relationship ends in this way the program sees the transition as a positive step. At the same time advocates and proteges are aware that the office is prepared to support the relationship at any time in the future if the needs arises.

2. At the request of the protege or person with a disability who decides they do not wish to have a particular advocate for a range of reasons.

Action: If the protege is uncomfortable or unhappy because of a personality clash or an inability to relate to the advocate, the Coordinators will spend considerable time with the protege deciding on an appropriate course of action. This usually involves speaking with the advocate separately; a discussion with both parties if the protege agrees (a Grievance Policy is in place). If the protege still wishes to discontinue the relationship another advocate will only be recruited if there is a major need.

Sometimes people with disabilities become hooked into a service mentality which affects the way they see an advocate's involvement. A protege may have an expectation that an advocate will perform in a certain way and if the advocate does not respond to the friend's demand they request another advocate. Sometimes people with disabilities who are matched with an advocate may be encouraged to seek another if paid carers are unhappy with an advocates's role.

3. In relationships that have been established for a few years we sometimes need to face a situation where an advocate has a change of lifestyle or moves interstate or overseas for an extended period. Advocates do not make these decisions lightly and they are aware of the implication in the life of their protege.

Action: If advocates are away for an extended period they are encouraged to keep up the contact in some other form, e.g. letters, cards, taped messages, a trusted mutual friend, arranged holidays or visits. Advocates in this situation may request another advocate for their protege, or it may be decided that the protege does not require a Citizen Advocate during the absence. Where necessary the Coordinators continue to keep up contact with the protege during the absence.

4. Where either the advocate or partner move away from the area. People with disabilities sometimes have the opportunity to change their lifestyle and move residence voluntarily, however more commonly people with disabilities are “moved” for a range of reasons other than in their best interests. These moves are often vigorously opposed by advocates, they are often deliberate, to break connection and advocates are often not consulted.

Action: Coordinators speak with the advocate and support and encourage the advocate to explain the reason for the discontinuation as honestly and sensitively as possible. The advocate must be given the opportunity to finalise the advocacy relationship without feelings of failure.

After the advocate has spoken with their protege, the Coordinators will follow up to make sure the protege understands, doesn't feel they have been rejected or caused the discontinuation. Caregivers or another person may be involved (if there is someone). Coordinators keep up contact for as long as necessary. A second match may be made if necessary.

5. Life threatening illness or death of protege or advocate

Action: Advocates with friends who are ill or hospitalised are supported and resourced by the Coordinators. Citizen Advocacy - Sunbury is very aware that people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable when hospitalised and this in itself can be a life threatening experience. (see Wolfensberger Deathmaking). If a death occurs the Coordinators will continue to support the advocate during the grieving process, i.e. appropriate literature, courses, etc. as well as just being there to talk things through.

If an advocate dies the protege will also need to be supported through the grieving process. Another advocate will be introduced depending on the need, either short term or long term. The advocacy office will keep in touch with the protege. Sometimes an advocate family member or mutual friend will be available to make this less painful.

6. Discontinuations that disturb us, the ones we try to prevent through orientation and support, are the discontinuations that occur when advocates lose interest, become too busy or have family or work commitments that make it impossible for them to continue.

Action: As for 4 above.

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT**

Citizen Advocacy upholds the principles of equal opportunity.

All people, regardless of their race, gender, socio-economic status, religion, age, physical and/or intellectual ability, will have access to this service.

Every effort will be made to recruit suitable advocates to assist people with special needs. e.g. those of a non-English speaking background.

Advocates will be chosen on the basis of their competence and genuine concern for disadvantaged people, regardless of their race, gender, socio-economic status, religion or age.

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY - SUNBURY & DISTRICTS
AVAILABILITY OF CRISIS ADVOCATES POLICY**

Situations will arise in which a protege has a critical, immediate need for representation or instrumental support. The typical process of recruiting, orientating and matching advocates will often be too slow for needed immediate response.

In addition a protege who is already matched needs to avoid involvement in crisis situations which are so demanding as to strain the ability of the advocate to support the relationship.

In order to ensure that the program can adequately represent people in crisis without drawing staff into a service providing relationship with an individual protege the office will recruit and support a number of stand-by, crisis advocates.

Crisis Advocacy relationships will typically be instrumentally focused and time limited though the potential exists for the advocate and protege to choose to broaden their relationship after the crisis situation is resolved.

Standard 4 Privacy, Dignity & Confidentiality
(Minimum Supporting Standard 4.5)

Guidelines for use of Protege Consent Form

Each proteges consent is obtained before any information about him or her is sought or released by the program.

Authority to Obtain and Release Information

This form gives written authority to staff of Citizen Advocacy Sunbury & Districts to obtain and release information about a potential protege that directly relates to the recruitment of a Citizen Advocate in relation to meeting individual needs of that protege.

POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

The policies and procedures in this handbook are to be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Committee of Management in consultation with the advocates and proteges of the program.