

VOCAS Volunteer Victim Advocate

Role Description

To support the Victims of Crime Advocacy Service (VOCAS) team in the delivery and promotion of a diverse, inclusive and client led independent advocacy and support. This will ensure that clients have greater choice and control over their lives, both now and in the future. Emphasising the importance of self-advocacy and supporting clients to gain the confidence and provide the tools for them to do this successfully.

Responsible to: **Supervising Advocate**

Location: **Bristol/North Somerset/Bath and North East Somerset/
South Gloucestershire/ Somerset**

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

Benefits of Volunteering with SWAN

- Training in coaching, basic advocacy principles, safeguarding and teaching self-advocacy
- 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 with full training and ongoing access to keep knowledge and skills up to date
- Support to progress to paid employment
- The satisfaction of knowing you are making a vital difference to the work of SWAN and VOCAS
- The satisfaction of empowering clients to find their own voice and tell others what they want or need
- Being part of an organisation, which has strong values and provides help and support to those most marginalised in society
- The opportunity to see clients' progress
- To be part of the education of other services in self-advocacy promotion
- Out of pocket expenses reimbursed - £0.45 per mile for mileage, all bus fares, train tickets and costs incurred can be claimed back immediately

What will you be doing?

Support the Victim Advocates; working with individuals who have been victims of crime.

- Work alongside Victim Advocates and their clients, in the community to enable their individual issues to be represented

- 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
- Provide 1:1 self-advocacy workshops and support programmes to victims of crime using our toolkits and resources
- 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
- In consultation with the line 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

What type of person are we looking for?

- Positive attitude towards vulnerable clients who may have a variety of complex needs
- Available 6 hours per week
- Confident to communicate both verbal and written information
- Experience of delivering training or workshops to groups is desirable
- Some experience of record keeping and report writing
- Knowledge and understanding of Safeguarding is desirable but full training is given
- IT literate

Please note that while the skills and knowledge listed are good to have, SWAN also appreciates that life experience can make you the ideal volunteer for a role such as this. We are keen to hear from people who have experienced adversity and difficulties in speaking out for themselves, who have found their voice and for whom advocacy would have been beneficial. If this sounds like you then do, please get in touch. The most important attribute is a drive to help others speak out on issues that are important to them.

What we need to you to do?

- Attend training and induction period of 6 months to ensure the role is suited and meeting requirements
- 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
- To attend 6-8 weekly supervision as outlined in the Volunteer Policy

Equality and Diversity Statement

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 people with disabilities, who are culturally diverse and who have used advocacy services. 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.