Job Description: Independent Companion Advocate

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| SWAN supports and empowers people to have a voice, by ensuring access to quality, independent advocacy. We believe that everyone has the right to be heard & respected, the right to choice in decisions about themselves and the right to be safe.  Our Emmaus Companion Advocacy Service represents the voice of the Emmaus Gloucestershire companion community and provides a housing related advocacy and support service. |

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| **About Advocates**  Advocates take action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests and obtain the services they need. Advocates work in partnership with people and take their side, promoting social inclusion, equality and social justice.  Advocates must hold the Diploma in Independent Advocacy Qualification (City & Guilds level 3 or 4). People without this qualification will be appointed as Trainee Advocates and expected to undertake the Diploma (provided by the company training scheme) within 12 months of appointment. Additional specialist units to support delivery in line with the Care Act 2014 may also be required.  The post is subject to 2 references including previous employer, evidence of right to work in the UK and an enhanced DBS check.  **About Emmaus:**  Emmaus is a social enterprise that provides housing and support with the objective of alleviating homelessness and the relief of poverty, hardship and distress brought about by the experience. Many people living through homelessness feel isolated and hopeless; without support this can have a devastating effect on a person’s self-esteem, confidence and physical and mental wellbeing. Emmaus offers a lifeline for individuals in this situation. It offers more than a temporary fix and provides a home where people can not only get back on their feet but take the time to address the issues in their life that are important to them.  Anyone that lives in an Emmaus community is known as a ‘companion’. Companions are more than residents; work is central to the Emmaus model and individuals are supported, as an integral part of a community, to carry out meaningful, self-sustaining work in the social enterprise that provides them with an opportunity to regain their purpose and self-respect, alongside the ability to learn new skills and gain valuable work experience.  **Role Overview:**  Our Emmaus Companion Advocate will provide advocacy, alongside practical and emotional support, to companions within Emmaus Gloucestershire.  SWAN’s Companion Advocate represents the voice of the community to Emmaus Gloucestershire’s CEO and Board of Trustees. The Advocate also offers issue-based advocacy and direct support to the companions of Emmaus Gloucestershire, especially in relation to dealing with housing related issues. Our Companion Advocate works directly with individuals and their support workers or other professionals to assist in assessing need and signposting for ongoing support.  The companion advocate role is home based, but attendance at our Kingswood office for supervisions, training and peer support is required. |

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| Hours of work:  Minimum of 7.5 per week.  Reporting to:  The Independent Companion Advocate reports to a Team Manager |

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| Employees need to be flexible and adaptable to succeed in an organisation that prides itself on the delivery of individual advocacy and support driven by the needs of the client, whilst also meeting the needs of overarching contract requirements. You may therefore be required to undertake other duties, roles and responsibilities. |
| Duties & Responsibilities:   * Work as to provide outcome focused, person directed advocacy and support as outlined in the service proposal and in line with relevant legislation, regulations, codes of practice and internal policy & procedure * Act on behalf of the companion at all times, following their instruction, taking action as directed by them and representing their wishes or choices * Prepare a monthly report for Emmaus Gloucestershire’s CEO, which represents the voice of the companion community * Prepare a quarterly report for the Emmaus Board of Trustees, which represents the voice of their companion community * Attend quarterly Emmaus Gloucestershire Board of Trustee meetings to represent the companion community * Promote self-advocacy as a strategy to build confidence and independence. * Represent SWAN by attending meetings, forums and panels in Gloucestershire, as required * Prioritise all work to meet the needs of companions and Emmaus Gloucestershire * Effectively manage individual case load * Ensure all companions have clearly understood advocacy and support plans that include the need to end the support at an appropriate time * Liaise, communicate, and negotiate effectively with a wide range of people * Promote the rights, equality, diversity and needs of all by ensuring they are respected and valued as individuals * Develop and facilitate companion Peer-Support Groups and Self-Advocacy Workshops if required * Identify risks in delivering the service and ensure compliance with risk management procedures. * Understand the relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and all organisational procedures in relation to safeguarding, including the need for timely and accurate reporting * Understand individual responsibility for organisational and personal health and safety * Ensure accurate recording and reporting of all data * Commitment to training and continual personal development |

**Person Specification: Independent Companion Advocate**

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| **Qualifications Needed**  GCSE or equivalent in English and Maths |

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| **Experience and knowledge crucial for the role:**   * Experience of providing support to people who are described as vulnerable, have additional support needs or needs associated with diversity, stigma or victimisation * Ability to communicate with a wide variety of people; including people from diverse backgrounds, members of the LGBTQ community and those who have learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health issues or have been assessed as lacking capacity. * Knowledge of Emmaus and the services they provide * Managing work time and work priorities, managing pressure and delivering on deadlines * A commitment to the belief that everyone has a right to be heard, have choice and control, to be safe from harm and to live the life they choose   Desirable experience:   * Experience of working with people at risk of homelessness * Experience of delivering housing related support and/or advocacy * Experience of representing the needs and opinions communities or groups |

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| **Other**  The post is subject to 2 references including previous employer, evidence of right to work in the UK, an enhanced DBS check and police vetting. |

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| **Skills and Attributes Needed**  Companion Advocates are expected at all times to uphold the organisation’s principles and values and to contribute towards building and maintaining a culture of trust and personal responsibility through their behaviours.  The personal attributes needed to succeed in the role and contribute to the organisation’s culture are as follows:  **Communication skills**   * Ability to adapt communication style depending on audience * Able to manage group interaction * Communicates well on a 1-2-1 basis using different questioning and listening skills * Seeks and interprets information accurately * Understands instructions   **Decision making**   * Able to make decisions which are consistent * Able to consider a variety of alternatives before making a decision * Takes personal responsibility for all decisions * Supports collaborative decision making   **Influencing others and negotiation**   * Able to convey benefits to a course of action * Makes positive suggestions to encourage commitment from others   **Teamwork**   * Inclusive of others by allowing suggestions for the service, sharing information and solutions * Encourages team co-operation * Pro-actively supports others   **Personal Responsibility**   * Takes personal responsibility for own performance * Perseveres to achieve individual and team goals   **Client Focus**   * Understands and is sensitive to clients’ wants and needs * Able to act on client needs, issues and complaints * Uses good judgement when dealing with clients * Monitors and follows up corrective action * Works to improve client satisfaction * Encourages others to improve client satisfaction     **Pro-activity and Planning**   * Ability to plan for self and others * Able to communicate vision, strategies and plans     **Integrity**   * Understands, demonstrates and promotes the values of the organisation * Supports the aims of the organisation * Delivers what they promise * Manages others with integrity and respect * Treats all others with the same respect * Works ethically and honesty * Strives for and meets high standards   **Positive Attitude**   * Enthusiastic and cares about the organisation and its aims * Takes pride in their role and aims for success * Actively models positive organisational behaviour * Creates an environment where positive attitudes can thrive * Works to overcome obstacles |