

Community Advocate Terms of Reference



OUR SERVICE

At Getting Heard we believe everyone has the right to be heard on important issues impacting their lives. This can be particularly difficult when someone is facing these issues alone and has other factors impacting their lives. Our Community Advocacy service matches clients with trained volunteer Community Advocates for 3-6 months to support clients to get heard their voice heard on issues of importance.



A volunteer Community Advocate and her client (January 2016)

ADVOCATE ROLE

Community Advocates are volunteers from the local community who are trained and supervised to work in partnership with their clients on a 1:1 basis. The service they offer is free, independent, non-judgemental, confidential, and supportive. Our Community Advocates:

- Give time and listen
- Offer support and understanding
- Help clients to research their options
- Support clients to read and write letters
- Assist in making telephone calls
- Help clients to communicate using other methods (e.g. text)
- Accompany clients to meetings; taking notes and asking questions if helpful
- Reflect with clients on meetings that have happened and explore what they want to do next

ADVOCATE REQUIREMENTS

Basic:

- Able to attend 3 days initial training
- Available 1-2 hours day-time per week (with flexibility to your needs) to support clients
- Willing to attend 1 hour of supervision every 3-6 months
- Willing to join volunteer network meetings every 6 weeks
- Responsive to preferred method of communication (e.g. phone or email)
- Can offer a volunteering commitment for up to 2 years
- Lives in Oxfordshire
- Flexibility to travel up to 15 miles from home location
- Basic IT skills (e.g. Microsoft Word and Outlook)

Personal qualities

- Excellent listening and communication skills
- Sensitive and respectful of other people's views
- Able to keep personal boundaries
- Punctual and reliable
- Robust communication skills
- Calm under pressure
- Committed to maintaining confidentiality
- Self-reflective with a willingness to learn

Ability to work independently

- Able to do research and access information from other agencies and/or online
- Maintains complete and confidential records about the case
- Strong literacy skills (e.g. confidence writing formal letters)

Ability to work in a team

- Forms constructive working relationships with a variety of stakeholders
- Able to flex engagement style depending on the person they are speaking with
- Willing to attend volunteer network meetings to reflect collaboratively on learning

