



Client Information Kit

Individual

Disability

Advocacy

Service

1300 648 655

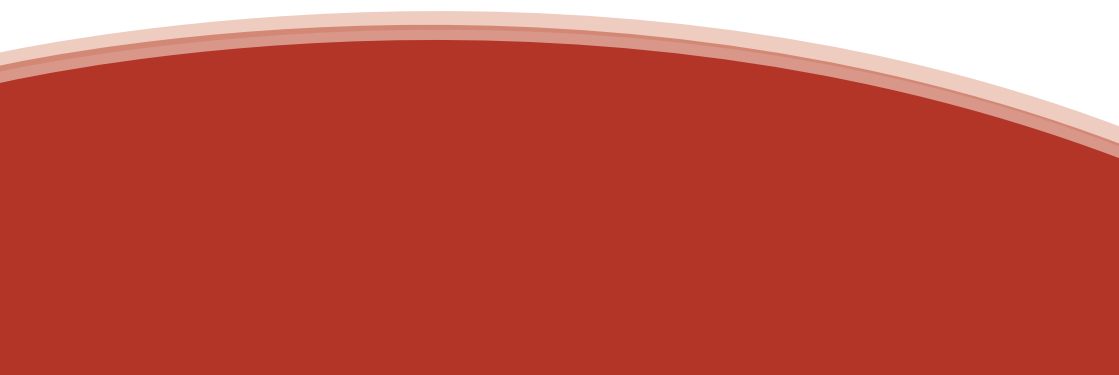


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What is IDAS?

The Individual Disability Advocacy Service (**IDAS**) commenced at Sussex Street Community Law Service in East Victoria Park WA in 2003. We provide free, independent and confidential disability advocacy to people living in the WA areas of the Midwest, Great Southern and Goldfields/Esperance regions.

In late 2009, Sussex Street Community Law Service entered into a partnership with UnitingCare West to provide IDAS to the cities of Wanneroo, Joondalup, Stirling and Vincent and the Town of Cambridge.

Individual disability advocacy seeks to uphold the rights and interests of people with all types of disabilities on a one-to-one basis by addressing instances of discrimination, abuse and neglect. Individual advocates from IDAS work with people with a disability on either a short-term or issue-specific basis.

We are funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) through the National Disability Advocacy Program (NDAP).

Our program uses a broad definition of disability which includes (but is not limited to): intellectual, physical, behavioural, psychiatric, emotional, medical, neurological, mental illness and long term diseases. We are an independent, free and confidential advocacy service for people with disabilities, their family members and carers.

What can IDAS do for you?

An Individual advocate may be able to assist you by providing:

- Information about your rights, options and the available services to assist you;
- Referral to an agency or service more appropriate to your needs;
- Direct advocacy support to deal with problems you cannot manage on your own; and
- Assistance to deal with problems you can manage on your own.

We may be able to:



Write a letter on your behalf



Call someone on your behalf



Speak on your behalf



Attend meetings with you

What do we mean by...?

Individual Advocacy

Individual advocacy is when a person with a disability is assisted by an advocate who takes action on their behalf and in their best interests relevant to a specific problem or circumstance.

Advocate

A person who will 'stand beside' you and support you to make your own decisions and get your needs met.

Client

You or any other person using a service, for example someone using IDAS services, is an IDAS client. This may be a person with a disability, a carer or a family member of a person with a disability.

Carer

A carer is a person who takes care of someone with a disability. This may be a husband, wife, partner, parent, son, daughter, relative or good friend.

How does it all work?

STEP 1 Initial contact with IDAS

Anyone can contact IDAS. You may have contacted us yourself by phone, approached us in person at one of our IDAS locations or we may have been contacted by someone else - such as a family member, your friend, carer or an organisation. You may be assisted by our reception staff who will then link you with the individual advocacy team.

An advocate will briefly discuss your needs and will provide you with basic information, referral to an appropriate agency or make an appointment to discuss your problem further if we may be of assistance. Prior to booking an appointment, we will ask you some questions about your details for funding purposes and to identify any conflict of interest.



STEP 2 Assessment of your need/first appointment

If an appointment is made, you and your advocate will identify the best time and location for the appointment. If you have trouble attending our offices due to your disability or location, a telephone appointment or a more suitable venue, such as a home visit, may be arranged. If you need an interpreter, the advocate can arrange one or you can invite anyone you like to the meeting to assist you.

Please Note: You should bring all paperwork about your situation with you when you attend the appointment, even if you think it is not important.



During the appointment your advocate will listen to you.

Together we will:

- Identify/clarify your issue;
- Discuss the support you need;
- Discuss possible actions we can take and the best way to keep in contact during the advocacy process;
- Discuss the level of assistance required;
- Develop an action plan explaining our goals, actions to be done, who is doing what and in what time frame; and
- Discuss your rights/responsibilities and what to do if you have a concern about the service you are receiving;
- Discuss any relevant information about our service (IDAS) outlined in our brochure;
- Allow you a time for questions/clarifications;
- Complete an Authority to Advocate form.

STEP 3 Confirmation of IDAS assistance

Shortly after your first meeting, your advocate will send you a letter which outlines your issues (what you have asked us to assist with), the amount of time we have allocated to assist you (level of assistance), the name and contact of your advocate and a summary of any relevant decisions made during the first appointment. We will also enclose a copy of your signed Authority to Advocate form and a copy of the action plan.

