

Head of Advocacy and Influence

Citizens Advice Sheffield is Sheffield's leading provider of advice and advocacy services. Every year we help over 20,000 people in Sheffield. Our services are free, confidential, independent and impartial.

We work with our partners, ranging from large public sector bodies to smaller community organisations, to support our clients with the problems they face, while campaigning to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

We provide a wide variety of advice and advocacy services through digital means, by telephone and in person and we strive to be responsive and adaptable in order to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

We work in a fast-changing and often challenging environment but together we make a big difference.

Job description and person specification

Purpose of the role

The Head of Advocacy and Influence reports to the CEO and is a member of the executive team with the Head of Advice, the Head of Resources & Organisational Development and the CEO. The executive team is:

- responsible for overseeing the delivery of the strategic plan, delegating to staff and directing resources in line with the strategic priorities, aims and objectives
- accountable to the Board of Trustees for the overall effectiveness and compliance of the organisation

Specifically the Head of Advocacy and Influence is responsible for:

- The effective delivery and strategic development and leadership of the Advocacy Services including maintenance of quality standards and adherence to commissioner/ funder requirements
- Identifying and developing external relationships with strategic partners, representing and raising the profile of CAS and our impact, and influencing change through policy making, partnerships, and media
- Leading a team of staff and volunteers, enabling a supportive and empowering culture where all are valued and understand their role in delivering the organisation's objectives
- Ensuring mechanisms and approaches that capture and act upon lived experience are embedded throughout the organisation
- Contributing to and supporting the financial sustainability of the organisation through effective financial management of services and income generation activities including bid-writing
- Overseeing the implementation of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures
- Ensuring service and staff KPIs, performance standards and expectations are met and for seeking strategic solutions and improvements.
- Line managing and delegating responsibilities to the Advocacy Service Manager and Social Policy and Involvement Manager.
- Commissioning freelance communications capacity as required.
- Being joint lead (with the Head of Advice) for the Client Experience Committee and contributing to Board meetings and other sub-committee meetings as required
- Actively contributing to the organisation's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda including improving accessibility of services and embedding an anti-racist approach
- Deputising for the CEO as required

This is a broad overview and there may be other related work as directed by the CEO.

Person specification

The Head of Advocacy and Influence will demonstrate the following competencies:

Leadership

Acting as a strategic leader for the organisation as a whole, supporting staff and celebrating their contributions and achievements, inspiring and encouraging collective efforts to achieve the organisation's vision and living our values. The Head of Advocacy and Influence:

- Values and supports staff and volunteers, empowers them to achieve their objectives and doesn't shy away from difficult conversations
- Promotes transparency and accountability, recognises their own shortcomings and supports others to learn from theirs without blame
- Incorporates CAS values and commitment to centring lived experience as the basis of all interactions with organisations, communities, and individuals
- Promotes training, learning and continuing personal development opportunities for the workforce, including themselves
- Enables effective team building to develop the organisation's strategic agenda

Strategic Approach

Able to think long-term in a fast-moving environment and to demonstrate flexibility when adapting to change. The ability to balance a broad range of factors and considerations both internal and external when developing plans and making decisions in the best interests of the organisation and the clients we serve. The Head of Advocacy and Influence will be able to

- Contribute to business planning processes and the development of organisational objectives
- Effectively analyse quantitative and qualitative information
- Stay up to date with policy and wider developments in the fields of advice and advocacy
- Understand financial management and planning and the financial implications of decisions

Partnership

The ability to build, develop and maintain strong mutually beneficial partnerships centred around the needs of our clients. Knowing when to compromise and when not and how to build trust and credibility. The Head of Advocacy and Influence:

- Demonstrates strong interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence
- Has the ability to see things from others' perspectives and develop resolutions that work for all parties both when establishing new partnerships and in long-standing arrangements
- Reviews and evaluates the effectiveness of relationships and partnerships
- Stays up to date with client needs and the wider environment in which we operate

Performance Management

Able to manage the mechanisms and systems that capture an overview of service and staff effectiveness and performance and to swiftly identify and mitigate any issues. The Head of Advocacy and Influence:

- Has a strong understanding of advocacy services, strategies, policies and good practice
- Effectively resolves strategic and operational service challenges
- Manages multiple demands and priorities without losing focus
- Drives and champions continual service improvement
- Effectively line manages people and teams
- Encourages and motivates others to proactively engage in developing the organisation

Co-creation and Co-production with external stakeholders

Facilitates, advocates for and champions the introduction and implementation of co-creation and co-production approaches across Citizens Advice Sheffield. The Head of Advocacy and Influence:

- Stays up to date with good practice and developments in co-production
- Embeds accessibility, diversity, equality and reciprocity into co-production activities
- Provides guidance and support to enable effective co-production with a full range of stakeholders

Communication & Influencing

Taking a lead role in CAS's external communications and influencing including media to support a positive external profile and strengthen visibility and credibility amongst current and potential clients, partners and funders. The Head of Advocacy and Influence:

- Is an excellent communicator in person and in writing
- Articulates messages clearly in ways appropriate to the audience
- Keeps themselves and their team up to date with internal and external issues
- Maximises opportunities to build and maintain links with key stakeholders
- Understands and uses the power of data and stories to demonstrate impact

Self-awareness and development

The Head of Advocacy and Influence understands the impact of their own behaviour, is receptive to feedback and is committed to continual learning and development. They:

- Actively seek feedback and act on it
- Seek opportunities for personal development
- Model the behaviours they expect from others
- Adhere to the organisation's policies and procedures?
- Demonstrates excellent organisational skills
- Promotes diversity and inclusion in organisational leadership activities and partnership work