



Volunteer Advocate

Role Description

To support the Generic Advocacy Team in the delivery and promotion of a diverse, inclusive and client led independent advocacy service. The role involves advocating for clients in the community on specific issues such as housing, benefits, or access to services.

Responsible to: **Supervising Advocate**

Supported by: **Generic Advocacy Team**

Location: **Somerset /South Gloucestershire**

This post is subject to satisfactory application, references, interview and DBS.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Work alongside clients, in the community to enable their individual issues to be represented.
- To support clients to articulate their own views wherever possible or speak on clients' behalf and represent them where requested or where appropriate.
- Promote the rights, equality, diversity and needs of our clients by ensuring they are respected and valued as individuals.
- Ensure that clients have access to information about services that is presented in an appropriate manner for their individual needs.
- Promote self-advocacy where appropriate as a strategy to build confidence and independence for service users, encouraging them to play a fuller role in the community.
- In consultation with the Team Manager, network with other agencies in order to maintain effective communication and joint working for the benefit of SWAN clients.
- Using the SWAN database, ensure accurate collection of data and data recording of all client meetings, travel time, and associated activities.
- Option available to run self-advocacy workshops for client groups to empower them to advocate for themselves.

Equality and Diversity Statement

The Volunteer must at all times, carry out his/her responsibilities with due regard to SWAN's policies and procedures in particular; Health & Safety, Financial Authorisation, Confidentiality with regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and all other relevant regulations.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are core to our values. In the selection of our staff and volunteers, we are committed to equality with regards to protected characteristics: age,

disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We welcome applications from disabled people. The Volunteer must ensure a positive commitment towards equality by treating others fairly and not committing any form of direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment of any description and to promote positive working relations amongst employees, volunteers, suppliers and customers.

Organisational/Personal Responsibilities

- The role requires commitment of one day a per week with some flexibility.
- To undertake Introduction to Advocacy taught session.
- After gaining an appropriate level of experience, to participate in relevant on-going training to keep up to date with services, procedures, guidelines, and legislation that affect the organisation and the clients who use the services.
- To take individual responsibility to alert the organisation to health and safety matters, and general organisational needs and issues.
- To attend regular team meetings/ briefings.
- To attend regular supervision as outlined in Volunteer Policy.

Skills and Attributes

- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Excellent organisational skills.
- Positive attitude towards mental health, learning difficulties and ageing.
- Some knowledge and understanding of the benefits system.
- Some knowledge and understanding of the housing system.
- Adaptable and approachable telephone manner.
- Comfortable using Microsoft Office, emails and database.
- Computer literate however full training is given in the systems we use and there is ongoing support for all IT.

Benefits of Volunteering with SWAN

- The opportunity to develop new and existing skills and gain experience volunteering in a charity.
- The opportunity to meet new people.
- The opportunity to build a Personal Development Portfolio.
- The satisfaction of knowing you are making a vital difference to the work of SWAN.
- The satisfaction of supporting a client to have a voice and address the issues that are important to them with the aim to achieve the outcomes they want.
- Gaining knowledge and skills to become a trained Advocate.
- Training and support through a thorough Induction and on-going support, advice and guidance
- Full training and ongoing access to keep knowledge and skills up to date.
- Out of pocket expenses reimbursed.