Thank you for your interest in joining Your Voice Counts Advocacy Service, we hope you will find that this recruitment pack provides the key information you need to decide if you would like to apply for the post.

**Position Description**

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| **Job title:** | Sessional Advocate |
| **Salary:** | £12.40 per hour |
| **Hours:** | Sessional  |
| **Contract type:** | Sessional  |
| **DBS required:** | Yes (arranged by YVC as part of pre-employment checks) |
| **Reporting to:** | Advocacy Manager |
| **Direct reports:** | None |
| **Probationary Period** | All posts are subject to a 6-month probationary period |
| **Role purpose:** | To provide advocacy representation to people with varying and diverse needs |

**All posts are subject to receipt of satisfactory references and a satisfactory DBS enhanced disclosure check**

**Who we are**

At Your Voice Counts, we help vulnerable people find a voice and gain control over their lives.

We help the people we support to **speak up** for what they want and need, to be better **connected** and to have **choice and control** in their lives.

Our values guide how we work, and we are all responsible for putting these into practice every day:

* **Being accountable –** We are honest and take responsibility for our actions.
* **Being person-centred** – We put people's needs first.
* **Learning and growing** - We challenge ourselves and each other to help us get better at what we do.
* **Promoting equality** – We work to get equal opportunities for everyone.
* **Working together** – We achieve more by working as a team than by acting alone.

Our wonderful staff embody our values and are dedicated to the work we deliver together. They are committed and passionate with a positive attitude. We all share the same vision and values.

**What we do**

Your Voice Counts promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice by supporting people to say what they want, to secure their rights and to represent their interests when they are unable to do so themselves.

**The Advocacy Charter**

*“Advocacy is taking action to support people to say what they want, secure their rights, pursue their interests and obtain services they need. Advocacy providers and advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side, promoting social inclusion, equality and social justice.”*

The Advocacy Charter, Revised 2018

**Purpose of the role**

To provide a range of high quality confidential independent, one-to-one advocacy to Your Voice Counts clients, including those with a right to statutory advocacy under the Mental Capacity, Mental Health, and Care Acts to agreed remit and performance standards.

Your Voice Counts Independent Advocates work with people with a range of needs including learning disabilities, autism, mental health problems (including diagnosed mental disorders), dementia, and acquired brain injury.

You will be responsible for providing advocacy to people in their own homes, residential, health or hospital settings. You will do this either by travelling to meet your client face to face or, when appropriate, remotely. You will also work closely with other members of the advocacy team to ensure delivery of a high-quality advocacy service.

**How will you make a difference?**

You will be responsible for ensuring the individual’s wishes, feelings, belief, needs and values are met in order to create positive outcomes for the people you support.

You will support people to speak up for themselves and grow in confidence, equip them to understand and exercise their rights and options, and will assist them in decision making processes.

You will work resourcefully and collaboratively with the individuals you support, be creative in your approach to empowerment by ensuring you meaningfully explain people’s options and rights to them. You will support individuals to fully participate in decisions affecting them and will make sure they have their voices heard.

**Principal accountabilities**

1. To provide high quality issue-based, client-led and independent advocacy services including all relevant statutory advocacy, according to relevant legislation, statutory guidance and codes of practice, commissioning requirements and service engagement and performance standards.
2. To have direct responsibility for a case load, to maintain accurate and appropriate case note recording and data for the service provided and contribute to reporting requirements as needed (including case studies).
3. To regularly monitor and review Advocacy Plans, Indicators and Outcomes in line with Your Voice Counts Quality Framework.
4. To participate in service development as required.
5. To be responsible for updating working knowledge of relevant changing policy, legislation and good practice guidance with regard to the people who use Your Voice Counts Advocacy Service.
6. To support the identification of people with advocacy needs meeting the criteria of the project(s) and facilitating referrals where appropriate.
7. To liaise with a wide range of professionals within NHS and Adults and Communities, Third Sector and maintain effective working relationships with all relevant agencies and stakeholders as required.

**Key Duties**

1. To provide high quality instructed and non-instructed advocacy according to the needs of the client and relevant to the service being provided.
2. To act on behalf of clients at all times, including following their instructions, taking action as directed by them in a supportive role or when necessary, representing their wishes, feelings, beliefs and values in line with the service being provided, engagement protocols and best practice.
3. To promote self-advocacy, supporting clients to understand how to gain access to information, promote understanding of outcomes and available options and to navigate systems.
4. To ensure prompt completion of tasks to a high standard and in accordance with Your Voice Counts policies and guidance and associated Quality Framework.
5. To evidence effective, outcome focused case management, ensuring all recorded casework demonstrates processes of planning, action and review.
6. To produce written reports of a professional standard with the purpose of ensuring the views of the person are fully represented and given due consideration in line with internal and external best practice guidelines.
7. To escalate concerns or complaints professionally as instructed by clients or otherwise where appropriate to the situation.

