



Job Title:	Criminal Justice IDVA ( <b>Independent Domestic Violence Advocate</b> )
Service/Division:	VAWG
Reporting to:	Service Manager
Direct reports:	None
Location:	Hammersmith (with some travel across London)

*This post is open to **female applicants only** as this is deemed a genuine occupational requirement under Schedule 9, Paragraph 1 of the Equality Act 2010.*

*Advance is committed to equality and diversity and strongly encourages applications from women with diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, BAME and LBT communities.*

### **Job Summary**

The Criminal Justice IDVA will work within a dynamic, fast paced, crisis intervention, advocacy, and support service to ensure the voice of survivors informs every stage of the process, specialising in working with women whose domestic abuse cases are going through the police and criminal justice system and risk to children is a factor. You will work to make proactive contact and provide high quality advocacy and support based upon a client led needs and risk assessment to women, focusing on working with those aged 18 and over who access the domestic abuse service. This role is part advocacy, part training/education and project work to improve response and early intervention to victim/survivors experiencing domestic abuse. You will be embedded in the community safety unit within the police, working with police professionals to ensure they adopt a trauma informed approach, can recognise the dynamics of domestic abuse and are providing more holistic support. You will be the domestic abuse subject matter expert on site, upskilling fellow professionals and acting as a point of contact for any clients experiencing domestic abuse and support requirements from police and court at every stage. Attend the weekly specialist domestic violence court in Westminster as a domestic abuse agency representative to obtain court outcomes, support efficient case progression and seeking opportunity to increase survivor safety at every stage of the court process.

**The IMPACT project was established over 10 years ago** and has been working in partnership in **Hammersmith and Fulham** aiming to improve integrated working between criminal justice agencies from the point of reporting an incident to court and beyond; to reduce attrition through earlier intervention and improved outcomes for victims/survivors and their children; and to hold more perpetrators to account through the justice system. The IDVAs will inherit strong working relationships and a commitment from all parties to offering more trauma-informed services. The borough has a focus on prioritising and developing good DA work in and this is an opportunity to be a major player in institutional change, ensuring that women accessing Family Children services for their children have an improved experience and that the local authorities are leading the way for all survivors engaging with their services.

Advance delivers nationally accredited, quality marked services in Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Brent, Ealing, **and across parts of East London**. We work within a coordinated partnership response to domestic violence to provide independent domestic violence advocacy and support for women, children and young people and women's community services for women who are involved in the criminal justice system, in anti-social behaviour or are at risk of breaking the law.

## Key Responsibilities and Duties

- Provide high-quality telephone or face to face crisis intervention, information, advocacy and support to women and young people referred to the service, in respect to risk management and safety planning, criminal and civil remedies, housing, health, welfare rights, and children's legislation.
- Assess the needs and risks of survivors, carry out short- and longer-term risk management, safety planning and support and identify and refer to services appropriate to their needs, including MARAC.
- Attend the weekly specialist domestic violence court in Hammersmith when required to advise on decisions and represent the needs and wishes of the survivor where known.
- Provide women with information, advocacy, and support as cases progress through the criminal justice system, supporting them to apply for special measures and to give impact statements, maximising their safety to help them give best evidence, and accompanying women to court where necessary.
- Advise women of their rights and options for seeking help and support from other agencies, making referrals and co-ordinating the provision of multi-agency support where necessary, and proactively advocate to ensure barriers to accessing support and protection are minimised.
- Work proactively and in co-operation with the police, specialist prosecutor and other criminal justice professionals to keep the client's perspective and safety at the centre of proceedings, maintain referral routes and increase access and earlier intervention, and to promote successful and safe use of the criminal justice system.
- Attend the Specialist Domestic Violence Court when required and work alongside the specialist prosecutor to support efficient case-progression, whilst ensuring opportunities to increase survivor safety are prioritised at every stage.
- Proactively assess the needs and safety of any children women using the service may have and ensure that any risks/needs identified are addressed directly with the woman.
- Participate in multi-agency conferences in respect of children and adults at risk as required, providing reports and undertaking actions as necessary.
- Ensure that agreed case recording and monitoring systems are kept up to date and secure.
- Be responsible for your own personal learning development and keep up to date on research, relevant legislation, policy and practice, and other literature relevant to the role.
- Participate in supervision, training and meetings as required, and assist in the development of services in line with agreed development plans.

## General Information

**Performance and Quality:** Ensure all work undertaken is aligned to the service/division’s annual plan and that all policies, processes and guidance notes are up to date and in line with best practice/current legislation.

**Policies and procedure:** Ensure the effective implementation of Advance’s Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Equality and Diversity and other policies and procedures and uphold the core values of Advance.

**Equality and diversity:** Advance aims to create and sustain an inclusive work environment which provides equality of opportunity for everyone and reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. The postholder is required to uphold the Equality and Diversity policy and comply with the code of conduct which sets out our standards of behaviour towards those who use our services or work within them.

**Confidentiality:** The post holder must ensure that any information relating to employees, service users, and volunteers (future, current and past) is treated in strictest confidence and must be discussed only within the confines of the work setting with the appropriate members of the team or manager.

*This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time when it was drawn up and will be reviewed from time to time. Duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post*

## PERSON SPECIFICATION:

E= Essential and D = Desirable

KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS	
A relevant qualification, for example in domestic violence, criminal justice, law, social work or related area.	E
A thorough understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence (physical, emotional and sexual violence, so-called ‘honour-based violence’, forced marriage, stalking and harassment) and its impact on women, children, families and communities.	E
An excellent understanding of the criminal justice system and relevant legislation with particular regard to legal and civil options, housing, benefits, matrimonial and children.	E
Thorough knowledge of safeguarding practice, procedures and legislation.	E
EXPERIENCE	
At least one year’s experience of supporting women who have experienced domestic violence, forced marriage or ‘honour-based violence’.	E
Experience of risk and needs assessment, safety and support planning, particularly with clients with complex/multiple needs.	E
Experience of partnership working and of maintaining excellent working relationships with a range of stakeholders.	E
Experience of working with criminal justice agencies or in a criminal justice setting	D
TECHNICAL/WORK BASED SKILLS	
Excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate well with a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds.	E
Excellent risk assessment, support and advocacy skills and the ability to advocate successfully using evidence and professional experience.	E

Ability to network, influence, problem solve and apply solution focused approaches to increase access and safety and facilitate positive outcomes for women and children.	E
Ability to work well within a team and responsibly on your own initiative, and of maintaining professional boundaries with clients and partner agencies.	E
Good crisis management skills and the ability to work effectively under pressure and to deadlines.	E
Good data collection, monitoring and IT skills, including word processing and using databases and spreadsheets.	E
Good report writing skills, including preparing reports for courts, case conference and information for Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACS).	E
<b>GENERAL SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES</b>	
Committed to Advance’s charity ethos and key values which are Listen and Support, Empower, Innovate, Collaborate, Quality and Accountability	E
Flexible, proactive approach and a good ability to prioritise work.	E

Advance is committed to safeguarding and creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm and expects all staff, including volunteers to share this commitment. We believe all individuals have the right to live their life free from violence and abuse and the right to feel and be safe. We have a suite of safeguarding policies, procedures and practice guidance, accessible to all staff, which promotes safeguarding and safer working practices across all our services and activities. When we recruit staff, we follow rigorous safer recruitment practices, this involves carrying out pre-employment checks including references, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, and identity checks. We ensure all staff undertake mandatory safeguarding training relevant to their role and responsibilities, to empower them to be competent and feel confident in recognising and responding appropriately to safeguarding issues and promote wellbeing.