

Southern Community Care Development Inc (SCCD)

POLICY 3.5 - CLIENT ADVOCATES

CLIENTS ARE ENABLED & ENCOURAGED TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHTS TO USE AN ADVOCATE AS A PART OF ANY NEGOTIATIONS WITH SCCD.

What is an Advocate?

An advocate is a person who, with the authority of the client, represents the client's interests. Clients may use an advocate of their choice to negotiate on their behalf. This may be a family member, friend or advocacy service.

Advocates are accepted, and indeed encouraged, by SCCD Projects, during complaints or for any other communication between the client and SCCD.

Procedure for Appointing an Advocate

Clients wishing to use an advocate are asked to inform SCCD in writing of the name of the person they wish to negotiate on their behalf. The client has the right to change their advocate at any time and is asked to inform SCCD in writing of any change (*Authority to Advocate Form/package*).

SCCD staff ensure clients are aware of their right to use an advocate, and will regularly remind clients of this option (see also **3.4 Client Complaints** & **3.2 Promotion of SCCD Services**).

Some SCCD project staff act as advocates as a part of their work for specific client target group/s (see **3.PROJECT**). However, SCCD staff only advocate with services outside of SCCD and do not act as advocates in negotiations with other SCCD projects. In circumstances where a client has asked for a SCCD staff member to be their advocate, the requested advocate is allocated only in the following instances:

- there is no conflict of interest for the worker or the Project that would disadvantage the client;
- there is no conflict of interest for the worker or the Project relating to other clients advocating for;
- the worker is appropriately skilled and experienced to assist the client and his/his specific issue;
- Project resources allow the necessary time commitment;
- with supervisor approval; and
- it is relevant and appropriate for the specific SCCD Project to be involved.

If the complaint involves a situation in which it is not appropriate for SCCD staff to advocate, the staff member who takes the enquiry provides the following response to the client:

- explain that SCCD cannot provide an advocate and why;
- provide basic information only, which may include an explanation of rights and encouraging him/her to ask the relevant agency about their complaints procedure; and
- provide contacts for other advocates.

Key Documents: *project-specific brochures, project-specific Job Descriptions, Authority to Advocate Form/package*

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE APPROVAL: 3/12/09