

## Advocacy for OCD Service: Volunteer Role Description

### Volunteer Role Title: Advocate

The aim of the advocate role is to provide adults with a diagnosis of OCD/BDD, who have a specific issue because of their OCD/BDD, with independent advocacy support via email, on the phone or in person. The role is home based but you would need to be able to travel to meet with clients and to attend appointments or meetings with them. The main issues that people bring to the service include difficulties in accessing care & treatment or problems with their housing, education provider or employer.

In addition to advocacy you would need to promote the service by making links with local OCD/BDD support groups, mental health organisations, Healthwatch etc.

#### **Main Tasks:**

1. To supply accurate and up to date information as requested by the client.
2. To work only on the instructions of the client.
3. To identify options for the client and to support their choices.
4. If requested by the client to do so to represent the wishes and views of the client to third parties in person, by letter or by phone.
5. To provide the Lead Advocate of a written record of all advocacy work undertaken in line with OCDA's casework procedures.
6. To promote and encourage a client's 'self-advocacy' where possible.
7. To identify collective advocacy issues amongst clients.
8. To promote the service locally by making links with other advocacy services, support groups, mental health services, Healthwatch etc.

#### **Skills & Experience Needed:**

- Empathy and understanding of the difficulties faced by someone with OCD.
- Tact.
- Diplomacy.
- A non-judgemental attitude.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Reliability.
- IT skills – email, internet & Skype.
- The ability to access public transport or to drive a car.
- Access to a computer – we will provide you with a mobile phone.
- Knowledge and understanding of mental health services.
- Personal experience of OCD/BDD either first hand or as a friend/family member of someone with the condition is desirable.
- Ability to work independently but also to be a team player.
- To be willing to build up a knowledge of local mental health services & resources.

**Targets:**

- To build a small case load of clients within your region & to identify any local/regional trends in terms of access to & quality of treatment.
- To offer some telephone/email support to clients outside of your region.
- To take part in training days, monthly Skype supervision sessions and case by case support from the Lead Advocate.
- To make links with local mental health and other relevant services.

**Time:** Flexible time commitment of the equivalent of a day/week but you would need to have some regular availability during the day.

**Place of work:**

Home based with advocacy delivered via email and phone and face-to-face at locations to be agreed with the Lead Advocate. Depending on location there may be the option of working out of the main office or another OCDA desk space. Promotional work will require outreach work and attendance at relevant meetings again agreed with the Lead Advocate.

**National Advocacy Manager:** Collette Byrne - 020 7253 5272

**Lead Advocate:** Rochelle Lewis-Kennedy – 020 7253 5272

**Benefits offered:**

1. 2 days of initial training tailored to the role and further training days throughout the year
2. Regular group & case supervision
3. Quarterly advocacy newsletter
4. Expenses paid
5. Insurance cover
6. Volunteer recognition events, e.g. Christmas and other holidays
7. Once you have taken on some client work we would be happy to provide you with a reference.
8. Input into a personal development plan.

**References:**

Two references will be required. Ideally one of these should be a work related or 'professional' reference i.e. former employer, tutor, social worker, healthcare professional. The other should be from someone who has known you for over 2 years, (excluding family members).

**DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service Check):**

Because some of our clients are classed as 'vulnerable' under 'Protection of Vulnerable Adults' protocols, all volunteers who are working as Advocates, must have an 'Enhanced DBS check'. These checks will be free to the volunteers. The National Advocacy Manager is happy to answer any queries about these checks and would encourage potential volunteers not to be put off by this standard protocol.

**Recruitment Process**

Application form and telephone interview.

