

# Volunteer Advocacy Coach

Be Heard for Autistic Adults



## Role Description

### Be Heard for Autistic Adults

Be Heard for Autistic Adults is a pilot project providing Self-Advocacy for individuals with a recent autism diagnosis from Somerset Autism Spectrum Service (SASS) including those who do not qualify for social care support. Those accessing the project will need assistance with various aspects of their lives and a Volunteer Advocacy Coach will be matched with the individuals' requirements.

The aim of this pilot is to empower autistic people with the tools and resources to give them confidence in achieving their goals, initially with the volunteer's support and independently in the future. The key objective of this role is to support individuals to have a meaningful and worthwhile experience whilst gaining skills, knowledge, and confidence, to live life to their full potential, by enabling participation and inclusion.

### What is an Advocacy Coach?

The role of an Advocacy Coach is to support autistic people to develop skills and confidence to navigate the issues that they may be facing as an autistic person. Advocacy Coaches will provide 1:1 advocacy coaching to clients and support them with both practical and social aspects of their lives. This ensures that the autistic person has greater choice and control over their lives, both now and in the future. Advocacy Coaches will help the person prioritise what's important post diagnosis, provide options, support choice, and make plans for action using an individualised action plan.

Advocacy Coaches will also facilitate peer groups where ideas will be shared, and self-advocacy coaching provided to a group of autistic individuals.

**Supervised by:** Project Lead

**Role available in:** Somerset

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

### 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 with full training and ongoing access to keep knowledge and skills up to date
- Out of pocket expenses reimbursed – mileage £0.45 per mile, Bike £0.20 per mile plus parking tickets, bus and train fares etc
- Support to progress to paid employment

- The satisfaction of knowing you are making a vital difference to the work of SWAN
- The satisfaction of empowering autistic people 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 the person progress
- To be part of a pilot study that will hopefully shape provision for autistic people in the future

### **What will you be doing?**

- Empower autistic people to self-advocate and make positive changes in their lives
- Provide 1:1 self-advocacy coaching to individuals using our Toolkits
- Provide information, support and coaching based on the issues the person is facing
- You may support the person to attend an event or access a service for the first time
- You may help the person with 'life admin', accessing services, or access to work requirements.
- Create an action plan with the person to reach their goals independently in the future
- Listen to individuals' feedback and gather this through paper and online surveys
- Help to review the feedback and put this into a report to show the impact the project has had
- Attend meetings to promote self-advocacy workshops and explain their importance for client empowerment
- Use an online database to record all travel time, and associated activities within the role as an Advocacy Coach

### **What type of person are we looking for?**

- Someone with lived experience - you will either be an autistic person or have experience working with, or supporting, autistic people
- Positive attitude towards autistic people who may have a variety of complex needs
- Available 3- 6 hours per week, evening and weekend availability is preferable for this project
- Confident to communicate both verbal and written information
- Committed to enabling people to take control of their lives
- 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 an autism diagnosis and would like to help empower others in the same position. If this sounds like you then do, please get in touch.**

### **What we need you to do?**

- Complete all mandatory training for this role within 8 weeks
- After gaining an appropriate level of experience, to participate in relevant on-going training to keep up to date with, procedures, guidelines, and legislation that affect the organisation and the people who access our 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 4-6 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.