

Easy to Read Summary of Annual Report 2021



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.

 <p>Patient Advocacy Service</p> 	<h3>The Patient Advocacy Service</h3> <p>NAS also provides another important service called the Patient Advocacy Service.</p> <p>The Patient Advocacy Service gives information and support to people who want to make a complaint about something that happened to them in hospital or a HSE nursing home.</p>
	<h3>Who Supports NAS?</h3> <p>The government gives money to the Citizens Information Board and then the Citizens Information Board gives this money to NAS.</p> <p>NAS uses this money to fund its work.</p>
 <p>An Roinn Sláinte Department of Health</p>	<h3>Who Supports the Patient Advocacy Service?</h3> <p>The Patient Advocacy Service is paid for by the Department of Health.</p> <p>They give money to NAS to run the service.</p> <p>The Patient Advocacy Service is an independent service. It does not get money from the HSE.</p>



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.



Covid-19 and our Work

Covid-19 in 2021 changed the ways that NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service could do its work.

Lockdown in the first half of 2021 meant it was hard to meet people face to face.

Services wanted to keep residents and staff safe.

The Patient Advocacy Service had delays in getting information. There were also delays in having meetings.



New Ways of Working

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service worked in new ways during 2021.

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.

This meant they could get the advocacy support they needed.



NAS Work in 2021

NAS Advocates worked on 1,006 cases supporting people with disabilities with their advocacy issues in 2021.

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 to 2,827 people in 2021.

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

1,890 people called this number in 2021.



Patient Advocacy Service work in 2021

The Patient Advocacy Service provided support to 1,205 people in 2021.

Advocates worked on 3,382 complaint issues for the people they supported.

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

	<p>In May 2021, the Patient Advocacy Service began to support residents of HSE-operated nursing homes.</p> <p>The Patient Advocacy Service has a website and it was visited by over 12,100 new users in 2021.</p>
	<p>Key Issues for NAS in 2021</p> <p>NAS dealt with a lot of important issues for people with disabilities in 2021.</p> <p>The biggest issues were around capacity building, housing, residential and healthcare settings, decision making, social care and health.</p> <p>NAS helped people with disabilities to work on these issues to try and make things better.</p>
	<p>Key Issues for the Patient Advocacy Service in 2021</p> <p>The Patient Advocacy Service worked on important issues for people in 2021.</p> <p>These top complaint issues were people feeling their anxieties were not listened to, not being able to visit hospitals, difficulty phoning healthcare units, calls not being returned and hospital staff not communicating care plans to the patient.</p>



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 going on the website or through hospitals.



Other Important Work in 2021

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service wrote 4 new reports in 2021 called 'Advocacy Matters: Impact of Covid-19'.

These reports told people about the work NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service did during the Covid-19 time.

The reports told people how hard the Covid-19 time was for the people NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service support.



The reports told people how important advocacy support is for people in difficult times.

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 mental health services and home standards for home support services are important for the people they support.

NAS managers spoke at important meetings about disability issues.



Telling People About Us

NAS and the Patient Advocacy Service took 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.

The Patient Advocacy Service had a regional advertising campaign in 2021.

This meant going on the radio and writing in newspapers to tell people about how they could support them.

NAS Case Study: Paul's Story about Move from an Inappropriate Placement

My name is Paul and I am in my 40's. I also have an intellectual disability. I love music and spending time with my friends.

I was living in a nursing home. I did not need to be there because I did not have any nursing needs. I was not happy living in the nursing home.

Covid-19 meant that my advocate could not come to see me at the nursing home. We talked on the phone and on video calls. My advocate also talked to my family to learn more about where I would like to live.

My advocate talked to the HSE disability managers and told them about me. My advocate asked them to find me somewhere new to live that would suit me better.

Covid-19 meant that talking to the HSE disability services took a lot of time but my advocate did not give up. A meeting was finally organised to discuss my issue. With the support of my advocate, I was offered a place to live in a residential service near where my family live.

It took some more time before I could move because of Covid-19. I was really excited to move to my new home. I am happy with my new home. I feel more settled.

Patient Advocacy Service Case Study: Adam's story about Appointment Cancellation

My name is Adam. I contacted the Patient Advocacy Service about a medical condition I have that was causing me a lot of pain. I need regular treatment but I had not got any treatment since the middle of 2020.

Many of my hospital appointments have been cancelled. My hospital doctor told me that this was because I needed to have my Covid-19 vaccine and my treatment could not happen at the same time. My hospital doctor did not help me to get my Covid-19 vaccine and said this was the job of my GP.

I spoke to an advocate in the Patient Advocacy Service who took the time to really listen to my concerns. The advocate gave me the chance to tell my story and helped me understand my options. My advocate explained the HSE's complaint process. They told me what department in the hospital to contact as the delays to my treatment were affecting my quality of life.

I contacted the hospital department. They told me that a mistake had been made. I was a high-risk patient who needed to get a vaccine as soon as possible. My name had been missed on the list. My advocate helped me to make a complaint. I received my vaccine and got an appointment for my treatment. I am making my complaint to the hospital so that this does not happen to anyone else.