**General Requirements**

1. To be committed to personal development by actively contributing to regular supervisions and taking up training and development opportunities as directed by personal development plans and organisational need.
2. To work effectively with the advocacy team and management and contribute positively to team meetings and contribute to the overall development and effectiveness Your Voice Counts Advocacy Service.
3. To contribute to the overall development of expertise within the advocacy team through sharing knowledge and attending best practice meetings to ensure the Advocacy Service maintains quality standards and that the associated Quality Framework is implemented and monitored.
4. Undertake personal training that may be required to keep up-to-date and fulfil the professional requirement identified for this person description and take responsibility for own research into relevant Mental Capacity/ Mental Health/Care Act legislation, case law and good practice.
5. To work to equal opportunities and non-discriminatory practice.
6. To provide information and raise awareness, including delivering presentations on statutory advocacy roles as well as other Your Voice Counts services to relevant stakeholders as required to ensure support to groups and individuals that experience disadvantage and/or discrimination.
7. Carry out all work in accordance with Your Voice Counts policies, procedures and values at all times and in particular confidentiality and safeguarding policies.
8. Handle confidential documents and information in a sensitive, confidential and appropriate manner.
9. Be able to work some unsocial hours as required in line with the demands of the role.
10. Contribute to developing and maintaining cultures and strategies in which people are respected and valued as individuals.
11. This is not an exhaustive list of duties, and you will be expected to undertake other duties commensurate with the duties of the post as may be reasonably directed and/or as necessitated by your changing role within the organisation and the overall business objectives of the organisations.

**Person specification**

**Knowledge, Skills and Experience**

**Essential requirements necessary for the role**

* Evidence of excellent communication skills and an ability to communicate effectively and work sensitively with individuals and groups and support them to achieve their aims.
* Able to demonstrate a good understanding of statutory advocacy under the Mental Health Act, Mental Capacity Act, and Care Act.
* Experience of managing a varied and complex workload, able to demonstrate the ability to meet deadlines and prioritise effectively while remaining responsive to events
* Experience of supporting clients who may have a range of particular communication and other needs
* Experience of processing information and producing good quality written work.
* Experience of managing risk to self and others, with a good knowledge of safeguarding processes and procedures
* Experience of working on your own and as part of a team
* Experience of using Microsoft office and good IT skills
* Able to demonstrate an awareness of and commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
* Experience of researching complex and sensitive issues independently and efficiently to ensure clients can make an informed choice
* Experience of forming positive boundaried working relationships with a wide range of clients
* Able to take a flexible positive approach, ability to work outside normal business hours (9am to 5pm) when necessary.
* The ability to undertake Independent Advocacy Qualification and additional modules relating to the IMHA/IMCA/Care Act role,),

If you are offered a full or part time post and you do not already hold the Independent Advocacy Qualification (IAQ), it is a requirement that you complete the IAQ within 18 months of starting in the role. This qualification will be funded by Your Voice Counts. Some self-study should be expected.

 **Desirable requirements for the role**

* Completed or be working towards the Independent Advocacy Qualification including IMHA/IMCA/Care Act modules
* Experience of working with complex cases as an IMHA/IMCA/CAA
* Experience of providing non-instructed advocacy
* Evidence of good general understanding of legislative and social policy issues relevant to advocacy
* Experience of working in a range of settings including forensic services
* Experience of working with people with diverse needs within specified timescales
* Experience of recruiting and training volunteers
* Experience of developing and maintaining effective working relationships with a wide range of professionals, agencies and stakeholders (i.e. NHS, Adult and Community teams, public and third sector organisations).

**Special requirements**

* Advocates will need to travel independently of public transport. You must have a full clean driver’s licence and access to a vehicle you can use for work purposes during work hours. Alternative arrangements can be made for people whose disability prevents them from driving.
* In line with current government legislation, it is a requirement that the job holder can evidence that they are COVID vaccinated (i.e. double vaccinated and booster) unless medically exempt.

**Personal attributes**

**Essential**

* Commitment to the values, aims and purpose of Your Voice Counts
* Commitment to detail, ensuring all work is accurate, concise and understandable
* Commitment to equality, diversity and rights
* Understanding how to set and work within professional boundaries
* Willing to work in co-operation with team members
* Willing to work flexibly and creatively within their role
* Organisational and time management skills

If this sounds like you, we’d love to hear from you.

**Returning your application form**

Before completing the application form carefully read through the Job Description and Person Specification. Consider the requirements of the job and use the form to explain how you satisfy various criteria. You should not enclose a CV as this will not be considered by the interviewing panel, but you may include additional sheets where there is insufficient room on the application form.

**How to apply**

All forms should be returned by email to jobs@yvc.org.uk.

If you want to discuss this post, please contact 0191 478 6472 or jobs@yvc.org.uk.

