

The Advocacy Project

Here's how you can
make a real difference
through volunteering...



Thinking about volunteering? We're thrilled to meet you!

At **The Advocacy Project** we help marginalised and vulnerable people make effective choices about what happens in their lives.

We support them to speak up and help improve important services we all need.

We want to make sure people across all age and care groups – including learning disability and mental health – can:

- › **voice their concerns**
- › **understand their rights**
- › **make effective choices about what happens in their lives**

We do this through advocacy services which support people individually, and user involvement projects that help organisations improve the services they offer.



“Giving even just an hour a week to visit a person who needs someone to look out for them will make a real and profound difference.”
Katherine Shaw
CEO

What’s in this pack?

Who are the Advocacy Project	3
What is advocacy and why is it important?	4
What to expect as a volunteer.....	5
What happens next?.....	6

Who are The Advocacy Project

The Advocacy Project works with seldom heard communities across London and provides a space for them to speak up and make decisions about their health, wellbeing, and social care. We're here to make sure people across all ages and care groups can understand their rights, make effective choices about their lives and voice their concerns. We want to make sure these voices are heard.

Our vision is '**A world in which every person has a voice.**' We have over 25 years' experience in supporting people across London to have the confidence to speak up and secure their rights so they can make informed choices and active decisions about how they live their lives.

We currently provide a range of services including:

- **Advocacy Services** - including the advocacy provision for Westminster and Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Ealing – that make sure people can express their wishes when decisions are being made about their care or wellbeing.
- **Healthwatch** – local Healthwatch organisations (Brent, RBKC and Westminster), which act as health and social care champions for the areas they serve and give people a direct channel to share their feedback.
- **User involvement projects** – these help organisations improve what they offer by listening to people who use their services and feeding those voices back into the system.
- **Personal Health Budget projects** – these allow people to access small grants to pay for items and services to improve their wellbeing.



What is advocacy and why is it important?

We know how it feels when no one is listening to you. When you're afraid or confused and you can't get the words straight to say how you feel or tell people what you need.

Now imagine the relief when someone takes the time to hear your concerns and helps you speak up for yourself in difficult circumstances. **This is advocacy.**

People who have been detained under the mental health act or those who are deemed to be lacking in capacity have a legal right to an advocate, but we also work to provide advocacy in communities, hospitals and with individuals.

“Everything felt in a muddle, and I didn't know what to say. The systems are complicated, and it felt like I didn't know my way. My advocate listened and helped me write down what I needed.”



Advocacy is important because it helps people to communicate when they are struggling. Advocates help people say what they want and ensure people's rights are being respected.

Advocacy promotes inclusion, equality, and social justice for all.

What to expect as a volunteer

Opportunities to volunteer include...

- › Working as a volunteer advocate
- › Supporting our Business Development and Communications team in fundraising and creating engaging content
- › Supporting local user involvement groups and projects
- › Supporting trainers at our safeguarding training events
- › Participating in recruitment panels
- › Joining our Board of Trustees
- › Joining our Healthwatch volunteering teams in Brent, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster.

We'll make sure you have all the training and support you need to fulfil a volunteering role with us.

You'll be assigned a key contact who will provide training, shadowing and provide you online training resources as you need them. Our volunteer handbook will provide you with an overview of our work and a full list of our policies and procedures.

Volunteers can expect support from us in terms of a named employee for contact, reasonable expenses for travel and the provision of equipment. The Advocacy Project are committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion at every step whilst working hard to ensure we respect people's cultures. We welcome applications from everyone who wants to take part ensuring we create a diverse and supportive team for all.

What happens next?

If you would like to apply to become a volunteer with us or have a chat about volunteering opportunities, please get in touch via our volunteer coordinator Ibrahim Ali and he will help to match you with a role that suits you.



Ibrahim Ali
Ibrahim.ali@advocacyproject.org.uk

Thanks for taking the time to read through this pack and we look forward to being in touch with you!



**The
Advocacy
Project**