**Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)**

**Job Title:** Independent Mental Health Advocate

**Contract Length:** Fixed Term (until end March 2015, with possible extension)

**Hours:** 14 hours (2 set days, during normal working hours Monday – Friday, additional hours/days possible)

**Line Manager:** Advocacy Manager

**Locations:** Edenfield Centre,GMW Mental Health NHS Trust, Bury New Road, Prestwich M25 3BL

**Job Description**

Our independent advocacy service provides IMHA services for Greater Manchester West medium and low secure, stepdown and tier 4 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and we need a new advocate to help provide advocacy in the medium secure services.

The service provides a free, independent and impartial comprehensive advocacy service in line with the Mental Health Act.

A good knowledge of IMHA requirements is necessary, though the advocate will receive internal training and support from our experienced team. Previous advocacy experience is a must, and advocacy and IMHA qualifications would be a strong advantage.

The advocate will typically meet people in person on hospital wards, with duties including

* Briefing patients on their rights under the Mental Health Act, the Human Rights Act and related legislation
* Supporting and if necessary representing clients in a variety of meetings and situations and working towards developing self advocacy

As part of the team, the advocate will help promote the integration of independent rights-based support within mental health services, including criminal justice and social care.

Please note a full DBS check is required.

**Tasks:**

To provide independent mental health advocacy for in-patients in secure mental health wards.

1. To provide legislative information and casework support on a one to one basis for Mind in Salford’s clients on a variety of issue.
2. Support and, if required, represent clients in expressing their views and making choices about their care and treatment, whilst recognising peoples’ differing experiences and protected characteristics.
3. Ensuring all casework conforms to legislative requirements, Mind in Salford’s systems and procedures and to the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark standard.
4. To follow the principles of the Advocacy Charter.
5. To work within and meet agreed case-working standards, requirements, targets and service goals.
6. Proactively promote the service, relational security and generate awareness - by attending wards, meetings etc. on a regular basis, ensuring that the advocacy service is well publicised by providing information and support on issues raised.
7. Take referrals direct from clients or via third parties, e.g. NHS staff, family, advocates and other mental health professionals.
8. Attend clients in hospital, Mind in Salford’s offices and out in the community as necessary.
9. To provide the service in a range of styles and venues, which will include providing a drop-in service, telephone-based support, and work at different sites.
10. All work is updated in a timely fashion including casework, statistical and monitoring information and other records for the purpose of information retrieval and casework continuity.
11. Use computer based software for the recording of information onto Mind in Salford’s Client Management Database.
12. Maintain a high standard of performance by working within Mind in Salford’s policies and procedures.
13. Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to mental health and advocacy.
14. Take due account of health and safety and undertake client risk assessments. Where risks are identified, take action directly and/or report to management as appropriate.
15. Where necessary to provide cover within the organisation.
16. To work at all times under the instruction and guidance of the line management structure.
17. To undertake any other reasonable duties as required.

**General**

1. To attend and participate in relevant meetings and give reports/presentations when required.
2. To comply with, promote and contribute to the development of Mind in Salford’s policies and procedures, including its Equal Opportunities and Diversity policies.
3. To participate constructively in appropriate internal and external training courses, supervision and staff away days.
4. To work effectively as an individual and as part of a team in all aspects of the role.
5. Liaise with statutory and non-statutory bodies and represent Mind in Salford as appropriate

**Person Specification**

All candidates will be assessed against the following person specification. Assessment will be made initially on the basis of information supplied on the job application form, then at interview through structured questions with the possibility of a task for shortlisted candidates. If a task is required, shortlisted candidates will be supplied with information on the task prior to interview, plus any information that may be needed.

**All candidates are reminded to address as many of the points in the person specification as possible in their application.**

**Knowledge and Skills**

1. Demonstrate an understanding of The Mental Health Act, Human Rights Act and associated mental health legislation and ability to apply these appropriately.

1. Knowledge of mental health services and the ability to advocate on any issue a client may face.
2. An understanding of the specific challenges faced by people detained in mental health services
3. Experience of liaison and negotiating with or on behalf of clients to third parties and representing clients’ views in a non-confrontational manner.
4. Excellent written communication skills with particular emphasis on preparing reviews, reports and correspondence.
5. Effective oral communication skills, including ability to communicate with people who may be experiencing varying degrees of emotional or mental distress.
6. Able to engage with vulnerable adults and show respect and understanding.
7. Establish and maintain effective relationships with professionals across varying disciplines.
8. Ability to follow instruction and also to participate in regular supervision.
9. Able to prioritise and organise own caseload and maintain up to date client and work records including monitoring information.
10. Able to use Microsoft Office and custom database packages, and to be administratively self-servicing.
11. Ability to contribute to organisational development, working co-operatively and supportively with colleagues to achieve shared outcomes.
12. Demonstrable knowledge and skills in client empowerment and participation.
13. Ability to follow Mind in Salford’s Policies and Procedures.
14. An understanding of quality assurance process and where you have contributed to them
15. Understanding of health and safety, including risk assessing and lone working precautions.
16. Understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and confidentiality.
17. Willingness to learn and develop personally, and engage positively with new ways of working, and to seek out appropriate training for your own professional development.

**Qualifications & Experience**

1. At least 1 years’ experience as an advocate. – **essential**
2. Evidence of training in advocacy – **essential**
3. Relevant qualifications, particularly the IMHA qualification, would be an advantage, but not required. - **desirable**

**Other Requirements**

1. Ability to travel to various sites in the local area.
2. Undertake an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record check.
3. Two detailed professional references will be required and disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest.

Mind in Salford is an equal opportunities employer.