**Purpose**

* To ensure the CLNZ Residents know of their right to have an advocate at any time.
* To ensure that family/whãnau, welfare guardians are clear about the role of an advocate.

**Underlying Principle**

* Every person has the right to support in all areas of their life.
* Those who cannot manage their own affairs are best assisted by a welfare guardian who ensures that their needs are met.

**Procedure**

* Any appointed welfare guardian is documented and copies of the orders filed.
* The role of the advocate and welfare guardian is discussed at the very first meeting when a Resident is beginning their trial placement at CLNZ. The referring person is encouraged to pursue this matter if it has not already been considered.
* The Booklet “Your Rights as a Resident at CLNZ” also covers the right to have an advocate.
* Support of an advocate must be offered in the following situations:
	+ Whenever an issue arises concerning informed consent.
	+ If there is a complaint.
	+ If abuse is disclosed or suspected.
* CLNZ will support any Resident requiring access to an advocate and provide contact details to external agencies.

**The following Agencies offer Advocacy**

* People First www.peoplefirst.org.nz A self-advocacy movement for people with intellectual disabilities. 0800 20 60 70
* HDC Advocacy Service www.advocacy.hdc.org.nz a free service. 0800 555 050
* CCS Disability Action www.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz 0800 227 2255

**The Role of an Advocate**

* Listen to concerns.
* Gives information about the person’s rights.
* Helps identify and clarify issues.
* Helps the person to explore the options available.
* Assists the person to resolve each issue.
* Supports the person in the actions that are taken to resolve their concerns.

**What is Advocacy?**

* An understanding of a person’s needs.
* A strong commitment of a philosophy, values based.
* Speaking and voicing for another’s rights, or your own rights.
* Knowledge of resources, what is available in the community?
* Knowledge of systems.
* Knowledge of options.
* Supporting an individual, group, family/whãnau or organisation.
* Seeking alternative solutions.
* Assertiveness.
* Advocacy must share the interests of the persons for whom they are advocating for.

**Advocacy skills include**

* Counselling.
* Communication.
* Assertiveness.
* Negotiation.
* Networking (building alliances).

**Advocacy requires**

* Identification of problems, calling for solutions and goal attainment.
* Some involvement in disagreements and confrontation.
* Contacting and communication effectively with bureaucrats and political representatives to have direct influence.
* Some ‘boat rocking’.
* Sustained commitment (resistive systems often attempt ‘to wait out the storm!’).
* Careful planning and preparation.

**Advocacy covers the following**

* Speaking up for yourself or others.
* Issues.
* Establishing and maintaining rights.
* Fairness (equity) and equality.
* Changing bureaucracies and society.
* Action (advocacy is not passive).

**Advocates may be**

* A natural advocate e.g. a parent.
* A volunteer advocate e.g. a citizen advocate, a ‘friend’.
* A corporate advocate e.g. a voluntary organisation such as IDEA Services.
* A public advocate e.g. the Ombudsman.
* A professional advocate e.g. a lawyer.
* A Court appointed advocate e.g. a guardian.
* The ideal - a self-advocate e.g. the person themselves.

**Advocates are**

* Good communicators, assertive, an assertive person is committed to presenting rights. An assertive attitude is important in recognising that rights are being violated.
* Sometimes rather alone.
* Good strategists.
* Sometimes labelled as complainers or troublemakers.
* Supportive and responsive to expressed needs.
* Open for rejection and criticism.
* Consultants, they empower the person or group.
* Flexible and willing to try several approaches.
* Willing to continue their effort until the problem is solved.

**Advocates have**

* Knowledge about appropriate legislation.
* A well-developed network, for information and support.
* Knowledge about systems, e.g. health, social welfare, education, funding.
* Contingency plans, i.e. alternative solutions to problems.
* Clear values that provide a focus for their time, their energy, their commitment, and themselves.

**Levels of Advocacy**

**Level 1**

* Least disruptive and non-intrusive.
* This level involves actions that are non-disturbing to the social order.
	+ It includes, procuring, and giving out of information, attending a meeting with someone, providing support, informing appropriate people of situations that exist, role playing to each self-advocate about advocacy
* Advocacy at this level is the most frequent and effective.

**Level 2**

* Some disruption and intrusion.
* Advocacy at this level often asks for special consideration and requires an organisation or body to make changes. It seeks compensatory treatment or justice. It can involve writing submissions, meeting with Ministers or Members of Parliament.

**Level 3**

* Disruptive advocacy, major changes demanded.
* This level requires strong collective action to right previous wrongs.
* It can involve ‘whistle blowing’ to the media, arbitration proceedings and possibly court action which sets a precedent.