

Volunteering Information



Our postal address is:

Advonet,
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Unity Business Park,
26 Roundhay Road,
Leeds.
LS7 1AB.

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Interested people are invited to contact us for more information. You will then be invited to a Volunteer Information Event or an informal meeting where you will be issued with an application pack. Once we receive your application form we apply for references and a DBS check if necessary and start training. Once this is completed your induction can begin. A DBS check, which was formally known as a CRB (Criminal Record Bureau), check is required for anyone volunteering, or paid, to work with vulnerable people.

If you have a skill that you would like to offer us and that you think would benefit our organisation, even though it may not match any of the roles outlined below, then we are always happy to talk to you about it.

Advonet exists to ensure everyone can have their needs heard and their rights respected. It both delivers services directly and promotes independent advocacy provided by partners in Leeds and the surrounding area.

What is advocacy?

To advocate is to speak up for someone or to protect their rights. It includes supporting people to speak up for themselves. It can be both very rewarding and very challenging. Advonet provides advocacy and related support for people who have significant difficulties having their rights respected or speaking up for themselves due to learning disability, autism, mental health, dementia or because English is not their first language. We may also advocate for people who, for other reasons, find it hard to speak up for themselves.

Advocacy is a way of making sure that someone's voice is heard when a decision is made. It involves looking at choices, enabling people to know their rights and helping them to defend those rights.

Advocacy helps people to speak up –on their own or with help. It makes sure people’s views are heard directly or that they are represented.

We talk about **independent advocacy** because it is important that advocates are independent of the organisations that are providing services.

Advocacy is not: a befriending, counselling, or an advice service. It is not the provision of social support or deciding what is in a person’s best interest. It does not replace services to which people are entitled.

What’s in it for you?

Volunteering with us would give you opportunities to make a difference for some of the most vulnerable or marginalised people in society.

Many of our services have been running for over 20 years and we have always been ‘client led’ placing the importance of individual experiences over systems, plans or theories.

We offer you the opportunity to:

- use and build on your communication and other skills and knowledge

- learn about services and systems (learning disability, mental health, dementia, welfare rights etc)
- be part of a dynamic, knowledgeable and committed team of people.
- Contribute to improving the wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

We provide ongoing support and training. There are regular get-togethers for volunteers. We also pay volunteer's expenses.

Why we want you?

We want to enable people with relevant skills and experience to use them for the benefit of those who need them.

As well as learning from the team and from the voluntary work you take on, we know that volunteers will bring their own skills and qualities to help Advonet broaden what it can offer. Volunteers do not replace paid members of staff, they enhance the organisation with the skills and knowledge that they bring.

We have always valued the contribution that volunteers have brought to our organisation. We are proud that we work to Investors in Volunteers standards and that we offer volunteers the best possible experience.

Learning Disability Citizen Advocate

Role description:

- To visit a client, or clients, and come to know their values, wishes and preferences.
- To remain independent of professionals who provide services such as housing, care and support.
- To be independent of the client's family.
- To build a one to one relationship and advocate for the client, or advocacy partner, when needed.
- To identify the client's choices and decisions, but not make or influence them.
- To ensure that the volunteer co-ordinator is informed of any issues which give rise to concern.
- To participate in relevant update meetings, training, supervision and annual review.

What skills do you need?

Advocacy skills are usually the life skills that we possess and use throughout our lives. There are no special qualifications required and we provide all additional support and training.

When and where required:

The citizen advocacy relationship lasts for as long as both partners want it to. For this reason we match the advocate and the client very carefully.

The amount of time required will depend upon the needs of the client and the availability of the advocate. Appointments are made between the volunteer and the client. This may be during the day, in the evening or at the weekend. They may take place at the client's home, in the office or somewhere else.

Induction, training and supervision

Advonet runs an ongoing induction programme according to individual availability. This is supported by essential training as follows:

The Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills course, over two days

The Learning Disability Awareness course, over one day.

Safeguarding Adults Training, over a half day.

Together the training courses cover all aspects of the advocacy role and how best to support the people that we work with.

We then provide support to volunteers who are matched with an adult with learning disabilities to help them to stand up for their rights.

