

## Helping others participate and engage (HOPE)

### Volunteer Advocate Role Description

#### Advocacy Definition:

Advocacy is taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain the services they need.

#### Volunteer Advocate Role Summary

You'll support people in your local community to have their views, wishes and feelings heard and to achieve their personal aspirations and goals. Within this role you'll support people with their issues or concerns and ultimately empower them to be able to resolve similar issues themselves in the future. Together, you'll develop a personal action plan and work to achieve their aspirations.

#### What a Volunteer Advocate does

As a volunteer advocate you'll help people to:

- Engage with others so they feel involved and supported
- Participate so they don't feel left out, isolated or disempowered
- Feel included
- Get the support they need, when they need it, based on what matters to them
- Understand their options and choices
- Choose what they feel is best for them given all the relevant information
- Understand what services might be available to them and what they can expect from services
- Be fully involved when decisions are being made that affect them
- Feel in control and equal to those around them
- Make sure their rights and entitlements are understood and upheld
- Understand what's happening at meetings or appointments
- Prepare for meetings
- Say what matters to them in meetings or sit alongside them to give support
- Look at ways to make them feel safe if they have been or are at risk of being harmed

#### Key skills or knowledge of a Volunteer Advocate

- Listening to people and hearing their wishes and aspirations
- Understanding of older people's issues
- Understanding carers issues
- Empathising with people
- Ability to empower people

- Patience and understanding of older people's situations
- Ability to plan a way forward with someone
- Ability to communicate clearly with others
- Ability to help people process information
- Ability to explain things in clear concise ways
- Lived experiences to draw on
- Positivity
- Good time keeping
- Ability to keep information confidential (as appropriate)

### **Key tasks for a Volunteer Advocate**

- Helping someone to understand the advocacy role at the start of the first meeting with them, including what you can and can't do
- Establishing appropriate ways of working to meet each person's needs
- Developing an action plan with the person wanting advocacy support, working together towards achieving their desired outcomes
- Enabling the person to shape the advocacy support they wish to receive
- Exploring and researching options that are available to the person
- Being there with someone if they need support at a meeting
- Making phone calls, sending emails, helping to write letters or filling in forms
- Providing the support agreed in the plan and reviewing regularly what progress is being made with the person being supported
- Appropriately ending the support when all issues have been resolved and in agreement with the older person or carer
- Attending meetings with your supervisor at Age Cymru as agreed and updating regularly on the status of the support being provided including any concerns
- Keeping records of your meetings and complying with data protection regulations, ensuring that our client information is kept confidential.
- Adhering to all Age Cymru values, policies, and procedures
- Responding to the requirements and requests by your supervisor at Age Cymru

### **Additional Information**

- Volunteers must be aged 18 or over
- An enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required for all volunteer advocates
- Advocacy support can be delivered either virtually, through telephone or video calls, or in-person, at community spaces or the client's home
- We will provide a HOPE induction training package to equip volunteers with the skills and knowledge needed to advocate for HOPE clients. This will be delivered virtually over Zoom
- To help keep your personal and volunteer life separate, we will provide you with an Age Cymru email address and access to our digital phone system (Byphone) for communicating with the client and / or any third party services
- We offer Tempo Time Credits in exchange for volunteering hours