



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Community Advocate – West Sussex

Reporting to: Service Manager – Community Mental Health Advocacy

Job Summary

To be responsible for the provision of independent, professional mental health advocacy primarily within community settings across West Sussex and ensure that the views and needs of people with mental health issues are heard, respected and acted upon.

The Advocate's role is to take action to help people say what they want, secure their rights and obtain the services they need. Mind in Brighton and Hove's (MiBH's) Advocacy Services work in partnership with the people they support and take their side.

Main Duties

- To discuss and meet with individuals to determine their needs for support and representation, working creatively and flexibly to deliver positive outcomes
- To provide general information to individuals on mental health issues, including their rights, to ensure that they are clear about the options available to them and fully involved in decisions about their treatment and care
- To advocate for individuals at key decision making meetings about their care and treatment, for example, care reviews, assessments, housing and complaints meetings
- To liaise with a range of statutory and voluntary sector services to represent and progress individuals' issues
- To manage an advocacy caseload, record accurate and professional case notes and ensure that individuals are kept informed of and involved in all aspects of the advocacy process
- To work to agreed referral processes, case working standards, monitoring systems and contractual arrangements and targets
- To fully understand MiBH's Confidentiality Policy and able to explain it in straightforward language, at all times observing and respecting the individual's right to confidentiality within the policy
- To contribute to the protection of individuals from the risk of abuse and harm to self and others, working in accordance with MiBH's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- To work closely with other community advocacy and IMHA colleagues and with other MiBH services.
- To work as part of a team contributing to service developments, sharing success stories and suggestions for improvement to help shape the future direction of the service
- To work in accordance with MiBH's Equality and Diversity Policies and Procedures and work proactively to ensure the service is accessible

- To ensure that monitoring information including equalities monitoring and satisfaction surveys are routinely collected and fed back to the organisation
- To promote self advocacy and assist people to self advocate as appropriate in line with Recovery principles
- To provide individuals with information about how they can feedback to the advocacy service and how to get involved with activities of MiBH, if they wish
- To build strong relationships with a range of stakeholders to promote the advocacy service and a shared understanding of advocacy
- To be proactive with regard to personal learning and understanding maintaining up to date knowledge of mental health and health and social care policy, local structures, legislation and other advocacy related issues
- To actively participate and contribute to ongoing learning and development through line management supervision, annual appraisal and undertaking agreed training
- To be mindful of the budget set for the provision of the service, implementing efficiencies and innovations which lead to improved performance
- To work with and support volunteers across all aspects of the organisation

Organisational Responsibilities:

- To work in accordance with MiBH's aims, objectives and values
- To work in accordance with all MiBH's policies and procedures
- To promote the work of MiBH and positive understanding, awareness and attitudes towards mental health
- To work flexibly to best meet the needs of the service which may include undertaking occasional evening and weekend work

This list of duties and responsibilities is not intended to be exhaustive. The job holder will be expected to adopt additional tasks when required; these tasks will be in keeping with the general profile of the role.

Person Specification – Community Advocate

Experience

1	Experience of working in or with mental health services with a strong client focus and a commitment to service user involvement, or relevant transferable skills	E
2	Experience of working directly with service users, managing a client caseload and maintaining appropriate boundaries	E
3	Experience of establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with a range of professionals, whilst retaining independence	E
4	Experience of recording accurate, professional case notes and maintaining effective reporting, recording and monitoring systems	E

Skills

6	The ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with a wide range of people and ability to represent MiBH	E
7	The ability to deal calmly and confidently with people experiencing distress and who may find communicating in person or on the phone difficult	E
8	Ability to work flexibly as part of a team and on your own initiative	E
9	Ability to identify and assess potential risks involved in work activities and manage these in accordance with Policies and Procedures	E
10	Ability to contribute to MiBH's strategy and business plan	E

Knowledge/Qualifications

11	Knowledge and understanding of mental health services, structures and legislation	E
12	Awareness and understanding of the main issues facing people experiencing mental health issues	E
13	Good understanding of the importance of confidentiality and the principles of data protection	E
14	Good working knowledge of other relevant services and agencies	E
15	Good understanding of the recovery model and an outcome based approach	E
16	Nationally recognised Qualification in Advocacy or willingness to undertake	E
17	Good working knowledge of MS Office	E
18	Full, clean driving license and access to own transport – please confirm in application	E

Personal Contribution

19	Ability to be flexible in an ever changing work environment	E
20	Commitment and understanding of MiBH's aims and objectives.	E
21	Committed and reliable member of team and understands impact of role within the organisation	E
22	Takes responsibility for organising own work effectively and for delivering results	E
23	Private space to work from home confidentially if required/agreed	E

Use of Technology

MiBH will make use of computer technology. All staff should expect to use information technology in their work to improve quality and co-ordination of services and to enable faster and more accurate communication within and outside the organisation.

Confidentiality

As an employee of MiBH, staff may gain knowledge of a highly confidential nature relating to the private affairs, diagnosis and treatment of service users, information affecting members of the public, matters concerning staff and details of items under consideration by MiBH. Under no circumstances should such information be divulged or passed to any unauthorised person. This includes holding conversations with colleagues concerning service users or staff in situations where the conversation may be overheard.

All staff are expected to comply with the Data Protection Act (1998) and with MiBH's Data Protection Policy and Procedures.

Anti-Bribery

Bribery is a criminal offence. The organisation prohibits any form of bribery. MiBH require compliance from all staff, with the highest ethical standards and anti-bribery laws applicable. Integrity and transparency are of utmost importance and MiBH have zero tolerance towards corrupt activities of any kind, whether committed by staff or by third parties. All staff are expected to comply with MiBH's policies and procedures.

Equal Opportunities

MiBH believes in equality of opportunity for all and is committed to challenging inequality, discrimination and stigma particularly in relation to minority and socially excluded groups and on the grounds of mental health.

All MiBH policies and procedures are designed to ensure equality of opportunity in employment and services delivery. All staff are expected to comply with MiBH's policies and procedures.

Health and Safety

Health and safety is everyone's responsibility. MiBH is committed to reducing accidents, incidents, and harm in the workplace and our services. MiBH promotes an open approach to identifying, managing and reporting incidents and recognise there are more benefits to be gained by learning from incidents and introducing steps to avoid or minimise reoccurrence than from attributing blame. All staff are expected to comply with MiBH's policies and procedures.

No smoking policy

MiBH operates a no smoking policy in all their offices. This applies to all staff and visitors. This policy also applies to staff travelling in their own vehicles whilst on duty. All staff are expected to comply with MiBH's policies and procedures.

This job description will be reviewed as necessary and may be amended to meet the changing needs of MiBH. It will also be used as the basis for annual appraisals.

This job description has been agreed between the post holder and MiBH.

.....
Employee
Date

.....
Manager
Date