VolunteerAdvocate

Aims of the Organisation/Service

Disability Sheffield is a disability organisation which aims to promote choice, control and independence for disabled people in Sheffield. Alongside our information service we run an advocacy service which offers a free, confidential and independent advocacy service for disabled people over the age of 18, living in Sheffield. Sometimes we all need help to get our voices heard and our problems addressed – this is what advocacy is about. We have a small team of paid advocates and are looking for volunteers to work alongside us, and increase the number of people we are able to offer advocacy to.

Volunteer Role Description

The role of an advocate is to work alongside individuals to help them speak up and be heard. This one to one relationship is called an ‘advocacy partnership’ and is a partnership of equals. The advocate will spend time getting to know an individual, helping them to explore options and make informed choices; they will support the individual to express their wishes and secure their rights. In very practical terms the type of things you would be doing as an advocate may include:

* Visiting your advocacy partner on a regular basis
* Looking up and sharing information with your advocacy partner
* Helping your partner to prepare for meeting and appointments
* Attending meetings and appointments, helping your advocacy partner to say what they want to say
* Challenging decisions with or on behalf of individuals, particularly in relation to services received from health services or social services.
* Writing letters (sometimes of complaint)

Your Skills and Experience for this Role

* Good listening and communication skills
* A welcoming and positive approach
* Reliability
* Ability to present information in a clear and concise manner
* A desire to support the work of Disability Sheffield
* Direct experience of disability is desirable but not essential
* Ability to work independently but able to ask for help when you need it
* Computer literate and comfortable with Microsoft Office including emails.

Benefits of Volunteering with Us

* Training in advocacy provided
* Experience of advocacy
* Wide and varied experience of health and social care issues
* Regular support and supervision
* Opportunity to engage with the wider work of Disability Sheffield
* Opportunity to work as part of a team and attend team meetings
* An inclusive and welcoming environment

When can you volunteer?

Our office is open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. We request a time commitment of at least 3 hours a week.

We welcome anyone who has received support in any way from Disability Sheffield in the past. We do ask however that there is a period of six months after you have finished that work before you can begin volunteering for us.

**Who to Contact for more Information about this role**:

Mary Phillips, Advocacy Manager

Tel (0114) 253 6750 (main office)

E Mail mary.phillips@disabilitysheffield.org.uk

The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane Sheffield S1 4FW

[www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk](http://www.disabilitysheffield.org.uk)