



your voice your rights your choice

Recruitment Information Pack

93%

of our staff say “My work gives me a sense of achievement”

“An exceptionally high standard of advocacy. I would thoroughly recommend them.”

Dawn Harwood, West London NHS Trust



Our vision is a world in which every person has a voice



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Welcome

Dear candidate

Thank you for taking the time to read about The Advocacy Project and our services – which include advocacy, user involvement, personal health budgets and Healthwatch.

We're a highly committed, people-centred organisation with a track record of growth and reputation for innovation, quality and learning. You'll be joining a highly skilled and deeply motivated team. You will see we're proud of our vibrant, positive working culture and our commitment to staff development.

We often have activities that are open to members of the public, so if you'd like to see what we do first hand just get in touch. And if you'd like an informal chat about the role you're applying for, just call.

You can contact us on 020 8106 0640 or email HR@advocacyproject.org.uk. We look forward to hearing from you.

Katherine Shaw
CEO



Katherine Shaw
CEO

“Our team feel very supported and involved. It's refreshing to work at The Advocacy Project with like-minded people.”
Advocacy Service Manager

About The Advocacy Project

We help people 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.

Some of the ways we do this include:

- **advocacy** services that make sure people can express their wishes when decisions are being made about their care or wellbeing
- **user involvement** projects that help organisations improve what they offer by listening to people who use their services
- local **Healthwatch** services, which act as health and social care champions for the areas they serve and give people a direct channel to share their feedback
- innovative **Personal Health Budget** projects that allow people to access items and services to improve their wellbeing.

Our vision

A world in which every person has a voice

Our mission

To enable every person to have their voice heard, uphold their rights and make choices

Our services are independent, confidential, and free to those receiving them. Together, our teams are standing up for essential rights and supporting people to have a say on the issues that matter to them.

We're very proud the quality of our work is being recognised more widely. This is an exciting time for us as an organisation – we're growing and developing, bringing new people on board, and exploring new ways of doing things. It's part of our plan to reach more people and have an even deeper impact on their lives. We hope you'll join us.



Sophia was in her late 40s with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia for which she needed 24 hour support. For the last 6 years she'd been living at a community hospital which supports adults who have complex and ongoing mental health needs. She'd been living in this type of care home for some 20 years.

Sophia asked for advocacy support to help her get in touch with her children.

She explained to her advocate that contact arrangements were directed by a court order and that she desperately wanted to re-establish contact.

The advocate was able to explain to Sophia that now that her children were adults, any court order restrictions about contacting them would have lapsed. The advocate supported Sophia to understand her options - she could self-advocate and talk directly with her responsible clinician and care coordinator or have the advocate act on her behalf.

With support from the clinical team and our advocate, Sophia was reconnected with her children.

Advocacy

Advocacy helps people speak up about their care and treatment. Sometimes people need support expressing what they want to say and having their point of view taken seriously. Advocates can help a person get the information they need, understand their rights, and explore their choices – so they can make the decisions they want about their life.

Our advocates might support by being there at meetings, helping a person make contact with the right people, or speaking for them in situations where they don't feel able to speak for themselves.

User involvement



Synergy, our speaking up group for people with learning disabilities

User involvement is making sure people are able to actively shape and improve the services they use and influence local and national policy. People who use services have first-hand experience, know what they need, what works well and what does not. They should have the opportunity to be involved in every aspect of the services they use – from their individual care and treatment, to the management, planning and evaluation of the services they receive. We run user involvement projects that work with people with learning disabilities, people using or wishing to use mental health services and older people.

Personal Health Budgets for Children and Young People

A Personal Health Budget (PHB) is an amount of money to support someone's health and wellbeing needs, which is planned and agreed between them and their health team. PHBs give young people more choice, control and flexibility over the support they receive. They can support young people to work towards mental health recovery goals; they can be used to buy an item, service, or membership that isn't available through existing statutory or community support.

