



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



your voice your rights your choice

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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
- **Accessible communication** - we specialise in producing easy read documents designed to help organisation communicate with people with learning disabilities.

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.

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.

Accessible communication

Easy read documents usually combine short sentences that are jargon-free, with simple, clear images to help explain the content.

Easy read can also be useful for people who speak English as a second language; people who find it hard to read and write; people who have memory problems; or people who are in a hurry or are stressed. Easy read can be beneficial for anyone with conditions affecting how they process information.

We specialise in producing easy read documents designed to help organisations communicate with people with learning disabilities. The Easy Read format we use has been developed by and with adults with a learning disability to meet their needs, and comes with a quality assurance mark.

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

Our values

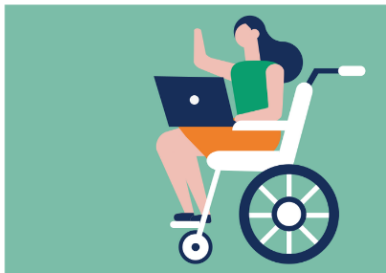
Earlier this year, we launched a refreshed set of organisational values that reflect the culture, behaviours and standards that matter most to us. Developed with input from colleagues across the organisation, these values provide a shared foundation for how we work together, support one another and deliver high-quality services. They will play an important role in strengthening our reputation, attracting and retaining talented staff, and continuing to build a positive and inclusive place to work.

WE ARE KIND

We treat people with respect and kindness and appreciate the unique experiences and viewpoints they bring. By creating an organisation where people listen to and value each other, we are building a community where everyone feels included, welcome and heard. We try to understand how others feel and respond with kindness and care



WE ARE HONEST



We always try to do the right thing. That means being honest, fair and open in everything we do. We empower people to make their own decisions: they can trust and count on us.

WE BELIEVE

We have strength, determination and passion. We're committed to delivering high quality support and information that makes a difference. We believe in our mission, the people we support, the power of advocacy, user involvement and co-production, and in each other.

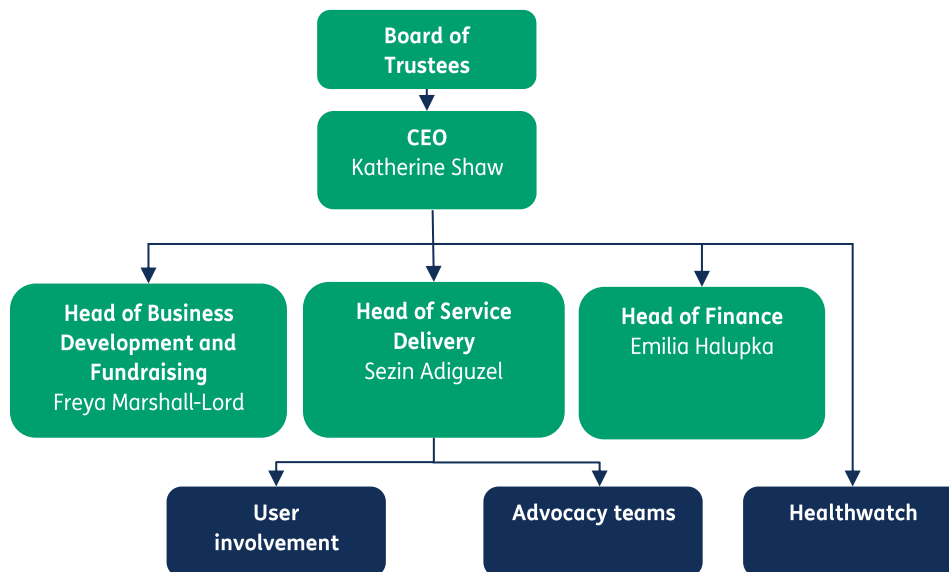


WE ARE STRONG



We're problem solvers who stay positive and flexible. We're committed to giving the best support we can, breaking down barriers and pushing through challenges. We work with energy, creativity and joy to help The Advocacy Project thrive.

