



## **Volunteer Mental Health Advocate**

### **Role Description**

To support clients who, because of mental health problems, require an advocate to access the support they need. This will ensure that clients have greater choice and control over their lives, both now and in the future.

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**Responsible to:** **Supervising Advocate**

**Supported by:** **Mental Health Team**

**Location:** **Somerset/South Gloucestershire**

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

### **Main Duties and Responsibilities**

- To support the Independent Mental Health Advocates; working with both detained and informal patients, to empower and enable them to express their individual needs, rights and choices:
  - Supporting informal clients on wards
  - Supporting as a second person on initial client visits
  - Follow up on generic cases / referrals in the community.
- To support clients on mental health wards in accessing the information and services they need, in particular with reference to benefits and accommodation.
- To maintain a presence on the mental health wards so that both hospital staff and potential clients are aware of the advocacy support available.
- To support clients in the community to access the information and services they need, in particular with reference to benefits, accommodation and mental health support.
- To support clients in the community to maintain a sense of good health and wellbeing, taking into consideration their mental health and physical health.
- Ensure clients have access to information which is presented in an appropriate manner for their individual needs.
- To provide person-centred advocacy appropriate to the needs and issues of each individual.
- To continue to work alongside clients, to ensure their individual plans and wishes are clearly represented and understood so that they may be unable to express these themselves.
- Promote self-advocacy as a strategy to build confidence and independence for clients.

- Empower and enable clients to become involved in the development and delivery of advocacy services.
- To use SWAN's database to ensure accurate collection of data and data recording of all client meetings, travel time, and associated activities.
- The option is available to attend the wards 'Have Your Say' meetings and run self-advocacy workshops to empower clients to advocate for themselves as part of the Recovery College Program (Somerset only at this time).

### **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.
- 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 need 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 and staff training opportunities.
- To attend supervision every 6-8 weeks as outlined in Volunteer Policy.

### **Skills and Attributes**

- Knowledge and understanding of the Mental Health Act 2007 is advantageous however training will be given.
- Positive attitude towards disability, mental health and ageing.
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Be able to use own initiative but know when to ask for help.
- Professional/friendly approach.
- Experience of record keeping.
- IT literate.

### **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.