

A support coordinator is not an independent advocate. In line with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*, an independent advocate cannot be:

- A staff member of the NDIA
- A staff member of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- A registered or unregistered NDIS provider, including support coordinators.

The [Disability Advocacy Fact Sheet](#) outlines what disability advocacy is, why it is important and why independence matters.

Support coordinators should help participants engage with community and other government services.

However a participant's support coordinator should not be acting as their formal advocate. A support coordinator's role is to refer and connect a participant to advocacy services where necessary.

Some questions which might help identify when a support coordinator might be moving into the role of an advocate include:

- Have I done all I can to help the participant make their needs clear to the provider, worker or government system through the established processes?
- Is the participant entering into a dispute, especially where there is legal involvement or escalation to administrative appeals?
- Have I fallen into dispute in a way that undermines my role and effectiveness as a support coordinator?
- Does my involvement in an NDIS review process create a conflict of interest, especially if I am requesting more support coordination funding at the participant's plan reassessment?
- Is the level of complexity or time required to adequately represent the person beyond the level of support allocated to support coordination?
- Is the level of representation required beyond my skills and capacity, and the participant would benefit from an experienced advocate?
- Is there an appropriate formal advocacy service to refer the participant to?

If the answer to some of these questions is 'yes', then a support coordinator should consider whether their participant might benefit from formal advocacy and assist them to find a suitable advocacy service.

The [National Disability Advocacy Program \(NDAP\)](#) supports people with disability to access effective advocacy that promotes, protects and ensures their full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in our communities.

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