



North Somerset
People First

*Supporting people with learning
disabilities to have a voice*



Volunteer Recruitment Pack

About Us

We are a voluntary sector self-advocacy charity, working for and led by the voices of people with a learning disability in North Somerset.

Mission Statement

"North Somerset People First promotes and encourages people with a learning disability to speak up for themselves, empowering them to be in control of their own lives, now and in the future".

Who We Are

North Somerset People First was set up in 1991 by a small group of people; their aim was to improve the lives of people with a learning disability by introducing advocacy. We have now grown and developed over many years and we became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) in April 2015.

As a small local charity, we rely on the support of our volunteers to develop, deliver and maintain our services. We are currently seeking Volunteer Advocates with a passion to empowering people with a learning disability, Autism, Asperger's or associated condition to have their voices heard and be in control of their own lives.

What We Do

Our self-advocacy services support individuals from the age of 16 to speak up for themselves and to be more in confident and aware of their rights. We encourage people to contribute to, and participate in, decisions that affect their lives and the community they live in.

How Do We Do This?



- Facilitate Speaking Up Groups, which enable people to have their voices heard.
- Carry out consultations by talking to people about the variety of services they may use and receive.
- Person centred planning and advocacy.
- Develop strong links with other agencies, both locally and nationally.
- Provide employment, work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- Provide a range of accessible training programmes for people with a learning disability.
- Offer a range of services and training programmes for outside agencies.

Volunteering with North Somerset People First

Why volunteer for us?

- The value of volunteering is well recognised.
- Working with someone with a learning disability and/or autistic spectrum condition can be rewarding and can make a real difference to helping individuals to achieve their full potential and could make a real difference to the lives of people in your community.
- Volunteering can give you the opportunity to make new friends, develop and learn valuable new skills.
- Volunteering can improve your confidence and self-esteem, networking opportunities and improve your CV.



About the Role

What is Advocacy?

- Supporting people in expressing their views, preferences and decisions on an equal footing.
- Aim to support individuals on a broad range of issues
- Give information in accessible format about rights and services so that people can make informed choices and decisions
- Speaking up for an individual or group on an objective basis.
- Working to make things happen, once decisions have been made by the people it supports.
- Defending equal rights against discrimination.
- Doesn't make choices or decisions for the people who receive advocacy support
- Encourages the inclusion of the isolated and excluded



As a Volunteer Advocate at North Somerset People First, there will be two key areas for involvement:

Individual Advocacy Casework

Supporting people with particular concerns. For example: housing, health issues, benefits, child protection, education, employment, and financial matters etc.

- Working with individuals to address and resolve specific issues.
- The focus being on one issue or set of issues and are not intended to have a long-term basis.
- Ensure people supported have the correct information they need about their options, rights and other support services
- Ensure the information is delivered in an accessible format and that the individual understands the content.
- Able to record accurate case notes



Individual Person-Centred planning

Person-centred planning is a way of helping someone to plan their life and support needs, focusing on what's important to the person. Person-centred planning has the following key features:

- the person is at the centre of the planning process
- family and friends are partners in planning
- the plan shows what is important to a person now and for the future and what support they need
- the plan helps the person to be part of a community of their choosing and helps the community to welcome them
- the plan puts into action what a person wants for their life and keeps on listening - the plan remains 'live'
- Uses a range of communication tools to support people with learning disabilities, including those with complex needs, to communicate about their life.



Would you like to join our friendly team

- Be involved?
- Feel valued?
- Meet new friends?
- Learn new skills?
- Improve your confidence?



Role specification:

You will be required to support the individual to:

- Identify the area where advocacy is required and address the issue appropriately as soon as possible
- express their views
- choose how they are supported
- manage change or to deal with difficult issues
- to speak up at meetings
- stand up for their rights

Additional responsibilities

- Commit to 8 hours each month (average 2 hours a week – this needs to be flexible)?
- Provide one to one advocacy to individuals with a range of learning disabilities
- Build a trusted relationship with the individual, meeting regularly at a time and place that suits the individual.
- Support the individual to talk about their needs, wishes and aspirations.
- Arrange regular meetings with the individual and the important people involved in their life - such as; family members, friends, support staff, etc.
- Devise a Person-Centred plan to make sure their needs, wishes and aspirations are actions are carried out.
- Keep clear written notes on the process of the plan and feedback to NSPF staff.

Skills required

- Excellent communication skills – able to communicate effectively with a broad range of people with a learning disability
- Able to establish effective working relationships with a range of professionals and family members while retaining independence
- Awareness of the need for confidentiality at all times
- Maintaining appropriate boundaries
- Good organisational skills
- Be reliable and committed

Personal Qualities

- Empathy and understanding
- Able to maintain boundaries and confidentiality
- knowledge and understanding of some of the issues facing people with a learning disability
- Experience of working directly with people who are undervalued in society in an empowering way
- The ability to use and develop communication tools at a pace appropriate to service user's needs.
- Passion about supporting people
- Understanding and valuing individual uniqueness
- Promoting inclusion
- Dedication to the charity's cause

We will provide

- Training
- An opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification in independent advocacy
- Regular support and supervision
- Peer support
- Regular reimbursement of all expenses

Additional Information

- A DBS check will be carried out for the successful candidate.
- We will offer relevant training to the successful applicant.
- Volunteers will be asked to provide the names and contact details of two independent referees, who should not be family members.

How to Apply

To apply, please submit your CV along with a covering letter stating why you wish to join the organisation, how your skills and experience would add value to the charity and any other relevant information. Please consider the following questions when applying and give examples:

- What skills or relevant experience do you have in advocacy or related work? Please give examples.
- What did you find easy?
- What did you find more challenging?
- What specific areas are you interested working in?
- How much time are you able to commit?
- Do you want to commit to a short or long-term project?

Applications must be emailed to:

info@nspf.co.uk

To discuss this opportunity further, please contact us at:

North Somerset People First

The Campus

Highlands Lane

Weston-super-Mare

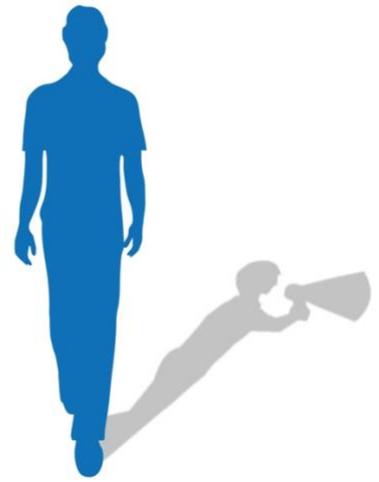
BS24 7DX

Tel: 01934 426086

www.nspf.co.uk

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Registered Charity no – 1159184