



# Disability Advocacy Support Helpline 2024–25

## 1. About this report

This is the first published document dedicated to providing information about disability advocacy programs funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (department).

This report includes information about the Disability Advocacy Support Helpline (the Helpline) and is current for the 2024–25 financial year.

The Program Reporting section includes information about the program using a consistent format to support comparison across reports, nationally. This includes:

- What the program is and what it does
- Who the program is for
- What funding the program receives
- Where the program operates (such as states or territories)

## 2. Program Reporting

### About the program

The Helpline is a telephone-based service that provides short-term, individual advocacy and referral support, for all people with disability, their carers, or their support people.

### Program Details

Table 1 – Helpline details

Item	Details
Program start	2022
Program end date	2027
Disability advocacy model/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individual advocacy</li><li>• Self-advocacy</li></ul>
Expected outcome/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An effective phone-based service that provides greater access to advocacy and enables self-advocacy for people with disability. It meets the needs of clients in a way that is trauma-informed and complements existing services.</li><li>• People with disability have increased access to, and greater flexibility about how they receive advocacy support.</li></ul>

Item	Details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with disability are supported to uphold their rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability.</li> <li>• There is an increased understanding of demand for disability advocacy services, to inform the design of future services.</li> </ul>
<b>Target group/s</b>	People with disability, carers and family members on behalf of people with disability, including specific cohorts, such as people from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, or with a specific type of disability.
<b>Regulatory requirements</b>	Comply with the Disability Services and Inclusion Act 2023 (DSI Act) and the mandated National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS).
<b>Certification requirements for providers</b>	Demonstrate compliance through independent audit and certification against the NSDS and maintain certification for the duration of the funding agreement.
<b>Additional information</b>	Nil
<b>Program design</b>	This program was designed in response to feedback from the advocacy sector, which reported unmet demand for disability advocacy services and limited-service delivery in hard-to-reach regional and remote areas.
<b>Caveats</b>	<p>Data source: Department of Social Services – Data Exchange (DEX) extracted 16 June 2026.</p> <p>Data should be interpreted with caution. The tables are based on information recorded in DEX for the 2024–25 financial year and may not represent a fully complete or reconciled dataset. Totals may not reconcile across all tables because each table uses information recorded for a specific data field, and some fields are more complete than others. Some fields may include unknown, not disclosed or blank responses. Some clients may also be counted in more than one category where their circumstances changed during the year, they received support across more than one location or jurisdiction, or more than one response was recorded. For these reasons, the tables should be read as indicative of client characteristics and patterns of met demand, rather than as a fully reconciled dataset.</p>

# Program Funding

In 2024–25, total funding provided for the program was \$1.153 million GST exclusive.

Table 2 – Disability Advocacy Support Helpline Funding Total

Funding provided (GST exclusive)	2024–25 \$ million
National	1.153

## Demand for the program

For 2024-25, the department has the following data on hand about met demand for:

- Gender
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds status
- Living situation
- Accommodation
- Age group.

As the Helpline is a national, phone-based service, data by location is not on hand.

**Note:** The following tables should be read with the data caveats outlined above. In particular, some demographic and location fields are more complete than others, so figures are indicative of client characteristics and patterns of met demand rather than a fully reconciled dataset. Also, totals may not reconcile across all tables because each table uses information recorded for a specific data field, and some fields are more complete than others.

