



Advocacy West Wales

A voice when you need it most

Trustee Information Pack

Advocacy West Wales

Tel 01437 762935

36 – 38 High Street, Haverfordwest SA34 0AU

Contents

Introduction	2
The Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees	4
Being a Trustee for Advocacy West Wales	6
Trustee declaration - Advocacy West Wales	7

“Our advocacy services are free, independent and confidential”

“About 600,000 people in the UK are trustees”

Introduction

Welcome

We appreciate your interest in becoming a Trustee of Advocacy West Wales.

Being a trustee is a rewarding experience. It gives you an opportunity to put something back into the community. You can use skills you already have, and develop new ones. You will meet new people, both amongst the trustees and on the staff team, and have the opportunity to work as part of the team. You will know that you have been able to contribute to helping individuals feel heard, and influence their own lives, often at times of crisis or concern.

The Purpose of this Trustee Information Pack

You will find in here:

- Information about the work of Advocacy West Wales.
- General information about becoming a trustee in the UK.
- Information about the kind of Trustees we are looking for at Advocacy West Wales.
- Sources of further information about this role.

The Law, and Long Words

You will see a lot of long words in the pages which follow. You will also read lots of things about duties, responsibilities, the law, regulation and governance. PLEASE don't be put off by this. Many trustees are ordinary people who learn to apply other skills which they have to the organisation where they sit on the Board. Some trustees are specialists, such as in finance, human resources, or the law.

As an Advocacy Charity, we especially welcome people with personal experience of the kind of situations which our Advocacy Partners (sometimes called “clients”) may find themselves in. You may have experience yourself, or through being a carer, or through employment, of issues such as mental health difficulties, learning disabilities, mental health problems in older people or in younger people. This is important for our trustee board, helping us to focus on providing a quality service for the people who we help.

There is plenty of expertise around us, people and places who the Board can ask for advice, help, or professional services. This includes organisations such as the Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, who are specifically set up to support charities and voluntary groups. We also have support from our auditors, our funders, and our employee support scheme.

“Advocacy empowers people to express their personal views and needs.”

Introduction

The main thing is that trustees ensure we keep applying for contracts and grants to fund our work; we manage our money well, and spend it on the things which the organization is set up for, and we don't spend more than we have.

Trustees employ a team of professional staff to deliver services. We ensure that they are well trained and resourced to deliver a quality service to our Advocacy Partners. We treat our staff well, in accordance with the law and best practice.

What next?

If you are interested in becoming a trustee of Advocacy West Wales, the process is as follows:

- Have an informal chat with one of our current officers to see if this is right for you.
- Review the information on Page 7 about qualifying criteria and conflicts of interest. You will be required to sign the form (Page 7) to say that you qualify, and to declare any conflicts of interest. Please check that you are eligible by reading this information.
 - Be willing to undergo a DBS check if this is required
 - Fill in an application form (included) and send it in to the AWW office.
 - You may then be invited to attend a formal interview with members of the board. They are responsible for making decisions about who may join the board.

The Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

Below are the general roles and responsibilities of trustees in the UK.

“Governance is the systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, supervision and accountability of the organisation.”

This information is taken from Section 3 of a Charity Commission Publication called:

The Essential Trustee – What you Need to Know

This is a very useful document which gives you the basic information which you need to know in order to understand the role of trustee.

It is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

You can also read a paper copy in the AWW Office, or at Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services.

3.1 Trustees and their responsibilities

Charity trustees are the people who serve on the governing body of a charity. They may be known as trustees, directors, board members, governors or committee members. The principles and main duties are the same in all cases.

(1) Trustees have and must accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up.

3.2 Compliance - Trustees must:

(2) Ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law.

(3) Ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.

(4) Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity.

(5) Act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets.

3.3 Duty of prudence - Trustees must:

“Trustees must ensure their charity is solvent and well run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it was set up.”

(6) Ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent.

(7) Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity’s objects.

(8) Avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity’s endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.

(9) Take special care when investing the funds of the charity, or borrowing funds for the charity to use.

3.4 Duty of care - Trustees must:

(10) Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient.

(11) Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Being a Trustee for Advocacy West Wales

Our Trustee Board meets on the second Thursday of the month at 11am at the Advocacy West Wales Office.

Trustees are expected to share out the work of the board, so you should expect to be doing other hours between meetings. This may include reading and responding to papers; researching a topic in behalf of the board; meeting with staff to discuss issues such as applying for grants or recruitment. Trustees sit on the recruitment panel when new staff are appointed, and one trustee – usually the chair – works closely with the Senior Officer. Trustees have also attended events, trainings and conferences on behalf of the Board and carried out fundraising activities.

Reasonable expenses, for instance, for travel or childcare, may be paid. Please ask for more information.

Trustee Person Specification

- A commitment to the vision of Advocacy West Wales, and how that is carried out.
- Understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of Independent Advocacy.
- A commitment to equality of opportunity, in particular an understanding of how the client groups of AWW may be affected by discrimination and infringements upon their rights.
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort.
- The ability to work as part of a team and to communicate well.
- Personal Integrity; being willing to speak out when necessary.
- Strategic vision and an ability to think creatively.
- Good, independent judgment.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship.

Trustee declaration - Advocacy West Wales

Trustee eligibility and responsibility

By signing this form, you declare that you:

- are willing to act as a trustee
- understand the organisation's purposes (objects) and rules set out in its constitution
- are not prevented from acting as a trustee because you: have an unspent conviction for an offence involving dishonesty or deception
- are not currently declared bankrupt (or subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order)
- do not have an individual voluntary arrangement (IVA) to pay off debts with creditors
- are not disqualified from being a company director
- have previously been removed as a trustee by the Charity Commission or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement
- are not disqualified or barred from acting as a trustee of this charity under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Signature:

Name (in capital)

Date: