

July 2020

Thank you for your interest in joining Connected Voice I hope you will find that this recruitment pack provides the key background information required to enable you to decide if you wish to apply for the post.

Connected Voice has been committed to supporting and developing voluntary and community action for ninety years. We currently have forty-six staff providing a broad range of services both to individuals and voluntary organisations.

We are the principal voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation for Newcastle and Gateshead. Our mission is to support the development of voluntary and community action that is effective, sustainable and brings about positive social change. We are a registered charity (no. 1125877) and a company limited by guarantee (no. 6681475), governed by a Board of Trustees nominated and elected by our members. We have a membership of over 750 local voluntary and community organisations. To look at our Annual Report, please go to www.connectedvoice.org.uk

Connected Voice services include:

- Advocacy
- Charity Business Services
- Haref
- Support and Development

The Advocacy service supports people in vulnerable circumstances to be aware of their rights and available choices; make informed decisions; have their voice heard; participate fully in decisions; and, gain the skills to self-advocate where appropriate.

Advocacy provides community advocacy services, Health and Care, Hate Crime, Families in Crisis, Refugee and Asylum seekers advocacy, the full range of statutory advocacy roles (IMHA, IMCA, Care Act and RPR) and individually funded spot contracts.

The Advocacy service has developed the DIY Advocate which is a fully customisable decision making app that helps to structure thoughts, feelings and opinions into action reports, which can then be saved or shared.

Charity Business Services is the trading arm of Connected Voice and provides charity accountancy services, including payroll, financial management, book-keeping, audit and accounts.



Connected Voice is a registered charity (number 1125877) and company limited by guarantee (number 6681475) registered in England and Wales. Our registered office is as above.

Haref works to identify health issues that affect Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The service gives a voice to BAME communities and works to reduce health inequalities linked to ethnicity and culture.

The Support and Development team provides expert advice on governance, funding, policies and procedures that enable organisations to be set up and run well. Our forums and networks keep voluntary and community organisations informed and involved in their local areas. We produce a number of publications, bulletins and reports. We have a presence on social media to further our reach and impact.

Our income for 2017/18 was over £1.5million; although charitable funding has declined in the past few years, we have been successful in generating an increasing proportion of our income from contracts, our trading arm and charging for specific services.

This is fantastic opportunity for an Independent Advocate to join a leading charity in the north east of England.

Our achievements have only been possible because of our skilled and committed staff and senior management team. If you have the skills and experience that we are looking for, I do hope you will consider joining us!

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:	Independent Advocate
Salary:	Fully Qualified salary starting from £26,999 (with Independent Advocacy Qualification and relevant modules) Pre-Qualified (working towards Independent Advocacy Qualification) salary is £24,343 to £25,972 Inexperienced (working towards Independent Advocacy Qualification) salary is £ £23,573 Sessional salary is £10.15 - £11.19 per hour depending on qualifications and role
Hours:	Up to 37 hours with flexible working options available - there is a flexitime system in operation
Contract type:	Permanent (sessional available)
DBS required:	Yes
Reports to:	Senior Advocate
Office base:	Connected Voice, Higham House, Higham Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8AF
Last reviewed:	July 2020

Connected Voice Advocacy (CVA)

Connected Voice Advocacy (formerly Advocacy Centre North) was set up in 1996 and provides a range of advocacy to vulnerable people including people with mental health needs; older people; people from BAME communities; people with learning and/or physical disabilities. We do this through a number of services:

- Health and Care Advocacy provides advocacy for adults in the community in vulnerable circumstances
- Families through Crisis supports families in crisis in Newcastle
- Hate Crime supports people who have experienced or are at risk of hate crime
- Statutory Advocacy – statutory support for people in Gateshead around their care and treatment
- We also offer advocacy on an individually funded basis, including out of area statutory cases, personal injury claimants, assistance in court and specialist advocacy for people with autism

The service currently has a staff team of one Director, two Senior Advocacy Co-ordinators, 16 Independent Advocates, one Senior Administrator and a Business Admin Apprentice.

Independent Advocacy is:

“Taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates work in partnership with the people they support and take their side. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice.”

Advocacy Quality Performance Mark, Code of Practice, Revised Edition 2014

We sign up to the Advocacy Charter and believe that:

- all individuals and communities should be valued and respected for who they are and have their rights upheld
- access to information, support, services and resources is vital for a good quality and dignified life
- advocacy is an essential way to make sure this happens for vulnerable people

We provide free, independent, high quality and ethical advocacy that:

- helps people to be aware of their rights and available choices
- supports them to make informed decisions about their lives and to have them acted upon wherever possible
- facilitates their voices being heard
- helps them advocate for themselves
- informs and influences decision makers in: policy; service commissioning; provision at a local, regional and national level to achieve positive change

Services we offer are:

IMHA - Advocating for people who are detained under the Mental Health Act specifically around their care and treatment or conditions of their detention, ensuring their rights and their nearest relative's rights are upheld.

IMCA – Advocating for people lacking capacity to participate in decision making as appropriate, consulting those involved in care and treatment, gathering information, representing the person, challenging decisions and presenting a written report.

RPR – Representing and supporting people in all matters relating to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards e.g. understanding rights to review, checking the requirements are met, participating in care reviews, representing in assessments, and concluding outstanding issues.

ICAA – Advocating for adults and/or carers judged by the Council to have substantial difficulty in being involved in either the care planning, review or safeguarding processes and who do not have someone suitable to support them with needs assessments/carer's assessments, preparation of care & support plans, reviews of care & support plans and safeguarding.

Health and Care Advocacy – Advocating for adults with health and social care issues who belong to any of the following groups, to enable them to speak up for themselves where possible, find out about their rights, make decisions and choices or get services or support:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community
- Mental Health needs
- Learning Disabilities
- Physical Disabilities
- Over 55 years old
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

Welfare Rights and Safeguarding Advocacy – Advocating for people around welfare benefits issues and potential abuse and safeguarding during Coronavirus pandemic.

Hate Crime - Advocating for vulnerable adults in the Northumbria PCC area (Gateshead, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, South Tyneside and Sunderland) who has one or more of the 'protected characteristics' identified in the Equality Act.

Families through Crisis - Advocating for families in Newcastle who are at a point of crisis who might be otherwise unable to engage with services that can support them (trigger points: benefit sanctions, sudden job loss, eviction or threat of eviction, family crisis). They may have low level mental health difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) and be in a position where some intervention and support can move them towards resolution and a more stable position. This project is delivered in partnership with North East Law Centre and Changing Lives, which provides advice and practical support.

Bespoke Advocacy - advocacy not covered under our existing projects. We deliver a range of statutory and non-statutory roles for local authorities, hospital trusts and personal injury claimants. Roles include Relevant Person's Representative, IMHAs, and Case Advocate in the

JOB PURPOSE

To offer high quality, independent advocacy to support adults with mental and physical health needs to enable them to take action to say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.

The Advocate will provide a range of statutory advocacy services in relation to health and social needs under the Mental Health, Mental Capacity and Care Acts and/or adults in the community in vulnerable circumstances.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Direct Advocacy Delivery

- 1 To provide Independent Advocacy directly to service users in a range of settings in accordance with relevant legislation (Disability/Mental Capacity & Health and Care Acts) as necessary
- 2 To support the identification of people with advocacy needs meeting the criteria of the project, making referrals directly to the project and process referrals following the project referral policy
- 3 To recruit volunteers to act as advocates, then train them to work with the person for whom they have been recruited
- 4 To be involved in the development and delivery of specialist training to volunteer advocates
- 5 To carry out accurate and timely case note recording and provide monitoring information and written reports (including case studies) as necessary
- 6 To support the development and maintenance of relevant contacts in the statutory and voluntary sectors
- 7 To support the development and delivery of awareness-raising about the project to relevant communities and professionals
- 8 To maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills in relation to advocacy practice and knowledge necessary for working with these client groups

Support to self-advocate

- 1 To support adults with disabilities and physical or mental health needs to understand how to gain access to information on how to navigate the legal framework, where appropriate and to know and when they should seek specialist help
- 2 To support adults with disabilities and physical or mental health needs to have the confidence and skills to self-advocate around the legal framework, where appropriate

General Requirements

- 1 Attend regular supervision sessions and staff meetings
- 2 Carry out occasional other duties as agreed within supervision to develop the aims of Connected Voice
- 3 Undertake such personal training as may be required to keep up-to-date and fulfil the professional requirement identified for this job description

- 4 Handle confidential documents and information, including personnel and data protection, in a sensitive, confidential and appropriate manner
- 5 Ensure support to groups/individuals that experience disadvantage and/or discrimination
- 6 Work as part of the Connected Voice Advocacy team to ensure Connected Voice maintains quality standards and that the associated quality programme is implemented and monitored
- 7 Have a collaborative and flexible approach to work undertaken by Connected Voice
- 8 Contribute to the overall development of Connected Voice
- 9 Carry out all work with reference to Connected Voice policies, procedures and values
- 10 Undertake other duties commensurate with the duties of the post as may be directed from time to time.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Skills and Experience

