

NAS Clarity of Purpose

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities (NAS) is funded and supported by the Citizens Information Board (CIB). The Comhairle Act 2000 and the Citizens Information Act 2007 give CIB a statutory responsibility for the provision of advocacy, particularly for people with disabilities. NAS fulfils this function.

NAS FUNCTION

NAS provides an independent, representative, confidential and free, issue-based advocacy service that puts the person at the centre and adheres to the highest professional standards. It is a countrywide service, managed under one National NAS board. Independent, representative advocacy empowers and is directed by the people who use it. It is person centred, accountable, accessible, impartial and independent of service providers, families and other supports. NAS ensures that when life decisions are made, due consideration is given to the will and preference of people with disabilities and that their rights are upheld. NAS are not decision makers.

NAS VISION

To work towards a society that ensures the full participation of persons with disabilities. We identify the core human rights as being dignity, autonomy, equality and independence. We recognise the capacity of persons with disabilities to make their own decisions equally with others, in accordance with United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCPRD).

NAS REMIT

NAS has a particular remit for adults (aged 18+) with disabilities who:

1. Live in the community & are isolated from their community and services
2. Have communication differences
3. Are inappropriately accommodated
4. Live in residential services
5. Attend day services
6. Have limited informal or natural supports.

NAS VALUES

1. Independence
2. Autonomy
3. Equality/Citizenship
4. Respect
5. Empowerment.

WHO CAN MAKE AN ENQUIRY?

Any person can contact NAS directly or a friend or carer/staff member can contact NAS on their behalf with the person's agreement/permission.

NAS ADVOCACY PRACTICE

Standards for NAS advocacy practice are set out in the NAS Code of Practice and in a full set of NAS advocacy policies. NAS advocates are bound by these policies and procedures.

ENQUIRIES TO NAS

Can be made in a number of ways:

1. NAS National line **0761 07 3000**
2. Emails to: info@advocacy.ie
3. Directly to a NAS advocate
4. Can be initiated by an advocate where an advocacy issue is identified for a person who is not in a position to self-refer.

Where an enquiry is made by a third party, the person's consent to contact NAS on their behalf should be obtained in so far as possible.

All enquiries received by NAS will go through an enquiry process to determine if NAS is the right service to best support the person. This is done by determining what the person's advocacy issue is from their perspective and then by applying the NAS Access & Eligibility Criteria.

This Criteria considers a broad range of questions, including things like: quality of life, the person's ability to self-advocate, whether the person has natural supports (where no conflict of interest exists) or can avail of support from another organisation/person to progress their issue and the ability for the issue to be progressed. If the advocacy issue can be supported by a citizens information service/MABS service, NAS may signpost the enquiry to these services.

ADVOCACY CASE

If the person is deemed eligible for NAS advocacy support and they wish to engage with NAS, then an advocacy case is opened (or when necessary waitlisted) and work will commence with the person to agree an advocacy plan to progress their issue. Work between the person and their advocate is confidential. Once advocacy goals are achieved, the case is closed and work with the advocate ceases.



How Advocacy Ready are you?

This short questionnaire is useful for you to consider how well you are supporting people's right to access an advocate

- Are people in the service familiar with the National Advocacy Service?
- Are people who use the service and employees aware that they are free to make enquiries to the National Advocacy Service without approval from others?
- Before making an enquiry to NAS for somebody, have you asked them if they would like an advocate & sought their permission to share their personal information?
- Do your policies acknowledge and support people's right to access the National Advocacy Service?
- Do you freely provide all information requested by advocates on behalf of people they support?
- Is it practice to always invite to and accommodate people at all meetings concerning them?
- Is it practice for advocates to be notified and welcomed at meetings with and/or on behalf of a person also?
- Do you support a person's right to access the National Advocacy Service, even when this is opposed by others?
- Do you respect the confidentiality between the person and their advocate?
- Is it practice to facilitate the National Advocacy Service to approach and promote its services to individuals, groups and those employed by the service?
- Do you facilitate the National Advocacy Service spending time with people so they can get to know them and gain insight into their experiences in various settings?
- Do you recognise and respect that the advocate's role is to represent the persons will and preference, even if at times this differs from the views of the service and/or others?
- Do you give sufficient notice to give advocates appropriate time to work with people in advance of meetings?
- Do you recognise that what you may identify as an advocacy issue for a person, if they do not agree or prioritise, may not be the advocacy issue that their advocate then supports them with?

*The above list of questions relate to NAS Advocacy specifically.
NAS acknowledges that people may also choose to engage other advocacy support outside of NAS.*