1.1 Easy to Read Summary of Annual Report

What is NAS?

NAS is the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities. It is called NAS for short.

NAS works to protect the rights and choices of people with disabilities. NAS supports people with disabilities to have their voice heard.

NAS supports people with disabilities who may not have a lot of other supports or who may find it difficult to be a part of their community.

NAS supports people with disabilities including people who communicate in different ways.

The people who work for NAS to provide this support are called Advocates.

Patient
Advocacy
Service

The Patient Advocacy Service

NAS also provides another important service called the Patient Advocacy Service.

The Patient Advocacy Service gives information and support to people who want to make a complaint about something that happened to them in hospital.

Who Supports NAS?

The government gives money to the Citizens Information Board and then the Citizens Information Board gives this money to NAS.

NAS uses this money to fund its work.

An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Who Supports the Patient Advocacy Service?

The Patient Advocacy Service is paid for by the Department of Health.

They give money to NAS to run the service.

The Patient Advocacy Service is an independent service.

It does not get money from the HSE.

How NAS Advocates Work

NAS Advocates work alongside people with disabilities. They work out together what the person wants and make a plan called an advocacy plan.

We all have different ways of showing what we want. NAS Advocates watch and learn the different ways people communicate.

Advocates also talk to friends, family and staff to find out more about what the person wants.

How Patient Advocacy Service Advocates Work

The Patient Advocacy Service offers information, support, and guidance to a person about their issue or complaint.

This is called empowerment advocacy.

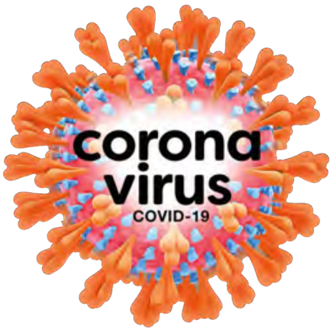
Patient Advocacy Service Advocates also support people with their complaints and can attend meetings.

Strategic Plan

NAS has a plan for its work called the Strategic Plan.

The plan is about 3 important parts of NAS work. These are service, standards and policy.

The plan is about NAS giving a good quality service and telling people about the issues that matter.



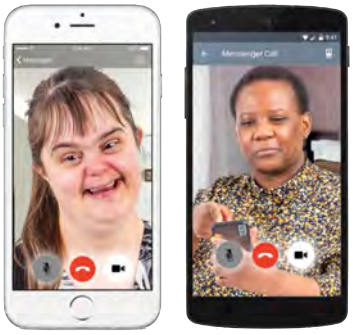
Covid-19 and our Work

Covid-19 meant changes for everyone. It changed the ways that NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service could do its work.

Covid-19 also meant changes to the way services and hospitals worked.

There were lots of closures to services. There were also delays dealing with hospital complaints.

New rules meant it was not always possible to have meetings with people face to face.



New Ways of Working

NAS and the Patient Advocacy had to work in new ways during the Covid-19 time.

Staff from both services had to work from home. Staff supported people by phone, emails and in video meetings.

People were still able to contact NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service by calling the national line, emailing or visiting the websites.

In this way both services kept providing a high quality advocacy service to people who needed it.


NEW NAS NATIONAL LINE NUMBER:
0818 07 3000
Visit: https://advocacy.ie

NAS Work in 2020

NAS Advocates worked on 1,051 cases supporting people with disabilities with their advocacy issues in 2020.

NAS Advocates helped people speak up, write letters, make phone calls, attend meetings and think about important decisions.

NAS also provided information and short-term advocacy support to 2,705 people in 2020.

NAS has a telephone number people can call for help with their issue.

1,903 people called this number in 2020.

Patient Advocacy Service

Patient Advocacy Service work in 2020

The Patient Advocacy Service provided support to 535 people in 2020.

Advocates worked on 1,281 complaint issues for the people they supported.

Advocates supported people to write letters, attend meetings and to speak up for themselves.

The Patient Advocacy Service has a website and it was visited by over 7,000 new users in 2020.

Key Issues for NAS in 2020

NAS dealt with a lot of important issues for people with disabilities in 2020.

The biggest issues were around capacity building, housing, residential and healthcare settings, decision making and social care.

NAS helped people with disabilities to work on these issues to try and make things better.

Key Issues for the Patient Advocacy Service in 2020

The Patient Advocacy Service worked on important issues for people in 2020.

