

## Justice Advocacy Service

### Making a referral

If you identify a victim, witness or suspect/defendant as potentially having a cognitive impairment, you can make a referral to the Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) by calling **1300 665 908**.

If you are unsure whether the person has a cognitive impairment, it is always better to call JAS and request a support person.

Referrals for a person with cognitive impairment who requires a JAS support person at court or at a legal appointment can be made between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday by calling **1300 665 908**.

For urgent referrals such as when a person with cognitive impairment is at a police station and requires a JAS support person overnight or on a weekend, an afterhours referral can be made by calling **1300 665 908**.

Sometimes, the person with cognitive impairment may have a support person with them such as a disability support worker or a family member. A JAS support person can assist and guide this person through the process if required.

#### **Obtaining the person's consent:**

Prior to making a referral, you should speak to the person to let them know you would like to call JAS. You can explain to the person that a JAS support person can support them while they are in contact with police, court or legal representatives. You can also encourage the person to speak with the JAS support person over the phone to provide information about their current circumstances. Once a JAS support person arrives at a police station, court or legal appointment, they will talk to the person further to obtain their consent and complete a consent form for new

referrals. **More information about the role of a JAS support person is available in the *Justice Advocacy Service Support Person Fact Sheet*.**

**When making a referral to JAS, the following information should be provided:**

- Name of the person requiring the support and if available, their contact details such as their address, phone number and the name of a key contact person such as a disability support worker or a family member. It is also helpful to know the person's date of birth if this information is available.
- The details of important dates such as court appearances and interviews or meetings with police or legal representatives.

*Additional information may be sought from the referrer to ensure the most appropriate type of support is arranged for the person.*

Once the support has concluded the JAS support person will document their

engagement with the client including what has happened and any follow-up support or action that may be required.

### **Eligibility:**

JAS will be available to victims, witnesses and suspects/defendants in contact with the NSW criminal justice system who may have a cognitive impairment. A potential client will not need to provide evidence of cognitive impairment to access the service.

As per the *Mental Health (Forensic Provisions) Act 1990 (NSW)* cognitive impairment includes (without limitation) any of the following:

- intellectual disability
- borderline intellectual functioning
- dementia'
- acquired brain injury'
- drug or alcohol related brain damage, including fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.
- autism spectrum disorder.

## For more information

### Visit the website

[www.justiceadvocacy.org.au](http://www.justiceadvocacy.org.au)

### Email JAS

[justiceadvocacy@idrs.org.au](mailto:justiceadvocacy@idrs.org.au)

### Call JAS

1300 665 908