

Independent Advocate

Length of contract:	Permanent (Subject to continuance of funding)
Salary:	£22,571- £26,975 per annum (NJC scale 12/21)
Based at:	Trafford
Hours:	30 hours

Our Mission

We help people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them in their lives, by providing high quality advocacy.

Purpose of role

To provide specialist Statutory Advocacy to local residents across Lancashire. To promote self-advocacy and empowerment and enable service users to make informed decisions and get their views heard in matters relating to mental health and/or care and support needs within health and social care. This will be through one to one advocacy and other models of advocacy as required. This activity will include working with people of all ages, including those with learning disabilities, people with mental health needs, people with physical and sensory impairment, older people and people that lack capacity.

Key tasks

- To provide Independent Advocacy support as defined under the Mental Health Act (2007), Mental Capacity Act (2005), Care Act (2014), and Advocacy Standards to individuals in community, residential and hospital settings.
- To manage a client caseload and ensure accurate case management and record keeping.
- To provide information, support or signpost clients, to inform or empower individuals on any issues regarding their health and care. Including mental health treatment under the amended 2007 Mental Health Act, deprivation of liberty safeguards under Mental Capacity Act and support with safeguarding under Care Act (2014).
- To advocate for individuals within a variety of meetings relating to their care and treatment, to include ward rounds, case conferences, Care Programme Approach (CPA) meetings, mental health assessments, best interests meetings and safeguarding meetings.
- To maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant mental capacity, mental health and community care policy, legislation, case law, and good practice.
- To work within the appropriate legislation, as well as agreed case-working standards and monitoring requirements
- To work as a member of the team, attend bi-monthly team meetings, peer group meetings, and contribute towards service planning and developments for advocacy and the wider organisation.
- To represent Advocacy Focus at various meetings/promotional events as required and to provide feedback to the team.
- To mentor and supervise volunteers and students to support clients through casework and peer advocacy groups.

- To be flexible to support work across all service areas to meet referral, geographical and organisational demands
- To be available to cover the Advocacy Community Hub at least 2 and ½ days per month
- To undertake duties in line with safeguarding and data protection principles.
- To produce reports for the Advocacy Manager, SMT and, others as required.
- To attend regular supervision/appraisal sessions with the Advocacy Manager
- To be available to work occasionally in the evening and weekends as required.
- To work within Advocacy Focus's policies and procedures
- To work towards and successfully complete the Independent Advocacy Qualification (IAQ) within 12 month of securing a position in order to provide all strands of specialist advocacy.
- To be responsible for identifying areas for personal development.
- To undertake any other duties as commensurate with the grading of the post.

Benefits

- **Personal Private Healthcare Plan** - A private healthcare plan for you and members of your family with money towards dentistry, glasses, private consultations and more.
- **Mental Health Support** - Free counselling and therapy support. 75% of our staff feel confident disclosing their mental health at work and we are keen to hear from anyone with lived experience of mental ill health.
- **Holidays** - 25 plus bank holidays and birthday day off.
- **Career Development and Progression** - We have award winning internal and external training packages. Most of our staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid and receive regular training, supervision and development. As a small charity, you have a real opportunity to make a name for yourself and develop your skills.
- **Wellbeing Days and Team Huddles** - We have regular meet ups where we focus on personal development and wellbeing.
- **Award Winning Workplace** - We recently came second out of 114 national organisations for our workplace wellbeing, culture and support procedures.

Person Specification – What we need from you

This section outlines the things we need from an Independent Advocate. You will see you don't always need specific qualifications or experience, but you will need to be able to demonstrate certain personal qualities.

The essential criteria are those things which you must have in order to do the job. Desirable criteria are those qualities that would be either useful, or an advantage to have and/ or are things that you could be trained to do.

