

# Job Description

**Title:** Independent Mental Health Advocate

**Department:** Operations

**Reporting to:** Advocacy Manager

**Office Base:** Cardiff / Swansea

**This post will be subject to an Enhanced DBS Check.**

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. To provide an Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) service to Welsh Qualifying Patients in hospitals and registered settings within the ASC area of operation, as required by the Mental Health Act 1983 (2007 amendment) and the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.
- 1.2. The post holder will provide support to people in relation to their medication, treatment and care, ensuring that they understand and can access their rights, within the context of Independent Advocacy as set out in the Advocacy Charter and Code of Practice.
- 1.3. IMHAs are expected to provide a duty advocacy role as part of a rota which includes occasional Saturday working. (There is no additional payment for this, although time off in lieu is given)

## 2. Core Competencies

- 2.1. To achieve the objective of this role the IMHA must place the client at the centre of all actions and decision making and must display the necessary competencies, skills and attitudes in their day to day work.
- 2.2. These competencies include: -
  - 2.2.1. being non-judgemental;
  - 2.2.2. promoting anti-discriminatory practice;

- 2.2.3. maintaining confidentiality;
- 2.2.4. promoting empowerment and self-determination;
- 2.2.5. promoting equal opportunities, equality and diversity;
- 2.2.6. ensuring that clients are treated with dignity and respect as part of ethical practice;
- 2.2.7. Detailed knowledge of the Mental Health Act 1983, Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010, Mental Capacity Act, and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (and future relevant legislation) in order that clients can be advised of their legal rights. In the case of clients who lack capacity the IMHA must be able to use this legislation to safeguard these clients' rights

### **3. Main Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **3.1. Advocacy Tasks**

- 3.1.1. To undertake the statutory IMHA role as set out in the Act, regulations, Code of Practice, Mental Health Measure, Local Engagement Protocols and any subsequent directives. IMHAs must have regard to the Mental Health Act Code of Practice for Wales.
- 3.1.2. To provide clients with the information they need in order to be involved in, express their views of, or complain about their treatment and care.
- 3.1.3. To enable clients, both as individuals and as groups, to identify and articulate their needs in relation to services, facilitating self-advocacy and advocating for clients as necessary.
- 3.1.4. To liaise, communicate and negotiate effectively with a range of health and social care personnel and managers to promote multi-disciplinary working, an awareness of the role of the IMHA and the rights of patients.
- 3.1.5. To signpost and refer on people for issues that fall outside the scope of the IMHA role.
- 3.1.6. To provide a duty advocacy role on a rota basis. The Duty Advocate responds to general enquiries and will take referrals

for all our services including IMHA, IMCA and Community. The Duty Advocate is the first line of enquiry for any professional or client who wants information about their rights, what our service provides. To signpost and refer on people for issues that fall outside the scope of the IMHA role. It is therefore vital that the duty advocate is knowledgeable about all of our services and procedures.

- 3.1.7. To work within the Advocacy Code of Practice, the Mental Health Act Code of Practice for Wales and the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice.

### 3.2. Awareness Raising

- 3.2.1. To promote the role of advocacy and services that ASC provides within a variety of settings.
- 3.2.2. To liaise with other agencies, identify and implement ways of enabling closer communication between clients, carers, professionals, statutory and voluntary agencies.
- 3.2.3. Establish and maintain links with community groups, voluntary sector providers and social service authorities including BME and older persons groups and services.
- 3.2.4. To actively promote a positive image of ASC.
- 3.2.5. To actively and positively promote mental health issues.

### 3.3. Advocacy Support in Cymru Limited tasks

- 3.3.1. Following successful completion of the probationary period, IMHAs are expected to obtain the City & Guilds Certificate in Independent Advocacy, in particular the IMHA specialism, as soon as possible and within 18 months of employment after probation. This is a condition of our Service Level Agreement and must be adhered to. This may involve some out of hours' time commitment. Failure to achieve this qualification within this period is likely to result in your employment being terminated.

