

Project Fact Sheet: People with Disability in Long-Stay Health Care Facilities

The Public Advocate

The role of the Public Advocate is to protect and promote the rights, autonomy and participation of Queenslanders with impaired decision-making capacity through statutory systems advocacy. We are committed to an evidence-based approach that explores and extends our knowledge and influence on inclusive policy, programs and practices to promote improved life opportunities and outcomes for these vulnerable Queenslanders.

Through our systems advocacy work we have become aware that there are a significant number of people with intellectual disability or cognitive impairment who continue to reside in institutional settings including psychiatric hospitals and other long-stay health care facilities. These settings, segregated from the community, are not necessarily optimal environments to promote autonomy, capability, independence and inclusion, or to achieve the best outcomes for these individuals.

Purpose of this project

This project builds on the **Public Advocate's Position Statement on Continuing the Deinstitutionalisation of People with Disability in Queensland** and seeks to raise awareness and promote action by Government with a view to encouraging the development of a positive and planned strategy for this cohort that will increase autonomy and provide enhanced opportunities for participation and inclusion in community.

What we will do

The Public Advocate has requested information from key government agencies about the number of people with intellectual disability and cognitive impairment who continue to reside in long-stay health care facilities. We are also seeking information on the extent to which key agencies are working together to assess the immediate and future needs of individuals in these facilities; and plan, on an individual basis, for their transition to more appropriate community based accommodation and support arrangements.

The Public Advocate has also called for submissions on this issue. Views from interested parties are sought on the immediate and future support needs of individuals with intellectual disability or cognitive impairment currently residing in health care facilities and the issues that should be taken into account to:

- assess the appropriateness of pursuing community-based living arrangements;
- increase access to targeted support services that increase community participation and inclusion; and
- support successful transition from institutional to community-based living, where appropriate.

This information will generate a comprehensive evidence base from which the Public Advocate will produce a report detailing the systemic issues and making recommendations for change. This will support the Public Advocate to continue working collaboratively with key agencies to pursue a positive and planned strategy to enable people with intellectual disability and cognitive impairment to live more autonomous lives in the community.

Other publications and resources

The Public Advocate's Position Statement, the call for submissions, and updates about the project and related resources as they become available will be published on the Office of the Public Advocate website at www.publicadvocate.qld.gov.au.

Contact us

For more information about the project, or to contact the Office of the Public Advocate to discuss this issue, please phone 07 3224 7424 or email public.advocate@justice.qld.gov.au.