Education and training	
Essential	Desirable
Grade B or above in English and Maths (or equivalent)	IA Qualification
The ability to drive and a full UK drivers licence	Experience/ knowledge of local and national safeguarding policies and practice
	Level 2 Diploma in Health and Social Care or equivalent
	Working knowledge of the Mental Health, Mental Capacity and Care Acts
Achievements, experience, skills & abilities	
Essential	Desirable
Knowledge of the legislation, policies, and procedures that influence advocacy and social care provisions.	Recent experience in a paid or voluntary capacity involving face-to-face advocacy or health/social care provision.
Understanding of Advocacy roles.	Experience of supporting people through health or social care services.
An understanding of the needs and issues faced by people accessing health and social care services.	Experience of working effectively in an inter-agency context, and with a wide range of stakeholders.
Ability to listen to and engage with people from diverse backgrounds, both face to face and over the telephone.	Knowledge of Health and Social Care Services.
Able to be caring, sensitive and patient while supporting people to be as independent as possible.	Knowledge of local area and local service provision.
Keen to work with the people Advocacy Focus supports and demonstrate empathy and compassion.	Experience of advocating for others in a paid or voluntary capacity.
Enthusiasm to make a difference to people's lives.	Experience of working in a work team setting. Experience of coaching and mentoring colleagues to improve practice.
Ability to listen, understand and respond to people, always putting the person that's being supported first.	Experience of developing new ideas that improve people's independence and working flexibly to achieve them.
The ability to understand guidelines, policies and records etc.	

Experience of completing records yourself.	
A high standard of written and verbal skills including the ability to write letters and reports.	
Computer literate, including word processing skills, sound keyboard skills and knowledge of MS Word/ MS office applications	
Excellent organisational skills with the ability to manage a complex workload and to prioritise effectively.	
Ability to work flexibly and manage your own diary.	
Ability to utilise supervision and peer support.	
Ability to get on well with people and work in harmony with others, by both challenging and helping people to develop and learn from their experiences.	
Ability to be flexible and open to new challenges, ideas and experiences.	

Key Competencies

The key competencies for this role include the following areas that you need to be able to meet.

It's all about you

- Self-awareness and awareness of others responses to your actions.
- Open to learning from others and willing to share knowledge and experiences.
- Show high standards of personal and professional behaviour.
- Take appropriate action if ethics and values are compromised.

Working with others

- Help others to play an active role taking into account a person's whole life, including physical, mental, cultural emotional and spiritual needs.

Managing services

- Gather feedback from people who use the service or colleagues you support to help develop team and personal plans.
- Actively contribute to discussions about how to improve performance and service.

Improving service

- Use systematic ways of managing and minimising risk in all that you do.
- Continually look for improvement in what we do by talking to those you support and people around you.

Setting direction

- Influence others by sharing your perspective and knowledge, including influencing key decision makers.
- Help other people to gain influence over things that impact them directly.

Values and behaviours

The 'I' statements describe the values and the essential behaviours that we value at Advocacy Focus and they apply to staff, volunteers, trustees and people who use the services.

Our values

Quality - We deliver high quality advocacy - we have over 20 years' experience of providing expert, person-led advocacy

People - We put people at the heart of everything we do and want to enable them to make positive change in their lives

Respectful - We are a respectful team - we treat everyone equally and make sure everyone feels valued, respected and listened to

Trust - You can trust us and know that we will keep your information confidential and safe

Independent - We are independent of councils and health services and we are on your side

Learning - We never stop learning - we learn from the people we support, our partners and each other

Our behaviours

I will deliver high quality advocacy: I listen to people when they feel lost in the health and social care system.

- No decision about me, without me:** I always seek to involve individuals in coming to decisions that affect them.
- I will put people first:** I care about people and encourage them to make positive changes in their lives.
- I will respect others:** I treat everyone equally and make sure everyone feels valued, respected, and listened to.
- I will be honest and open:** I am open about the reasons for my actions and I give my honest opinion knowing that it will be respected.
- I will work independently:** from any local authorities or health/ social care professionals, ensuring my focus is to support people in the first instance.
- I will never stop learning:** I aim to develop and improve my skills. I learn from the people I support, our partners, stakeholders, and each other.
- I will take informed risk:** I consider the benefits of taking a risk as well as what might happen if things go wrong. Where possible I seek to manage risk rather than avoid it.
- I will find things to celebrate:** I recognise that all achievements, no matter how small they might seem to me, are cause for celebration.