We work with NEL ICB to deliver the PHB CYP service for mental health recovery for young people in City & Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham. The PHB CYP team process PHB referrals and support clinicians with PHB related queries.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch's aim is to improve health and social care services for local people and to make sure their views and experiences shape the services they need. It benefits patients, people who use services, carers and the public through promoting and supporting people's involvement in commissioning and monitoring services – helping services to be more responsive to people's needs and improving outcomes. Key aspects of Healthwatch's work is to:

- engage and work with local diverse voluntary and community groups
- work with local health and social care services (adults and children)
- engage with BAME communities and seldom-heard groups

There are 152 Healthwatch services across the country; we run the services in Brent, Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

What we care about

We want everyone to be able to make informed choices and active decisions about how they live their lives. By working with people who are vulnerable or excluded, we address the challenges people face having their voices heard. We're committed to being a strong, well-managed and dynamic organisation so we're best-placed to make this happen.

Our vision for the future

Drawing on our strengths and expertise, we are determined to focus more deeply than ever on prioritising those in greatest need and ensuring that the voice of lived experience is at the heart of all we do. We will continue to address unmet need in culturally appropriate innovative ways using a blend of digital and using traditional approaches. This will benefit more people more powerfully.

Our user council

Our passion is for people to be actively involved in the services they use – and this applies to our organisation as much as any other. We have a council made up of representatives from across all our services. They share feedback and ideas from people who use our services and let us know if we're fulfilling the high standard we aspire to. As well as guiding us to improve what we do, the user council helps us choose the right staff.

Our board of trustees

We believe good governance is about genuinely holding ourselves to account for making a positive difference to the people we work with. We are proud of the diversity of our board as it reflects the communities we work in. Our board includes two service user trustees, and many board members have lived experience of the issues we work on. The expertise our board provides through lived and professional experience means we're properly informed to make the right decisions about what we do.

“An exceptionally high standard of advocacy. I would thoroughly recommend them.”

Dawn Harwood, West London NHS Trust

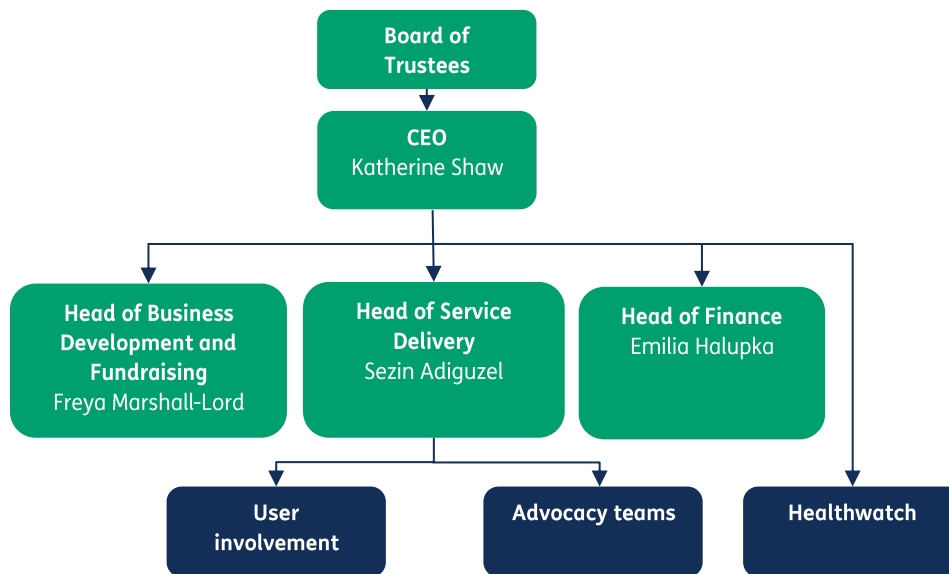
“The Advocacy Project does great work and we are privileged to work with you”

Idoya D’Cruze, Area Manager

“I am very impressed with The Advocacy Project’s efficiency, willingness to help and quick response to queries and referrals.”

