



Volunteer Advocate Job Description

Location

This job will involve you in working with people in your local and surrounding area. You may be required to visit people in residential/care homes, hospital, or occasionally their own home. You may need to accompany them to meetings or attend meetings on their behalf. Access to a car is desirable.

Advocacy Role

Your main role is to be an advocate for people who want assistance to speak up on specific issues. The tasks will vary but usually involve:

- Arranging to meet with the person to discuss their issues and/or concerns.
- Identifying the specific points or issues the person wants to raise and with whom.
- Agreeing a course of action with the person, noting their views and opinions.
- Attending a meeting, review, or tribunal and empowering the person to speak up, or assisting them by representing their views and wishes at the meeting, or submitting a report as agreed with the person, detailing their views and wishes.

Training

Before you can begin working as a volunteer advocate you will be required to attend our Advocacy Training Course. The course takes place over 3 or 4 days. The sessions will be arranged to suit the majority of attendees. You must commit to attending all sessions and completing all units. The course covers advocacy skills, confidentiality, being a volunteer and relevant legislation. Additional training opportunities will be made available on relevant issues.

Support and Supervision

You will receive support that will enable you to carry out your role as an advocate. This will be through one to one supervision with your Advocacy Area Co-ordinator on a regular basis. This will be an opportunity for you to talk through your work, consider any particular difficulties and discuss possible options and identify any additional training needs.

Commitment

We ask that you give a few hours per week. An Advocate needs to be able to work in a flexible way, often the work and time involved can vary according to the individual's needs, this will be taken into consideration when cases are allocated.

There is also a requirement to attend regular individual supervision sessions and group training and support sessions. These are done remotely as well as face-to-face.

Confidentiality

All advocates must maintain strict confidentiality in their work at all times.

Expenses

Out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of Advocacy Highland are reimbursed on the submission of an expenses claim form and receipt.



Volunteer Advocate Profile

Below are listed some skills and qualities that it would be useful for an advocate to possess. Please remember that we don't expect anyone to have all these things, it is only a guideline.

It is essential, however, that you are able to work in a way that respects an individual's views or wishes even if these are different to your own.

Skills

- The ability to listen and communicate effectively.
- Assertiveness and diplomacy.
- The ability to define a problem and work through it.
- Report writing skills
- Good organisational skills

Qualities

- Empathy.
- Reliability.
- The ability to work in stressful and emotional situations.
- The ability to set and maintain appropriate boundaries.
- The ability to keep confidentiality.
- Self-awareness. An understanding of personal issues and how these can affect your work.
- Self-motivation.

Knowledge

- Some knowledge of mental health legislation or community care practices would be useful, but not essential, as full training will be provided.
- Experience of working with or supporting those with mental ill health, dementia, ASD or learning disabilities would be useful, but not essential.

Other

- Access to a car would be useful but not essential if alternatives are available to you.
- Being available for a few hours per week.
- Some flexibility of time.