Contact Information:

Tel: 0113 244 0606

Fax: 0113 244 0178

Email: office@advonet.org.uk

Volunteer Activities Supporter for Leep 1

Role description

Advonet requires Volunteer Activities Supporter to work with Leep 1, a self-advocacy organisation for adults with learning disabilities to speak up for themselves, and for the monthly club nights, 'Asking You' and 'People's Parliament' meetings. This includes:

- Supporting members to make decisions on activities.
- Supporting with general tasks around the Leep 1 office, including website, promotion of events, social media.
- Getting to know the needs and issues of the group.
- Helping with tasks, such as organising transport, facilitating small groups such as the Walking group, Out and About group, helping with writing accessible agendas and meeting minutes.
- Supporting members during meetings and events, and service user consultation meetings.
- Help with organisation and running of the monthly club nights at 'Tiger Tiger' nightclub.

Induction and training and supervision

Leep 1 runs an on-going Induction program according to individual availability, followed by a group training course as follows:

- Shadowing and on the job training
- One day Learning Disability Awareness
- Safeguarding Adults Training
- Autism Awareness Training

The training course looks at how best to support people with learning disabilities.

The volunteers are supervised by the Volunteer Coordinator for Leep 1.

When and Where Required:

The volunteer may be required to work in various locations including our office, community settings, night club or day centres.

Leep 1 runs 5 days per week, and one evening per month.

The amount of time which needs to be committed will be negotiated on an individual basis with each volunteer.

Contact Information:

Paul Wade

Leep 1

Tel: 0113 2439477

Email: paul.wade@advonet.org.uk

Volunteer Autism Mentor with Leeds

Autism AIM

Advonet has developed an innovative service providing low level support and information to autistic /Aspergers adults in Leeds that have little or no funded support in place. There are over 5,000 autistic adults in Leeds, many of whom can struggle to access services they need. We aim to help autistic adults build their potential by improving access to information and services through:

- **Autism Hub:** a drop in service every Tuesday 3.30-7pm and fortnightly Fridays 4-7 pm at Lovell Park Hub providing information, advice, peer support, workshops and talks.
- **Information and signposting:** through our website, email and phone support and the Autism Hub.
- **Autism mentors:** provide time limited, structured support to identify goals and develop a clear plan to overcome any barriers to these being achieved to help people achieve their life choices.

This service is co-led by autistic adults and we particularly welcome applications from autistic adults across all volunteer roles.

Role description:

- To meet with an autistic adult regularly for a set period of time, usually in the persons own home or at the Autism Hub.
- Develop a structured plan to achieve identified goals and help to overcome any barriers to achieving these goals with the client.
- Provide information to help the client make choices and help to build confidence.
- Provide support to develop strategies to manage independently day to day
- Help the client to access necessary services and ultimately empower them to reach their goals.

What skills do you need?

We require reliable people who have a patient and empowering approach. We welcome applications from people with experience of autism either personally or professionally. However, we also welcome applications from people with a specific interest in autism and willingness to learn from training and from the people they support. You need to have the ability to accept people as they are but also be able to motivate, think

creatively and show persistence in helping people address barriers to living the life they choose. Although you will have support, you will also need to have the ability to help plan clearly and to work on your own initiative in the community.

Induction, training and supervision:

- Two days training in autism awareness and mentoring.
- Optional two day training in Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills.
- Ongoing optional training evenings.

We highly value our volunteers and will enable you to build and use your individual skills. After full training and induction, we will support you in initial introductions with the person and in developing a structured plan. We will provide ongoing support as you need it and regular supervision support. We have regular optional group meetings where you can get support from other volunteers as well as access to additional training. Travel expenses are covered by the organisation.

When and where required:

This may be day time, evenings or weekends but will be at a time that suits you and the person you are working with. It may be anything from two hours weekly to two hours monthly. It is important that volunteers are

reliable and can commit for a minimum period of 6 -12 months.

There will be supervision/training for an additional hour every 2 months.

Volunteer Hub Supporter with Leeds Autism AIM

Role description:

To support autistic adults who visit the service to feel comfortable and increase involvement in activities as they wish.

To welcome people and direct them to the most appropriate service or information.

To support specific groups at the autism drop in hubs; we have several groups in areas such as gaming, cooking, women, LGBT and more in development.

What skills do you need?