STEP 4 Advocacy work

Your advocate will gather information from you and do research, then they will discuss the options with you so you can make your own informed decision as to what to do.

They will undertake the tasks set out in the action plan and will contact you for any update on the progress on your matter.

STEP 5 File closure

Your advocate will work hard to achieve the goals identified in the initial appointment. When these goals have been addressed to the best of our ability, or if for any other reason the service is ceased, we will discuss closing your file. We will inform you of the file closure procedure and ask you for any feedback in relation to the service we have provided.

Your advocate will always confirm important information or updates in writing, via post to your mailing address.

This is particularly important when IDAS closes your file. We will send you:

- **File closure letter** - this outlines what we did and the outcomes that were reached;
- **Client feedback survey** - this gives you a chance to tell us about the service you received and allows us to make improvements in the services we provide;
- **Information about complaints** - this explains how to make a complaint if you are not happy with the service or the way we treated you; and
- **Other documents specific to your file** - we will return any of your original documents we may have on file.



Please Note: If something we do affects you as an IDAS client, your advocate will also inform you in your preferred contact method, such as:

- Email;
- Phone (including text message);
- TTY or National Relay Service;
- In person;
- Phone or in-person translator; or
- Any other identified alternative form of contact.



What can you expect?

IDAS Advocates

IDAS advocates will do their best to assist you with your needs, however they are not solicitors. If you require legal advice, an advocate will refer you to an appropriate legal centre or solicitor.

Your advocate will get information from you and do research, then will discuss the options with you so you can make your own informed decision as to what to do.

IDAS is focused on individual advocacy and considers each situation individually. An IDAS advocate will address your requests and needs as soon as possible, considering commitments to other clients and other obligations.

If you leave a message for an advocate, we will get back to you within two business days to address your request or set another time with you.

It is important to tell your advocate all the circumstances relating to the issue you want assistance with. If new issues arise, or if you change your address, phone number or other contact information, you should tell us immediately.

Confidentiality

All the information you give us about yourself and your circumstances is kept in a secure place and all staff are bound by their organisations' confidentiality policies. The things we ask about you will be important things that will assist us so we can do the best advocacy job for you.



We will get your permission before telling other people or agencies anything about you.

The only time we will discuss your information with anyone without your permission is if:

- ➡ You are at risk: that means if you are in a situation where you are in danger of losing your life;
- ➡ there is a child involved and the child is at risk;
- ➡ there is a risk that your actions could cause harm to yourself or others;
- ➡ we are required to do so by law; or
- ➡ you cannot tell us what you want. We may ask your guardian what we should do and to allow us to disclose information if we need to. (This is called informed consent).

You can feel comfortable to ask us

- What information we keep about you;
- For a copy of your file documents; and
- Who else has access to your file.



Service

IDAS services are free of charge, however we may ask you to pay for things such as doctors or court documents and other expenses necessary in assisting you.

If we need you to pay for something, your IDAS advocate will discuss this with you first.

IDAS advocates will treat you with respect and dignity at all times and want you to feel comfortable in:

- making your own decisions about the progress of your matter;
- contacting your advocate with new information or questions;
- bringing other people with you for support;
- giving feedback or complaining about IDAS services; and
- asking IDAS to arrange support in making a complaint.

Your responsibilities

As a client of the Individual Disability Advocacy Service, you have the following responsibilities:

- ➡ To be honest about the problem you need assistance with;
- ➡ To keep IDAS updated with changes to any circumstances about your IDAS matter;
- ➡ To keep your appointments and, whenever possible, give at least 24 hours' notice if you need to change your appointment;
- ➡ To let your advocate know if you are receiving assistance with your problem from someone else;
- ➡ To tell your advocate if your home may be unsafe if they are visiting; and
- ➡ To treat staff with respect and not abuse them verbally or physically.

Please note: IDAS may ask you to comply with other policies relevant to your matter or situation. If so, an advocate will inform you of these prior to you becoming an IDAS client.

Where is IDAS?



IDAS is in a number of locations across Western Australia.

North-west Metropolitan WA locations

- ➔ City of Stirling
- ➔ City of Wanneroo
- ➔ City of Vincent
- ➔ City of Joondalup
- ➔ Town of Cambridge

Regional WA locations

- ➔ Albany Community Legal Centre Inc.
for the Great Southern region
- ➔ Geraldton Resource Centre
for the Midwest region
- ➔ Goldfields Community Legal Centre Inc.
for the Goldfields/Esperance region



1300 648 655

IDAS central is maintained by Sussex Street Community Law Service.

Calls are allocated out to the most appropriate IDAS advocate, considering location and workload.

How do you contact IDAS?



Phone

1300 648 655 (cost of a local call)



Email

idas@sscls.asn.au

However, if an advocate gives you an alternative email address, please ensure you use the one they give you for ongoing contact with them.



Writing

Locked Bag 2 East Victoria Park WA 6981



In person

You can always ask to see an advocate in person, or approach us at one of our locations.

How do you give feedback?

You can provide feedback to our service by:

- Providing verbal feedback to your advocate;
- Contacting the IDAS coordinator;
- Completing a feedback survey at the file closure; or
- Any other way you may prefer.

**This kit is to support you in understanding IDAS easier.
If you have any ideas on how to make things better please
contact us.**

This service is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

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