Social worker

Who's who



Board of trustees



Dele Olajide



Adam Antonio



Roger Skipp



Helen Richardson



Jayesh Patel



Rachel Gonzaga



Rachel Hutchings

Senior Leadership Team



Katherine Shaw
CEO



Freya Marshall-Lord
Head of Business
Development and Fundraising



Sezin Adiguzel
Head of Service Delivery



Emilia Halupka
Head of Finance

Working for The Advocacy Project

Making The Advocacy Project an even better place to work is an explicit theme in our annual plan. We all strive to create an environment where staff feel supported, know their contribution is valued, and are enabled to do their best work. We are known in the sector for the strength of our learning and development programme. We have monthly staff briefings where we share news and updates, with different staff members talking about their work. Once a year all staff join the meeting in person to build links between teams and share best practice.

We hold the Advocacy Quality Performance Mark. We're a Mindful Employer, and a Disability Confident Employer.

Confidential care service

All staff have access to our free confidential care service. People can call the service about anything that's bothering them – whether work related or something in their personal life. Staff can arrange counselling through this service.

Staff development

We take staff development seriously and encourage staff to pursue personal development opportunities.



“The Advocacy Project has close-knit and very supportive advocacy teams, willing to continue to learn from best practice and able to help each other.” **External review**

“The independent, flexible and adaptive way you work, ensures that many and different service users get involved.” **Kiran McRobert, Gordon Hospital**

“Working at the Advocacy Project I feel hugely valued as an individual, with my skills being recognised and appreciated, and as such I am given opportunities to develop and use my unique skillset in projects outside my normal role.”

Ealing Advocacy Team

Lectures

Each month we invite renowned national experts to give a talk on a topical issue. The lectures are open to staff as part of their learning and development – and we encourage service users to attend plus anyone who’s interested and would like to join us. The session includes time for questions and discussion.

Details of forthcoming lectures are on <https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/lectures/>.

We have enjoyed listening to many interesting speakers including the following.

- › **Professor Dame Carol Black, OBE**, answered questions about her long career in health and politics. With expertise spanning better aging, health within the workplace, tackling drug addiction and much more, this was a fascinating opportunity to learn about contribute to widening health inequalities.
- › **Selina Aktar, a DIALOG+ Lived Experience facilitator** and champion for North London Mental Health Partnership, joined us to the new DIALOG+ care planning tool which aimed to provide more consistent care to those supported through the NHS Mental Health Pathways
- › **Dr John Lister** spoke about proposals to change the way patients in North West London access same day care, giving patients and residents the opportunity to share their comments and concerns
- › **Mairéad Ruane**, a lived experience speaker, facilitator and producer hosted a lecture as an OCD Action representative. She explained, from a lived experience perspective, what OCD is and how we can support those living with OCD.
- › **Paul Morrison, Trustee of the Trussell Trust**, spoke on the cost-of-living crisis and how we can move beyond the crisis and make sure people no longer need to rely on services like food banks to get by.

An external review concluded that:

“...in addition to having regular access to training opportunities advocates are able to keep up to date with changes and developments across the advocacy sector.”

The review also stated: “Staff felt safe in their work, able to approach managers whenever they had concerns and were united in their praise of the open and trusting environment in which they work.”

Trustee stories

Adam



Adam Antonio became a trustee as he felt he could use his own experiences to give others a voice at the board table.

What's important to you about The Advocacy Project?

“I found out about The Advocacy Project through someone I know who works in the social care field. I thought it would help me, as I am close to someone who has a mental health condition.

There's a stigma around mental health; the doors are closed for people with disabilities. But The Advocacy Project is opening these doors by giving people a voice and showing them that there is support out there.

What do you like about being on the Board of Trustees?

“The trustee board at The Advocacy Project is diverse in terms of cultures, abilities, disabilities, experiences, ideas and outlooks. This means we have more informed conversations. No question is a silly question. Everyone's point of view is heard and valued.”

What do you do in your spare time?

“My background is in art and design; I have a knack for putting ideas on paper then designing and bringing them to fruition. I originally studied art and interior design. I was also keen to learn how to develop properties – from the ground up – so I studied architecture too.

In my spare time I go to art and design classes. I also enjoy writing music lyrics. In the past I have been on BBC television, singing with a gospel choir as part of the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year competition. I also enjoy doing Tai Chi.”