NAS Advocate: National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities

Job Description

The National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities provides an independent, confidential and free, representative advocacy service that works exclusively for the person using the service and adheres to the highest professional standards.

The service has a particular remit for people with disabilities who are isolated from their community and services, have communication differences, are inappropriately accommodated, live in residential services, attend day services and have limited informal or natural supports.

The National Advocacy Service is managed by a Board of Management and has responsibility for the delivery of an advocacy service for people with disabilities. The National Advocacy Service is provided through four regions and a National Office which is based in Dublin.

The four regions are:

Region	Including
Greater Dublin	Dublin, Fingal and Wicklow
Northeast & Midlands Region	Cavan, Laois, Longford, Louth, Kildare, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Westmeath,
Western Region	Clare, Donegal, Galway, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Roscommon, and Sligo.
Southern Region	Carlow, Cork, Kerry, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford

Reports to: Regional Advocacy Manager

Salary: €42,658 - €46,915
(It is anticipated that new entrants to the National Advocacy Service will be appointed on the 1st point of the scale however, incremental credit, should it be awarded, will be based on previous relevant experience as set out on application form).

Location: Depending on region

Hours: The position is a permanent contract, full-time (35 hours per week) and may involve working some unsocial hours.

Core Duties and Responsibilities

Service Provision

- Assist, support and represent people with disabilities to seek a service, negotiating on their behalf and pursuing any right of review or appeal as required
- Work with people in residential and day service settings and with service providers to ensure people's rights, dignity, choices and decisions are safeguarded
- Advocate on behalf of qualifying persons under the Citizen information Act (when commenced) as requested by the Regional Advocacy Manager
- Work as part of the regional advocacy team and share learning to improve practice and effect policy change
- Ensure that people with disabilities who need information, advice and advocacy are provided with the service that best supports their needs and that those with the capacity to self-advocate are supported to use mainstream services in their local community
- Identify and record issues that arise for people with disabilities to inform systemic changes in both the delivery and policy of public services
- Adhere to standardised policies, practice and quality standards.
- Provide peer support within the advocacy team and develop specialist expertise as required
- Work in co-operation with other advocates across the National Advocacy Service for People with Disabilities
- Maintain effective and co-operative relationships with key stakeholders including service providers without compromising the independence of the advocacy service.
- Effectively manage a caseload and keep accurate records using the electronic case management system, adhering to case management requirements
- Report on advocacy activities, and undertake review and evaluation as required by the Regional Advocacy Manager
- Observe data protection legislation and good practice in service provision
- Offer occasional back-up to self-advocacy and other support groups.

Additional Duties and Responsibilities

- Participate in special projects and joint working arrangements in consultation with the Regional Advocacy Manager
- Participate in mentoring activities
- Undertake promotional work on the National Advocacy Service as directed by the Regional Advocacy Manager
- Develop and share knowledge of relevant legislation, appeals/redress mechanisms and social policy and practices in relation to advocating on behalf of people with disabilities
- Undertake appropriate training as required and ensure continuing professional development
- Undertake supervision of practice in line with service requirements
- Represent the National Advocacy Service at conferences etc., as decided by the Regional Advocacy Manager

- Participate and work within a Performance Management Development System (PMDS) process
- Undertake other duties assigned by the Regional Advocacy Manager

Person specification

- An understanding and knowledge of the philosophy, background and operation of advocacy
- Awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and the barriers experienced in accessing rights and services.
- Ability to represent, negotiate and communicate on behalf of others
- Ability to understand and maintain confidentiality
- Ability to respect and promote people's right to make informed decisions/choices
- Excellent judgement
- High degree of personal integrity
- Ability to organise one's own workload, plan and set goals
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Commitment to the rights of people with disabilities
- Flexibility of approach and flexibility to work unsocial hours when required and ability to travel efficiently throughout the region as requested.

Required competencies for position

- Educated to graduate level in one or more of the following areas: social sciences, humanities, law, training and development. Equivalent experience and training will also be considered.
- Advocacy qualification desirable
- Previous experience of working with people in a service-delivery role
- Knowledge of relevant disability legislation, disability rights and issues, developments in disability services
- Effective communication skills both oral and written
- Ability to negotiate effectively on behalf of clients
- Competent IT skills
- Good written English
- Experience of and commitment to building up personal skills
- Case management skills
- Ability to give presentations to a variety of audiences.
- Ability to review and monitor projects