

a city-wide advocacy project

AdvoCard

for users of mental health services

# Volunteering for AdvoCard

## *What's involved?*

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Advocacy is:

- being there
- using lifeskills which are more important than formal qualifications
- helping to work out strategies
- providing practical support

## **Why is there a need for an AdvoCard Volunteer Advocate?**

Have you ever felt it would be useful to have someone along with you, on your side, when you have consulted a professional or sought a service? Most of us have felt this at some time or other.

People who have experienced mental health difficulties commonly feel this way when they turn to doctors, nurses, social workers or other community care professionals for help. They feel disadvantaged because the system of help can often seem too complex, too remote, too overburdened to deal with their needs.

## **What is a volunteer's role?**

In many cases what is involved is just being there on the user's side, willing to be an extra pair of ears and hands to help a user of mental health services make their views felt and have their rights respected.

## **How much time will I need to give?**

The level of commitment a volunteer makes to AdvoCard can vary and is personal to the volunteer. It can be as flexible as 2 hours per week to 2 hours per month. People who can offer a couple of hours a week during the day are especially needed.

## **What is AdvoCard?**

AdvoCard is an advocacy scheme for users of mental health services who live in Edinburgh. We provide advocacy support to service users either for a particular problem or issue or for long term advocacy support. Our advocacy work may include accompanying a service user to an appointment, helping to fill out forms or find out information about rights and benefits. The work can be varied and interesting.

## **What does AdvoCard offer a volunteer?**

Training and support are given to our volunteers. Taking part in our “Training for Volunteer Advocates” course is the initial commitment for a volunteer. This is a 25 hour course which is offered over a ten week period. The course helps volunteers learn about what is involved in being a mental health advocate as well as examining how each volunteer will fit in to that role.

## **What can you gain by being involved?**

By volunteering with AdvoCard you will be a part of something that really makes a difference to people using mental health services. Your contribution is part of a two way process that can bring you worthwhile experience and opportunities for personal development. Further training is encouraged and supported. All out of pocket expenses for your volunteering will be reimbursed.

*You provide the life skills  
we'll provide the training and support  
and together with the service user,  
we'll aim towards a fairer society.*

How to apply, or to get more information

*Contact:*

AdvoCard  
332 Leith Walk  
Edinburgh EH6 5BR

Tel: 0131 554 5307

Fax: 0131 555 6092

Email: [advocacy@advocard.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@advocard.org.uk)

A volunteer information pack and application form will be sent to you on request. Training programmes are offered two or three times each year.

You are welcome at AdvoCard regardless of race, gender, religious belief or sexual orientation. We positively encourage mental health service users to contact us.

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We are striving to be an equal opportunities employer.