**Voscur Advocate role description**

**Introduction**

Voscur Advocates play an important role in ensuring that the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) is involved in shaping and influencing services in Bristol. Voscur Advocates work with partners to ensure that the VCSE sector in Bristol is involved in strategic and operational decision making on a broad range of issues. Voscur Advocate roles are voluntary – they are usually elected as they have specific expertise in their roles in VCSE organisations. They work to ensure the voice of the VCSE sector is heard and influence is achieved at a number of partnerships, boards and other forums in Bristol.

Voscur Advocates do not ‘represent’ the entire, diverse VCSE sector in Bristol; they advocate on sector issues and speak from experience of the VCSE sector perspective.

Voscur Advocates are elected by the VCSE sector.

**Key elements of the role**

* Engage and communicate with the wider Bristol VCSE sector
* Attend relevant boards, network meetings other Voscur events
* Attend Voscur Advocates’ meetings
* Use appropriate methods to advocate for the Bristol VCSE sector

**The Voscur Advocate role requires you to:**

* Prepare in advance for board meetings
* Represent the sector effectively
* Represent broad sector views and concerns, and not personal or organisational perspectives
* Liaise and provide reports to Voscur coordinators before and after board meetings
* Attend board meetings or let Voscur know in good time about non-attendance and, where possible, Voscur staff will substitute
* Attend and participate in relevant Voscur events
* Be available to listen to VCSE sector comments/views
* Attend Voscur Advocates’ meetings and Voscur’s AGM
* Declare any conflicts of interest during induction and at board meetings

**How does Voscur support its Advocates?**

* Induction meeting with a coordinator
* Brokerage of an induction meeting between the Voscur Advocate and Chair of relevant board
* Option for a mentoring system for new and existing VCSE Advocates, if desired
* For board meetings, pre- and post-meeting briefing by phone or e-mail with Voscur staff
* Board papers to be published in advance (where possible); Voscur staff to publicise
* Post-meeting report facilitated/published by Voscur staff
* Ongoing support on any issues arising such as surveys, research, investigation, briefings and liaison as needed
* Payment of travel expenses to attend the relevant meetings and others, by agreement in advance
* Regular Voscur Advocates meetings, including one with Voscur trustees
* Promotion of Voscur Advocates roles and reports via a range of media, including regular features in e-bulletins and social media

**Other matters**

* Voscur Advocates’ roles will be initially for 2 years with the possibility of extension for a further 2 years. This can be extended by 12 months if a replacement Advocate is not recruited via the election process
* Voscur Advocates can only hold one Advocate position at a time to ensure a good cross section of VCSE sector representation on boards
* Voscur Advocates are expected to attend most of their board’s meetings. If Voscur Advocates do not consistently attend meetings without notice, they may forfeit their status as Voscur Advocates
* Sharing roles, mentoring and shadowing will be used as opportunities for developing capacity for influencing for the sector in conjunction with Voscur’s Inclusion Policy
* Voscur will seek to recruit more than one Advocate for each board so that VCSE representation is more diverse and sustainable
* Voscur intends to have up to two rounds of recruitment each year. Requests for advocates on new boards/sub-groups will be held to the next round of recruitment, rejected for lack of strategic fit or temporarily filled by available general advocate/s or Voscur staff, where possible