**We are committed to equal opportunities for all and would especially welcome applications from people from ethnically minoritised backgrounds.** **Your Voice Counts is a member of the Disability Confident Scheme.**

**Application Form**

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| **Job applied for:**  |  |
| **Closing date:** |  |
| **How did you find out about this vacancy?** |  |

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| **1. Personal details:**  |
| Surname: |  |
| Forename(s): |  |
| Address: |  |
| Postcode: |  | Home Tel: |
| Work Tel: |  | Mobile: |
| Email address: |  |
| Can you be contacted at work? |  |

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| **2. References**  |
| Please ensure at least one reference is from your present or most recent employer. References will be requested via e-mail where possible.  |
| **Present/most recent employer**  | **Second referee**  |
| Name: Address: E-mail address:Telephone number: | Name: Address: E-mail address: Telephone number:  |
| How do you know this person? | How do you know this person? |
| Can this reference be contacted now?  | Can this reference be contacted now?  |

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| **3. Education & Qualifications**  |
| Please detail below any academic, work based and professional qualifications. Please list highest qualification first and include details of any current course of study. |
| Secondary School/College/University  | Subject  | Qualification and date obtained  | Grade  |
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| **Other Skills and Qualifications relevant to the post** |
| Please detail below any further accreditation or certification you have achieved (this includes membership of professional bodies and associations (include the name of the body and date of membership obtained)  |
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| **4. Employment History**  |
| Starting with your most current or recent job please give details of your history of employment up to a maximum of ten years. For your current job include your period of notice if applicable  |
| **Current or most recent post (paid or unpaid)**  |
| From:  | To: |
| Job Title: | Hours & Salary:  |
| Current or most recent employer’s name: |
| Reason for leaving including notice or date you left: |
| Please give a brief description of the duties and responsibilities:  |
| **Employment history up to a maximum of ten years** |
| Please list all previous employment over the previous 10 years, starting with the post held immediately before the post described above:  |
| **Job title, employer’s name, and dates employed from and to** | **Brief description of main responsibilities and reason for leaving.**  |
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| **Volunteering and Community Work skills and experience can be included in the supporting statement when addressing the person specification criteria.** |

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| **5. Supporting statement**  |
| Please use the space below to detail how you meet the criteria detailed in the Person Specification and address each of the essential, desirable and personal attributes criteria separately (providing examples). Use clear, short paragraphs and don’t forget to outline any relevant skills, experience and training appropriate to this post.  |
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| **6. Additional information**  |
| Do you have any employment and/or commitments to other organisations which you intend to continue?  | Yes / No |
| If yes, please specify: |
| It is a criminal offence to employ someone who is not entitled to work in the UK. To comply with the Act, all applicants who are offered employment with Your Voice Counts Advocacy Service are required to provide evidence of their eligibility to work in the UK. Successful applicants who are subject to immigration control must be in possession of/obtain valid permission to enter or remain in the UK, and that permission must not preclude them from working at Your Voice Counts. Are you free to remain and take up employment in the UK with no current immigration restrictions?  | Yes / No  |
| If no, please provide details: |
| If appointed, when could you start? |
| How much sickness absence have you had in the last 12 months? |
| Number of days;  | Number of occasions:  |
| Under legislation for the protection of children and vulnerable adults, if successful, you will be asked to agree to a check being made by the Disclosure and Barring Service about the existence and content of criminal record. A criminal record will not necessarily prevent you from employment with our organisation. Do you have any spent or unspent convictions within the terms of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act?  | Yes / No |

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| **7. Data Protection**  |
| Your Voice Counts undertakes that it will treat any personal information (that is data from which you can be identified, such as your name, address, e-mail address etc.) that you provide us, or that we obtain from you, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. If you are successful, this application form will be kept on your personal file. If you are unsuccessful, this information may be stored for a period of six months after which it will be destroyed.  |

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| **8. Do you consider yourself to have a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010?** |
| Your Voice Counts is a Disability Confident Employer and will guarantee an interview to an applicant who declares they have a disability, if the person meets the minimum criteria for the job,  |
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| **9. Reasonable adjustments**  |
| If you require any reasonable adjustments to the recruitment process, including the application process and interview, please provide details below |
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| **10. Declaration**  |
| I declare that the information provided on this form, and on any accompanying documents, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that false information may lead to the termination of employment or withdrawal of a job offer.I agree that the content of this form and any accompanying documents may be treated as part of any contract of employment agreed between myself and Your Voice Counts. I understand that my application form will form part of my personal file and will be treated in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Act 2018.  |
| Signed:  | Date:  |
| Print Name:  |
| Please make sure that the application form is fully completed and return it by email to jobs@yvc.org.uk**All posts are subject to receipt of satisfactory references and a satisfactory DBS enhanced disclosure check** |