We require reliable people who have a patient and empowering approach. We welcome applications from people with experience of autism either personally or professionally, particularly autistic adults. We also welcome applications from people with a specific interest in autism and willingness to learn from training and from the people they support. You need to have the

ability to accept people as they are but also be able to motivate, think creatively and show persistence in helping people address barriers to involvement.

Induction, training and supervision:

- Training day in autism awareness and strategies to support.
- Volunteer induction to include areas of safeguarding, boundaries and confidentiality.
- Optional two day training in Effective Advocacy and Negotiation Skills.
- Ongoing optional training evenings.

When and where required:

The autism hubs run every Tuesday 3.30-7pm and fortnightly Fridays 4-7 pm at Lovell Park Hub on Wintoun Street, LS71DA.

We also offer other volunteer opportunities in varied support within AIM such as supporting at events.

Contact Information:

Owen Walker Autism Volunteer Co-ordinator

Tel: 0113 244 0606 / 0113 2056532

Email: Owen.Walker@advonet.org.uk

[Version 5: September 17](#)

Mental Health Advocacy Volunteer

Advonet Mental Health Team is energetic and well respected. We have been delivering high quality advocacy to people who require it for over 20 years. We have an enduring commitment to human rights - especially to individuals whose 'voices' have become 'lost', and to their empowerment.

What Skills Do You Need?

- To be able to communicate with a range of people.
- To be able to develop effective relationships with the people who use our services.
- To be able communicate effectively with the wide variety of agencies and individuals that our clients may need to deal with.
- To have active listening skills
- Have the ability to write letters (using a computer) and the ability to keep clear records of the work done, using our existing systems.
- To be able to deal sensitively with conflict situations.

- Be able to recognise and manage your own stress.
- Personal experience of mental distress, of using mental health services and/or experience of supporting/advocating for people who experience mental distress (including dementia) can each be extremely valuable for this role.
- While much of the direct work is 1-1 and individual, working positively as part of a team and being reliable and accountable is essential to providing the best service we can.

Induction, training and Supervision

We will provide all necessary training and support for volunteers to carry out and develop in their role. We also know volunteers will bring experiences, skills etc. that we, individually and as a team, will be able to learn from. We value highly being able to give and receive support between colleagues and Advonet Mental Health Team has a strong, supportive team working ethos. Advocates are expected to work within the organisations policies, including Health and Safety and Lone Working which will be included as part of the volunteer induction.

Where and When Required:

Advonet Mental Health Team need to be able to respond flexibly to client's needs. Volunteers will ideally work 6 - 8hrs per week, with some flexibility.

The office and its resources (I.T., telephones, and colleagues) are available and some time would be spent at and working from the office but how much would depend on individual circumstances and, would most likely vary over time.

To get a reasonable experience of the advocacy role and benefit from it we would want the volunteer to be able to commit to at least 6 months, preferably longer. Wherever possible we would hope people could complete any direct client work they are involved in before leaving. Again this could be negotiable depending on any particular circumstances, and we acknowledge people's circumstances can change.

Contact Information:

Glenn Bates

Volunteer Co-ordinator for Mental Health

Tel: 0113 244 0606

Fax: 0113 244 0178

Email: glenn.bates@advonet.org.uk

Volunteer Bilingual Advocate

Role Description:

Advonet Bilingual service provides culturally sensitive, independent, bilingual advocacy. We work in a wide range of community languages to support socially excluded, newly arrived and emerging Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.

We are looking for more Volunteer Bi-Lingual Advocates.

Volunteers must be able to speak a community language, for example South Asian languages such as Bengali, Sylheti, Kashmiri, Mirpuri, Punjabi, Urdu etc; Chinese: Cantonese and Mandarin, African and Middle Eastern languages such as Amharic, Arabic, Farsi, French, Kurdish, Somali, Tigrinya, Eastern European languages such as Czech, Polish, Slovak.

Many other languages are also welcome, please talk to us.

The volunteer bilingual advocate will receive full training and support to deliver high quality, independent, bilingual advocacy to the BME communities in Leeds, mainly clients speaking their community language.