Essential requirements necessary for the role

- Experience of providing Independent Advocacy to individuals
- The ability to communicate to an excellent standard, and work sensitively with, individuals, groups and organisations in particular those with mental health & capacity needs, physical disabilities and long term physical and neurological conditions and support them to achieve their aims
- Experience of working with people with Mental Health and Mental Capacity needs, including in a hospital setting
- Good understanding of safeguarding, health and safety and equalities legislation
- The ability to undertake Independent Advocacy Qualification and additional modules relating to the IMHA / IMCA/ Care Act role within the first year of employment
- The ability to process information and produce good quality written work
- The ability to manage a varied and demanding workload and meet deadlines
- The ability to set priorities and work to them while remaining responsive to events
- The ability to work on your own and in a team environment

- The ability to be flexible and work outside normal business hours (9am to 5pm) when necessary

Desirable requirements for the role

- Achieved or working towards the Independent Advocacy Qualification level 3 including IMHA/IMCA/Care Act modules
- Experience of working with complex cases as an IMHA/IMCA/RPR/ICCA
- 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 using non-instructed advocacy
- Experience of dealing with people with diverse needs within specified timescales
- Experience of recruiting and training volunteers
- Holder of a current full driving license and access to a car or to independent travel (alternative arrangements can be made for people whose disability prevents them from driving)

Personal attributes

Essential

- Commitment to the values, aims and purpose of Connected Voice
- Commitment to detail, ensuring all work is accurate, concise and understandable
- Commitment to equality and diversity
- Enthusiasm, energy, and resilience
- Understanding of how to 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

5. Equality and diversity

Connected Voice is committed to promoting equality and diversity and will take steps to challenge discrimination, harassment and victimisation in everything that we do.

No organisation or individual to whom we provide services will be disrespectfully treated or discriminated against by us on any condition or requirement that cannot be shown to be justified including but not limited to the nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010

6. Notes

- All jobs are subject to change from time to time and this job description will be reviewed
- The job description is a guide to the work required to be undertaken and represents a range of responsibilities in line with the grade for the post
- All posts are subject to a 6-month probationary period

7. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- Connected Voice has included with the application pack the Employee Data Protection and Privacy Policy which sets out information in relation to the processing of employee and recruitment data
- The information you provide on the application form is strictly confidential. It will only be seen by the interview panel and recruitment administrator. However, if you are offered employment with us it will be placed in your personnel file to which only the Chief Executive, Office Manager, Chair and Vice Chair will have access. If appointed the application form will be kept for the duration of your employment and for nine months afterwards. If you are unsuccessful in your application for employment, your application form will be held for six months following your interview in the event there are any queries and will then be shredded
- As part of our assessment, we may have to carry out checks to verify the information provided by you. We may obtain information about you from third parties (including referees) and disclose your personal data to certain third parties such as law enforcement bodies for this purpose

8. Terms and Conditions

Holidays:	29 days per annum, bank holidays plus 3 days between Christmas and New Year (pro rata for part time hours)
Pension:	Scottish Widows pension scheme – up to 5% employer and employee contribution
Probation	There is a probationary period of six months
Notice	A minimum notice period of two months on either side
Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhanced sickness benefit scheme depending on length of service• Life insurance – two times salary cover• Flexitime system in operation• Credit Union savings scheme – save directly from salary• Bike to Work scheme• Corporate metro pass scheme• Long service awards
Connected Voice awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investors in People• Real Life Living Wage Employer• Time to Change – Mental Health• Better Health at Work – Gold Level• NAVCA Award for Leadership 2019• NAVCA Award for Embracing Digital 2019• Highly commended in outstanding service category for the Advocacy National Awards• Advocacy QPM Award 2019

9. Returning your application form

Before completing the application form carefully read through the Job Description and Person Specification. Bear in mind the requirements of the job and use the form to explain how you satisfy the 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.

Please return your application form by 12 noon on Monday 31 July 2020. Interviews will be held on **12 August 2020** via video call.

All forms should be returned by email to advocacy@connectedvoice.org.uk or post to Senior Administrator, Connected Voice, 3rd floor, Higham House, Higham Place, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8AF.

If you want to discuss this post, please contact Jane Kingston, Advocacy Manager Connected Voice Advocacy on 0191 235 7013