

Information for applicants

Job title: Independent Advocate

Contract: Permanent Contract

Location: 1 X Barrow in Furness

Hours: 24 per week

Salary: £21,100 FTE

Who we are

People First is an independent customer-led charitable organisation that has worked in Cumbria for almost 30 years. We have a deep understanding of our communities and the unique challenges of this area. We provide a wide range of support and information services across Cumbria and more recently Lancashire, aimed at helping people to live informed, respected, healthy and fulfilled lives. Our Head office is based in Carlisle, supported by offices in Barrow and Lancashire.

The Department

People First's Independent Advocacy Department hosts a range of projects focussing on supporting people to have their voices heard and their rights and choices respected. This includes both statutory and non-statutory advocacy delivery and the Advocacy Hub which provides information and support to enable people and their referrers to access timely advocacy.

Independent Advocacy is about supporting people to:

- Understand information and processes
- Explore options and choices
- Have their rights respected
- Tell people what is important to them

People First's Independent Advocacy offer provides both statutory advocacy and non-statutory to people who may need some extra support speaking up for themselves. We do this through a range of projects including:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy
- Independent Care Act Advocacy
- Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy
- General Independent Advocacy
- Self Advocacy Groups



The Person

We are seeking someone to provide independent advocacy as defined by the Advocacy Charter, Advocacy Code of Practice, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Health and Social Care Act 2012 and Care Act 2014.

This includes:

- Supporting people who have been assessed as lacking capacity at a specific time about a specific decision to ensure their feelings, wishes, values and beliefs are kept central to decision making as defined by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (IMCA).
- Supporting people who have substantial difficulty engaging in a local authority process such as a needs assessment or adult safeguarding to ensure their feelings, wishes, value and beliefs are listened to (Care Act Advocacy).
- Supporting people to raise concerns and complaints about NHS funded care and treatment.
- Providing facilitation and support to Self-Advocacy Groups across Cumbria to enable people to speak up for themselves and understand their rights and choices.

Person Specification

- Good all round level of education including office and IT skills.
- Knowledge of the legislation, policies and procedures that influence advocacy and social care provisions
- Understanding of Advocacy roles
- An understanding of the needs and issues faced by people accessing health and social care services.
- Ability to listen to, engage and communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, both face to face, written and over the telephone.
- Ability to display empathy in a range of situations and deal effectively with conflict situations
- A high standard of written and verbal skills including the ability to write letters and reports



- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to manage a complex workload and to prioritise effectively
- Ability to use supervision and peer support
- Willingness to undertake training, complete the National Advocacy Qualification and other training as identified
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a team player; able to ask for and give support to colleagues, students and volunteers
- Positive attitude to a fast paced working environment where tasks and systems need to be developed and updated on a regular and ongoing basis
- Creative, flexible and enthusiastic approach
- Commitment to valuing diversity and equal opportunities
- Commitment to providing a high quality service centred on the needs of individuals who are vulnerable and disadvantaged
- Able to work occasional evenings and weekends
- Understanding of complaint processes and the ability to raise concerns and challenges in a professional manner.

Driving

- Current driving licence and access to own transport.
- This post requires you to have 'business use' insurance in place.
- The post require you to drive colleagues, volunteers, members, Board members and clients, as required and appropriate (expenses will be paid).

Duties will include:

- Undertake the statutory IMCA, NHS Complaints and Care Act advocacy role as set out in the Acts, Regulations, Code of Practices, and any subsequent directives, including the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Manage an active caseload ensuring timely, prioritised and responsive interventions
- Work within the appropriate legislation, People First policies and procedures, quality standards and monitoring requirements including contractual obligations, key performance indicators, QPM and ISO900 and outcomes monitoring
- Record accurate and appropriate data on both internal and external advocacy databases in line with contractual obligation, People First policies and procedures and the Data Protection Act
- Ensure all enquiries are dealt with in a timely and courteous fashion within contractual obligations or agreed timescales



- Create individual advocacy action plans in partnership with people highlighting what people would like support with, what they would like to achieve and how we can support them best
- Ascertain the person's wishes and feelings, as far as possible, and any values or beliefs likely to influence the decision/ process
- Obtain, review and evaluate information including health and social care records relevant to the decision/ process
- Ascertain alternative courses of action, for example; researching different types of care arrangements or different accommodation, seeking a second opinion.
- Compile high quality written letters and reports ensuring submission within appropriate agreed timescales
- Challenge decisions, where appropriate, using appropriate informal and formal methods including complaints procedures, applications to the Court of Protection
- Liaise, communicate and negotiate effectively with a range of people, health and social care personnel and managers, and family members.
- Keep knowledge of local services, relevant regulations, policy, legislation, case law and good practice up to date
- Identify any conflicts of interests and risks in delivering the service ensuring they are appropriately assessed, reported and recorded
- Publicise, network and promote all advocacy provision to the public, organisations and key stakeholders on a local and national level
- Work as a member of the team, attending team meetings, and contributing towards service planning and developments for advocacy and the wider organisation. Including facilitating continuity for both planned and unplanned leave, developing case studies, operational planning and taking a full and active part in supervision and referral reviews
- Mentor and supervise volunteers and students
- Complete all relevant Advocacy training including the relevant modules of the advocacy qualification and other successful accredited training in order to provide all advocacy strands as required

Other Duties

The duties outlined above are not intended to be exhaustive and may change as the needs of the organisation alter in line with current agendas

The Appointment

Applications should include:



- completed application forms A & B
- the supporting information should be no longer than 2 sides of A4

People First is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Applicants must be willing to undergo a DBS check and any other safeguarding checks as appropriate to the post. The appointment will be subject to the satisfactory outcome of these checks.

One referee should be the applicant's current or most recent employer. Please note that references will not be accepted from relatives or from people writing solely in the capacity of friends. References will be sought on the successful candidate following the interview process however; we may approach previous employers for information to verify particular experience or qualifications, prior to interview. The appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references.

All candidates invited to interview must bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualifications referred to in their application form. Where originals or certified copies are not available for the successful candidate, written confirmation of the relevant qualifications must be obtained from the awarding body. Where the successful candidate has worked or been resident overseas in the past five years, we will carry out such checks and confirmations as may be required in accordance with statutory guidelines.

All candidates invited to interview must also bring with them:

- A current passport (if you do not hold a current passport, or you do not hold a British passport, then further evidence will be required as proof of the right to work in the UK)
- Driving Licence – photocard
- Official documentation evidencing your current address (e.g. utility bill, bank statement)
- Where appropriate, any documentation evidencing a change of name (e.g. marriage certificate)

All applications should be clearly marked:

Confidential – Independent Advocate Post

And emailed to recruitment@peoplefirstcumbria.co.uk for the attention of Mr Barry Munro-Berry



To arrive no later than 5pm Friday 15th January 2021