- They will work mostly with, health and social care services, welfare benefits, tax credits, housing, debt and financial inclusion.
- They will provide information and practical assistance to help individuals to become more independent by supporting them to resolve problems, gain entitlements and negotiate services.
- Encourage volunteering for the bilingual service from BME communities
- When experienced they will be expected to provide support and training for new volunteers

What skills do I need?

- Knowledge of the difficulties some BME communities (including refugees, asylum seekers and eastern European communities) may face in getting social care, health and welfare services.
- Personal or professional knowledge of some or all of the following: welfare benefits, tax credits, housing rights, debt management.
- Understanding of the importance of fair treatment and equal access for all (Equal Opportunities and Diversity).

- Experience of formal or informal advocacy/advice/ or of supporting individuals to gain entitlements, see GPs, use a service.
- Experience of working with volunteers
- Able to communicate clearly in your community language, spoken and written English, face to face and over the telephone.
- Able to work independently using your own initiative and to learn quickly.
- Able to work in a sensitive and caring manner
- Ability to maintain appropriate confidentiality and handle sensitive information.

Time Commitment

We expect a minimum of 8 hours per week, which can be set by negotiation. 10.00am – 3.00pm Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are core hours to the service and volunteering should fall within these times, unless agreed in advance by the advocacy and volunteer coordinator.

Volunteer Receptionist /Administrator for Bilingual Advocacy

Role Description

The role of the Receptionist / Administrator is to ensure the smooth operation of our drop-in and appointment system, ensure that the public spaces are kept tidy and carry out admin tasks for staff and volunteers.

To ensure that the drop-in and appointment system runs smoothly by:

- Greeting clients and taking relevant information accurately
- To check that we have advocates available with an appropriate language.
- To ensure that we do not 'over book' i.e. taking on more clients than we have time for.
- Ensuring correct use of the online calendar and that it is kept up to date.
- To monitor the time taken for drop-in sessions and appointments and remind staff and volunteers to end sessions if necessary.
- To work with and support volunteers.

What skills do you need?

- An understanding of equal opportunities and anti-racist and anti-sexist practice in all aspects of work
- Knowledge of BME (Black and minority ethnic) communities.
- Experience of working in reception admin duties including maintaining an office diary, coordinating appointments, dealing with telephone calls, filing and note taking.
- Experience of working with customers, service users, visitors /experience of providing reception services
- Experience in the voluntary sector
- Community language(s) skills
- Good skills in IT (e.g. word processing, use of internet, use of copier machines)
- Good interpersonal skills, able to get on with people from a range of backgrounds
- Ability to keep client information confidential
- Clear, calm, organised and efficient
- Accuracy, precision and attention to detail
- Motivated and independent, able to work with minimum supervision
- Willingness to work in a flexible way as part of small team.

For both these bi- lingual roles contact:

Sameer Sami

Volunteer Coordinator for Bi-lingual project

Tel (Advonet): 0113 244 0606

(Bi-Lingual Team): 0113 380 5629

Fax: 0113 244 0178

Email: sameer.sami@advonet.org.uk

Volunteer Fundraiser and Events Organiser

Role Description

Advonet require Volunteer Fundraisers and Events Organisers to work towards raising funds for new project areas for the Advocacy service, and to organise fundraising events that service users and local people can get involved with. We will provide ongoing support and training and pay reasonable volunteers expenses.

Induction and Training and Supervision

Shadowing and on the job training

Volunteers are invited to attend any other training within Advonet that would enhance their knowledge of the different project areas such as Effective Advocacy and Negotiation training or Learning Disability Awareness but this is not essential for this role. We then provide ongoing support and training. There is an opportunity to get involved in the work we do on a variety of levels.

Role description:

Finding and applying for funding from a variety of grants and trusts.

Attending fundraising meetings.

Organizing and running a program of events that can involve staff, volunteer and service user members of Advonet and the wider community to contribute towards fundraising and the raising of our public profile throughout Leeds.

When and Where Required:

Time: Flexible depending on availability and events.

The volunteer may be required to work in various locations including office based, community settings, universities, indoors and outdoors events.

Commitment: Preferably long term residence in Leeds.

What skills do you need?

- Experience in finding and applying for funding such as National Lottery, or in organizing and running fundraising events would be an advantage.

Contact Information:

Tel: 0113 244 0606

Fax: 0113 244 0178

Email: office@advonet.org.uk

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