

the advocacy people®

Considering volunteering?

This pack will tell you everything you need to know when it comes to donating your time to **The Advocacy People**

We're excited for you to become a volunteer

We are called **The Advocacy People** because we want our organisation to be just that:

The advocacy people, a group of people working together to deliver what we see as really important services.

If we are to do this properly, we need to be able to draw on as diverse and experienced a team as possible to reflect and work effectively with our many clients.

We are certain that you will find the experience rewarding and satisfying.

Together, we can help change lives.



Matthew Hilton
Chief Executive Officer

This pack contains information which will help you to decide if volunteering is right for you, the types of opportunities available and what to do next to become a volunteer with **The Advocacy People**.

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Our commitment to you

We value the contribution volunteers make, not just to our organisation but to the people we provide support and services to, and the local communities in which we work.

It's important to us that a volunteer's experience working with **The Advocacy People** is a positive, effective and enjoyable one.

To ensure we provide a positive and worthwhile experience for our incredibly valuable volunteers, we make sure there is an effective framework in place, to give you the information, training and support you need and that it's appropriate to your role.

Why our volunteers are so important to us

- The variety of unique life skills, experiences and enthusiasm
- The diversity
- The contribution to local communities
- The time and skills that volunteers donate
- Their contribution to support **The Advocacy People** as an organisation, to provide sustainable, good quality services
- Their ability and willingness to support someone as they may have been helped in the past
- The desire to make the world a better place, to change lives for the better, in whatever way they can



What is advocacy and why is it important?

We all know how hard it can be when we don't feel listened to, when what's important to us isn't taken seriously by others, or when we don't feel we are able to say what we really feel or want.

This can be even more difficult when decisions are being made about our health and social welfare, care and treatment.

"My advocate helped me to clarify everything in my own mind and supported me to understand my rights. It made me feel more confident in dealing with a most upsetting and stressful time in my life"



Advocacy is supporting someone to communicate when they are struggling or communicating on their behalf to; help them say what they want, ensure their rights are being respected, represent their interests and help them access the services they need.

Advocacy promotes inclusion, equality and social justice.



"Thank you for being with me yesterday. It made me feel stronger. I think I would be powerless on my own, even to be in the meeting"

An introduction to The Advocacy People

People are at the heart of what we do.

We believe in a society where:

- **people** feel in control of their lives and are confident to speak up
- **people** who can't speak up for themselves have someone in their corner to speak for them

We've been providing advocacy services since 1994.

Since then we've been through many changes as an organisation, growing and evolving to meet the changing world of advocacy provision.

We provide a range of services to a wide range of society, from working face to face with clients in prisons, acute psychiatric wards and hospitals to helping write letters to GPs and social workers.

An advocate's role is diverse and rewarding.

Our aim is to provide high quality, confidential, independent advocacy.

Our staff and volunteers support clients to have a voice in the way they are cared for, in the services they receive, and in decisions that are made about their lives, assisting them in safeguarding their rights and ensuring that those who are particularly vulnerable and/or excluded have an opportunity to take forward issues which are of importance to them.



What to expect as a volunteer

Your individual skillset and experiences help us to match you with the right role within The Advocacy People.

Volunteering opportunities

- Volunteer advocates & Independent Visitors
- Supporting advocates at local drop-ins and networking events to raise awareness of our services
- Supporting administrative work in locality teams
- Supporting trainers at training events
- Participating in recruitment panels
- Being part of our student placement programme (affiliated to local colleges/universities)
- Becoming a member of The Advocacy People's Board of Trustees

We are committed to our volunteers, we will ensure that you are armed with the skills and knowledge needed to give you the confidence to carry out your role with us.

We will provide a blend of shadow training, online courses and other resources, relevant to your role.

You will be provided with a detailed induction checklist, a handbook that will equip you with an overview of The Advocacy People, our services and our policies and procedures.

Volunteers can expect support from us in terms of a named employee for contact, access to our Mindful Employer Plus scheme, reasonable expenses for travel and the provision of equipment as relevant.

The Advocacy People are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity whilst working hard to ensure we respect people's cultures.

Student placements

Finding the right placement is so important.

We know (because many of us have been on that journey) that it can be difficult getting the right balance between workplace experience and focusing on your studies.

Which is why you'll always be supported with comprehensive training and access to Employee Assistance from Mindful Employer.

What will you get from your placement?

We have various roles offering direct client contact and case work, fully supported and overseen by qualified professional advocates.

Paid RPR - visiting clients in care and hospital settings to monitor the Deprivation of Liberty that person is under

Independent Care Act Advocacy - shadowing advocates supporting clients under the involvements under the Act

Independent Mental Capacity Advocate - shadowing when a person is potentially moving due to a change of needs or undergoing a serious medical treatment

Independent Health Complaints Advocate - supporting clients with a range of issues involving NHS provided care

Independent Mental Health Advocates - shadowing members of our team when they visit people who are under a Section

Community Advocacy - cases where we support clients to have their rights upheld

If you would like to know more contact us via the information at the end of this booklet or speak to your university's career team.

Independent Visitors

Independent Visitors are exceptional people, who volunteer with us, to spend time with young people, making a huge difference to their lives.

What is an Independent Visitor?

An Independent Visitor, is a person (18+) who has been vetted and trained by us, who we match with a young person that is in the care system.

The role of an Independent Visitor is to:

- Become a long-term friend to the young person, a stable and reliable feature in what can often be a chaotic time in a young persons life
- Share interests, hobbies and experiences together. It could be sitting and reading quietly, it could be going for a walk, going to concerts, bowling, creating artwork, visiting museums. Discovering new experiences and being flexible to the young persons interests. Most of all, having some fun.
- Some one to act as a friend, a mentor, someone to trust, someone who will listen and who has the young persons best interests at heart

We pay for the activities and your expenses

"Anon loves spending time with their IV, they always have great fun and long chats together"

- Foster Carer of a young person

To find out more about becoming an Independent Visitor, get in touch with via the details at the end of this booklet.



What to do next

If you would like to apply to become a volunteer with us, please fill in the Expression of Interest form which you can find on the volunteering pages of our website.

If you would like more information or to have a chat about volunteering opportunities, you can get in touch via:

Phone	0330 440 9000
Email	volunteering@theadvocacypeople.org.uk
Website	www.theadvocacypeople.org.uk



Thank you for taking the time to learn about volunteering with **The Advocacy People**.

We hope that you found this information pack helpful and look forward to hearing from you soon!