- 3.3.2. Monitor services by using the required recording systems and in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
  - 3.3.3. To contribute towards quarterly and annual Commissioners Reports.
  - 3.3.4. To assist the Advocacy Manager in the development and implementation of the Business Plan and other related documents.
  - 3.3.5. To complete all required service documentation and general documentation required by ASC, ensuring that there are accurate records of work pertaining to the post.
  - 3.3.6. To complete necessary Administrative Tasks.
  - 3.3.7. To adhere to the requirements of all Service Level Agreements, Engagement Protocols and contractual requirements.
- 3.4. Confidentiality
- 3.4.1. To ensure strict confidentiality is maintained at all times.
  - 3.4.2. Understanding of and compliance with Data Protection legislation, and ASC Data Protection and Confidentiality policies.
- 3.5. Health and Safety
- 3.5.1. To work at all times in a safe and efficient manner and be aware of the ASC's Health and Safety policies.
  - 3.5.2. All employees have a responsibility of care for their own and others health and safety.
- 3.6. Training
- 3.6.1. To attend all mandatory training sessions.

- 3.6.2. To ensure that all training needs are identified, met and updated to encompass all relevant changes and practices (subject to funding).
- 3.6.3. All employees have a responsibility to assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the training and development of fellow employees, students on placement or volunteers.

### 3.7. Behaviours

- 3.7.1. To work within the ASC corporate framework, and to follow all ASC Policies, Procedures and Protocols.
- 3.7.2. To ensure that your Line Manager is fully informed of any issues which may affect the quality of service provision.
- 3.7.3. To attend all supervision sessions, appraisals and notified meetings, where relevant.
- 3.7.4. To ensure good communication both within ASC and with external agencies.
- 3.7.5. To ensure ASC's Equal Opportunities, Code of Conduct and Health & Safety policies are fully understood and upheld.
- 3.7.6. To ensure that all work is conducted to the highest professional standards within ASC's policies and procedures.

### 3.8. Other

- 3.8.1. Any other duties relevant to this post.
- 3.8.2. The job description sets out the main duties of the post at the date drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time, without changing the general character of the post, or the level of responsibility.
- 3.8.3. Such changes are common occurrences and cannot by themselves constitute a reconsideration of grading

# Person Specification

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## Qualifications

### Essential

1. A minimum of 5 GCSE's or equivalent

### Desirable

1. City & Guilds Level 3 in Independent Advocacy
2. City & Guilds Level 4 in Independent Advocacy Practice

## Experience

### Essential

1. Working with Adults at Risk and / or children in a formal or indirect setting (ideally within Health and Social Care), for example as a carer.
2. Facilitating group work, chairing or taking an active part in meetings.
3. Working with people with Mental Health Difficulties.
4. Organising work load and prioritising tasks in order to make effective use of the available time.
5. Use of Information Technology in respect of record keeping, administration, researching material and correspondence

### Desirable

1. Working (either paid or unpaid) as an advocate
2. Working effectively in an intra-agency context with Health and Social Care Professionals

3. Working in diverse and multi ethnic communities
4. Working with people with Learning Disabilities, Dementia, Complex Communication Needs and / or Capacity Difficulties.

## Attitudes and Personal Qualities

### Essential

1. Understanding, awareness of and commitment to the principles of Equal Opportunities and the promotion of equality and diversity within the service and as a member of staff.
2. Desire to help people achieve their own goals.
3. Flexible and adaptable
4. Working in a non-judgemental way that is respectful of people's needs, wishes and experiences.
5. Working collaboratively and function effectively within a Team Environment.
6. Ability to work independently within organisational boundaries.

### Desirable

1. The promotion of autonomy and self-determination.

## Skills and Knowledge

### Essential

1. An understanding of a range of Mental Health difficulties and how these can impact on people.
2. The principles and purpose of advocacy.
3. The principle of confidentiality, specifically in relation to the advocate / client relationship.
4. An understanding of professional boundaries
5. Good Communication Skills.
6. Ability to use and learn a range of IT technologies and systems.
7. Assimilate information quickly and construct coherent arguments.
8. Recognise and deal with potential risks, be aware of and manage personal safety.

### *Desirable*

1. Knowledge of the role of the Independent Mental Health Advocate as defined in the Mental Health Act Code of Practice for Wales and the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010
2. Knowledge of the Mental Health Act 1983 (amendments 2007), Mental Capacity Act and the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010.
3. Accurately and assertively represent people to decision makers in a range of contexts e.g. care planning meetings, ward rounds, hearings, etc

### **Other**

### **Essential**

1. Travel efficiently and effectively within the Advocacy Support Cymru area of operation.
2. Undergo training and professional development.
3. Accept supervision.
4. Work occasionally outside of normal office hours

### **Desirable**

1. Ability to speak Welsh