**Table 3 – Number of individual clients supported by cohort in 2024-25**

Cohort	2024–25	2024–25 %
Total number of individual clients supported	2,113	
Gender – Female	1,159	55
Gender – Male	903	42
Gender – Different term	37	2
Gender – Unknown / undisclosed / prefer not to say	14	1
First Nations – Identifies	157	7
First Nations – Does not identify	1,953	93
First Nations – Not identified / disclosed	3	0
CALD status – Identifies	72	3
CALD status – Does not identify	2,041	97
CALD status – Not identified / disclosed	-	-
LGBTIQA+ – Identifies	-	-
LGBTIQA+ – Does not identify	-	-
LGBTIQA+ – Not identified / disclosed	-	-
Living situation – Housed	8	0
Living situation – Supported accommodation	-	-
Living situation – Prison or juvenile detention	-	-
Accommodation – Homeless	2	1
Accommodation – Homeless - at Risk	1	0
Accommodation – Unknown / not disclosed	2,102	99
Age group – 0–9	133	6
Age group – 10-24	282	13
Age group – 25-44	617	29
Age group – 45-64	922	43
Age group – 65 and over	178	9
Age group – Unknown / not disclosed	1	0

### 3. Glossary

These are terms used in this document. Some terms may have different usage across programs and can be outlined for each program as required in their own glossary. Further work at a later date may be required by the Working Group to map how some of these terms are being used by agencies and programs.

Term	Usage
advocate (noun)	<p>An advocate is a person or organisation who acts, speaks or writes to promote, protect, uphold and defend human rights of people with disability. An advocate can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a person with disability (speaking up for themselves or others)</li> <li>• an organisation</li> <li>• a person employed as an advocate</li> <li>• a relative, friend, carer, supporter, support worker or other person</li> </ul> <p>Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.</p>
client	<p>A client is a person who receives a service delivered under a funded program. This can include people with disability, informal carers and/or family members supporting people with disability and/or acting on their behalf.</p>
dataset	<p>Structured information presented in lists, tables, databases, etc. Data may be numeric, spatial, spectral, statistical or structured text.</p>
demand	<p>A term used in national reporting. The quantity of people who are needing or wanting the service. See <b>Met demand</b> and <b>Unmet demand</b>.</p> <p>Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.</p>
demographics	<p>The characteristics of a group of people. This can include things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• location</li> <li>• age or age range</li> <li>• whether people identify as First Nations, from a culturally and linguistically diverse background, as LGBTIQ+</li> <li>• accommodation, such as in supported accommodation, prison, juvenile detention</li> </ul>
disability advocacy	<p>A term used in national reporting to mean Acting, speaking or writing to promote, protect, uphold and defend the human rights of people with disability.</p> <p>Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.</p>
disability advocacy model	<p>This is how the program refers to the advocacy it supports and includes any definitions.</p>

Term	Usage
disability advocacy program	A term used in national reporting. A disability advocacy program uses <b>disability advocacy</b> , or a/multiple <b>disability advocacy model/s</b> as the focus for most of its work (an example is more than 50%) to achieve its outcomes. Another way to consider it is if the <b>disability advocacy</b> component were removed from the program / grant, it would be a completely different program / grant and would not be able to achieve its outcomes.
framework / National Disability Advocacy Framework	The National Disability Advocacy Framework is a commitment by Australian, state and territory governments to work together to improve access to disability advocacy services across Australia.
individual advocacy	<p>Seeks to uphold the rights and interests of people with all types of disabilities on a one-on-one basis by addressing instances of discrimination, abuse and neglect.</p> <p>Individual <b>advocates</b> work with people with disability on either a short-term or issue-specific basis. Individual <b>advocates</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop a plan of action (sometimes called an individual advocacy plan) in partnership with the person with disability that maps out clearly defined goals;</li> <li>• educate people with disability about their rights; and</li> <li>• work through the individual advocacy plan in partnership with the person with disability.</li> </ul> <p>Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.</p>
met demand	A term used in national reporting. People who received the service. Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.
National Disability Advocacy Framework / framework / NDAF	The National Disability Advocacy Framework is a commitment by Australian, state and territory governments to work together to improve access to disability advocacy services across Australia.
national reporting	Jurisdictions' commitment to publishing information and data about their disability advocacy programs from 1 July 2026.
target group	The people the services are targeted towards.
unmet demand	People who did not receive a service due to <b>demand</b> being greater than supply. Note: Disability advocacy programs may have their own definitions of this term.

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All information in this publication is correct as at 16 June 2026