Who's who



Board of trustees



Chair
Dele Olajide



Treasurer
Pankaj Shah



Lived Experience Trustee



Rachel Gonzaga



Deborah Finding



Roger Skipp



Lived Experience Trustee
(Vacancy)



Rachel Hutchings



Jayesh Patel



Hasib Dewan

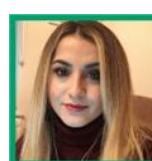
Senior Leadership Team



Katherine Shaw
CEO



Head of Business Development
(Vacancy)



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.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) counselling service

All staff have access to our free confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) counselling 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

We regularly 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/events/>

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.”

Staff story

Maureen



Maureen is a passionate member of our User Involvement team and is in charge of two of our long-standing projects - Mental Health Voice and Older People's Voice.

“The Advocacy Project acts as a bridge between local people in the community and commissioners who invest in innovative change. There is a desire from both parties to come together and create a lasting impact, and The Advocacy Project is one of the best platforms for this to take place.”

What is your day-to-day role, and how long have you been with The Advocacy Project

My day-to-day role varies, from reading and responding to emails, reading policy documents, facilitating and attending meetings of the Older People's Group in Westminster, and The Mental Health Voice Committee in City and Hackney. I really don't know where the time has gone, but I started working 7 years ago in April 2019. Gosh how time flies.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

The versatility of the role means it is never boring. It's constantly challenging my skills, allowing me to develop in a supportive environment. I mostly enjoy travelling around the boroughs in which I work, preferably on a summers day, meeting the people I work with and learning from them. Particularly satisfactory is when commissioners and providers take notice and act on the advice given by the group members.

What would you say to someone thinking about a career in advocacy?

I would say it could be challenging but rewarding at the same time, especially when trying to address inequalities in society. I adopted a mantra which I use when people feel apathy, they feel changes can't be made and it's not worth the effort. I say 'by removing a brick at a time, we will eventually bring the entire wall down.'

Trustee story

Rachel



Rachel has over ten years' experience within healthcare policy, research and advocacy. She is currently a Fellow at the Nuffield Trust where she undertakes qualitative research and policy analysis across a range of topics including health inequalities, digital inclusion and social care.

Rachel has a particular interest in involving people with lived experience in her work. She has a BA in Law from the University of Oxford and a Master's in International Human Rights Law from the School of Oriental and African Studies, where her research focused on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and Mental Capacity Act.

What experience do you bring to The Advocacy Project?

I've worked in the charity sector for almost ten years always within healthcare policy, research and advocacy. I started by managing a helpline where I provided people with information and support around healthcare rights, before moving to the Alzheimer's Society where I led policy and campaigns work on the Mental Capacity Act, human rights and end of life care. In my current role at the Nuffield Trust, my focus is on building a strong evidence base for improving healthcare in the UK and developing impactful recommendations for how to improve access to care, and address health inequalities.

What are you most looking forward to about joining the Board?

The work the Advocacy Project does is so important and I'm looking forward to supporting the organisation to think about how to continue to deliver on its objectives. There's a huge range of work and I'm really excited to learn more about the variety of projects. This is also my first trustee role so I'm keen to learn as much as I can from my fellow trustees about how to do it most effectively.

What do you do in your spare time?

I'm a member of a cycling club and really enjoy exploring new places on my bike. I've also recently started gardening and growing my own fruit and veg – only partially successfully so far!

How to apply

Please check application details for this role on our website:

<https://www.advocacyproject.org.uk/work-for-us/>

Complete the relevant form, which will ask for one or more of the following:

- Comprehensive CV or extended biography
- Supporting statement addressing the points in the person specification
- Name and phone number for two referees (we won't contact them without your permission)

Please let us know if you have any accessibility needs should you be called for interview.

If you have any questions, please contact HR@advocacyproject.org.uk / 020 8106 0640.

The Advocacy Project is fully committed to equality of opportunity and diversity and we warmly welcome applications from all suitably-qualified candidates. We welcome applications regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, disability, or age. All applications will be considered solely on