These top complaint issues were people feeling their anxieties were not listened to, difficulty phoning healthcare units, not being able to visit hospitals and hospital staff not communicating care plans to the patient.

Who Contacted Us?

NAS was contacted by people with many different types of disabilities. Some people had more than one disability.

Many people who were connected with NAS lived in residential services or attended day services.

People contacted NAS themselves or were supported by family, friends or support staff to be connected with an Advocate.

People contacted the Patient Advocacy Service in different ways such as visiting the website or through hospitals.

Other Important Work in 2020

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service helped with the response to Covid-19 by supporting people in different ways.

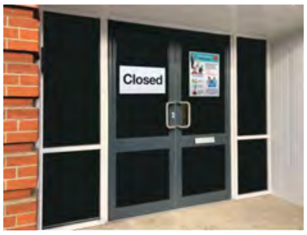
They helped government agencies and services to think about what people needed and make plans.

They helped ensure that the rights, will and preferences of people were respected during the Covid-19 time.

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service were members of groups that looked at important issues.

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Services also wrote papers called Policy Submissions. These were sent to the government and other expert groups.

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service explained why issues like adult safeguarding, disability matters and safety in nursing homes are important for the people they support.



They also explained the serious issues the people they supported had experienced during covid-19 such as closures to day services.

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service took part in meetings to discuss important disability and patient issues.

Telling People About Us

Covid-19 rules meant that NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service could not attend many events in person to tell people about the work we do.

We did take part in lots of online events to talk about the work of the Advocates.

We told people how both services could support people with their advocacy issues.

We also used social media like Facebook and Twitter to tell people about both services and the work we do.

Training

Training is important for NAS and Patient Advocacy Service Advocates.

Advocates attended courses to learn more about disability issues and patient issues.

Training helps NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service provide a high quality service to the people they support.

Thank You

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service thanks all of its staff for all their hard work in 2020.

Thank you also to the Citizens Information Board and the Department of Health for their support in 2020.

NAS Case Study on Impact of Day Service Closure: Tom

My name is Tom and I live in a residential service with other people. I also have a physical disability. I like to keep busy and enjoy meeting my friends and family as much as I can.

I go to a day service, which I really like as I meet lots of people and do activities that I enjoy. My day service had to close because of Covid-19 and this was very hard on me. I missed my friends and my routine. I started to feel anxious and unhappy.

My Advocate chatted to me on video calls and listened to how I felt. My Advocate supported me to tell my residential service how I was feeling. We decided to ask my residential service to make a plan of activities that I could do every day. This new routine really helped me feel less anxious and happier. I also learned new skills and could choose the activities I liked best.

I am very grateful to NAS and my Advocate for supporting me during the Covid-19 time and making sure that my wishes were heard by my service.

Patient Advocacy Service Case Study on Visiting Hospitals: Anne

My name is Anne and my dad Sean was in hospital for a few weeks during the Covid-19 time. I am very close to my dad as he lives with me and my family and we support him with his care needs.

While my dad was in hospital I was not allowed to visit him because of the no visiting rules. This was very hard on me and also on my dad as he didn't really understand why I could not visit him.

I did not know how my dad was doing in hospital. I tried phoning the hospital but there was no answer.

I contacted the Patient Advocacy Service and my Advocate gave me lots of information and ideas for how I could support my dad. My Advocate helped me ask for a meeting with my dad's doctors and nurses. My Advocate also helped me think of the questions that I could ask at this meeting.

My Advocate supported me to ask the hospital to let me have a short visit with my dad every day. This really helped my dad as he knew we were all thinking about him and he was not alone.

NAS Case Study on Housing: Clara

My name is Clara and I am in my 30s. I have a physical and an intellectual disability. My family were doing their best but they knew I needed more support. They contacted NAS for me.

I was living in a very small and crowded apartment with my family. I had no home care support in the apartment. My Advocate met me and we agreed that my Advocate would tell the local authority and the HSE Disability Services about my situation.

Covid-19 meant that my day service had to close. I was now in my apartment all day every day with no supports. I also had to leave the country for a few months with my family. While I was gone, I was offered a house but the offer was taken away because I was out of the country. My social welfare payments were also stopped.

My Advocate helped explain why I was away and helped me get my payments started again. My Advocate also helped me with the local council and I was offered the house again. I was able to move in with a member of my family.

I am now living in an accessible home with supports. I am also attending my day service again. My Advocate helped make my life better and get me the support I needed.