

Job Description

Post: Lead Advocate

Responsible to: Service Manager

Hours: Full time, 37.5 hours

Circles Network Summary

Circles Network is a UK wide voluntary organisation based in Warwickshire, renowned for building inclusive communities on the foundations of justice, advocacy, empowerment and friendships.

Working with people of any age who are isolated or at risk of isolation, this organisation has ground breaking expertise in the development of Circles of Support, Independent and Collective Advocacy, Person Centred Planning and Inclusion into the mainstream of life. Working in highly creative, entrepreneurial styles, we are dynamic and ever more determined to dream, dare and do.

Service Summary

Circles Network Advocacy Service provide a professional, independent advocacy service for individuals detained under the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 in medium secure care (Rowanbank) and low secure care (Leverndale) in Glasgow. The majority of the individuals we support are detained and may have had contact with criminal justice services.

Our core funding comes from NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and the West of Scotland Forensic Directorate.

In addition to providing advocacy in a hospital setting we also provide an advocacy service for those recently discharged to the community, for up to a three month period following discharge. The areas we cover include male and female admissions, male and female rehabilitation, the National Learning Disability Unit, pre-discharge and community outreach. In addition to independent mental health advocacy, we facilitate annual service review for the Scottish Association for Mental Health within 14 of their community supported accommodation units.

Job Summary

Circles Network Lead Advocates support the Service Manager to lead an innovative service for those that use the Advocacy Service, whilst also delivering high quality

Advocacy support. Lead Advocates are part of the local management team and provide active support on issues of development, operational delivery, quality assurance and team management.

The Values of Inclusion

All the work carried out by Circles Network is underpinned by a strongly held set of values and beliefs known as the values of inclusion. This philosophy, where all people, regardless of ability, are seen to be citizens of worth, drives us in our mission to support.

- Everyone has a voice and the right to be heard.
- All people have dreams and aspirations.
- All people have capabilities and qualities.
- All people should have power and control over what they do now and in the future.
- The whole community can benefit from embracing diversity.
- All people should have the opportunity to lead ordinary and valued lives.
- All people have the right to live and be part of the community.
- All people need friendships and independent relationships; a natural support network.
- All means All.

The Main Duties and Responsibilities of the post are as follows:

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- To coordinate and support teams of Advocates and volunteers to provide the highest quality of support and follow all policies and procedures in line with Circles Network high standards of quality.
 - To provide supervision for the Advocates in their teams, identifying any areas for development and maintaining accurate records and to assist with recruitment of team members.
 - Ensuring operational delivery for the day to day service provision in the absence of the manager.
 - Maintaining and overseeing the team's professional practice and training, contributing to training sessions, team meetings and learning events.
 - Providing buddying for lone working practices.
 - Providing independent advocacy to individuals, in compliance with the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 and other relevant legislation and guidelines including the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.
 - To maintain provision and operate within professional advocacy standards in accordance with advocacy guideline, and in line with Circles Network's Business and Operational plans.
 - To ensure that all individuals are supported to advocate in their own right, including the safeguarding of rights relating to those individuals defined as not having capacity/insight.
 - To promote awareness of statutory rights and resources available to the individuals using Circles Network Advocacy services.
 - To adopt and encourage flexible, person centred approaches to advocacy which meet the needs of each individual.
 - To actively seek and identify ways in which to engage particularly vulnerable and isolated individuals, developing the service to constantly extend scope and reach.
 - To embrace and coach others in person centred approaches and individualised working to promote and facilitate effective communication of expressed needs in the immediate and long term future.
 - To ensure that the civil and human rights of individuals are recognised, respected and upheld to contribute to the safeguarding of the individuals from the risk of abuse and harm to self and others.
 - To maintain accurate and up to date records in a clear and concise manner with strict adherence to confidentiality and data protection policy.
 - To source and provide relevant information on a range of services that the individual may wish to access.

- To contribute to the ongoing development of the advocacy role through participation and leadership in training, research, and professional development within Circles Network and other appropriate external agencies.
- To actively recruit volunteers and students in to the team providing guidance, training and support.
- To contribute to the communication and planning processes within Circles Network through representing us at meetings, planning groups, forums and in relevant reports and feedback sessions.
- To organise the administration of work undertaken ensuring efficient, accurate filing and information sharing.
- To ensure good time management for yourself and others.
- To produce and contribute to written reports on work relating to the project.
- To share appropriate information within the team, distributing articles and reports and encouraging collaborative working throughout Circles Advocacy Services.
- To facilitate group work sessions with new and on-going groups when appropriate
- To work proactively with individuals who are additionally vulnerable through matters of incapacity in accordance with statutory principles.
- To create links with advocacy initiatives in order for people of this and our other services to develop relationships, skills and expertise.
- To support people to make informed choices and present information on alternatives to traditional arrangements, in particular, for people who are about to make the transition back in to the community from hospital or restricted setting.
- To undertake training in areas related to Forensic Mental Health provision as appropriate to the service.
- To assist in the provision of training, workshop and presentations as a means to contribute to raising of awareness of the Advocacy Service and role.
- To be aware of NHS policy and guidance on the management of Forensic Mental Health Guidelines on Risk Good Practice and Procedure and Patient Confidentiality.
- Any other tasks commensurate with the work of Circles Network in agreement with your line manager and Chief Executive.

Person Specification

The person specification describes the qualities that we will be looking for when selecting an applicant for the post. Use the person specification when you are completing the form to highlight your relevant skills and experience.

Essential Criteria

- Experience as an advocacy practitioner providing both individual and collective advocacy with relevant qualifications and/or experience in advocacy or in a related field.
- Ability to communicate on a personal level with people supported by the Service and a range of practitioners from legal, health, psychiatric, social and educational services.
- Ability to communicate using written, verbal and graphical methods, considering the requirements of diverse individuals. Communicating, in styles as agreed with those supported, in an open and honest manner.
- A willingness to learn new skills such as developing positive relationships and conflict management.
- A clear understanding and commitment to the values of inclusion and equal opportunities and human rights.
- Experience in working with sensitivity, confidentiality and integrity.
- Ability to work on your own initiative, within a team and within a partnership with other agencies, ensuring clarity of roles, responsibilities and regular reporting mechanisms and schedules and appreciating the importance of the organisation's policy and practice.
- Proven recording skills, ability to write accurate reports for colleagues, Trustees and funders.
- High level organisational skills and efficient time management.
- Full use of a car and / or driver, and willingness to travel to different locations.
- Ability to work flexible hours, which may include evenings and some weekends, and occasional overnight stays.
- Effective ICT skills.
- Creativity, the ability to find solutions and overcome barriers with positivity and enthusiasm.
- Ability to take down professional boundaries whilst maintaining a professional service.
- Experience of working with people who experience mental ill health

Desirable Criteria

- Experience of responsibility in leading a service, team or project.
- Proven expertise as a trainer, facilitating workshops and courses of learning.
- Supervision and support of volunteers and students working in an advocacy environment.

