



Job Title:	Mentor Advocate
Service/Division:	Young Women and Girls
Reporting to:	Service Manager
Direct reports:	None
Location:	Hammersmith, Stratford, Finsbury Park and community locations 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

In recognition of the distinct challenges facing young women and girls (YWG), Advance has developed and delivered specialist provision for YWG and has recently been awarded funding to develop the Maia & LIFT programme in partnership with three other specialist organisations – Chance UK, Working Chance and Woman’s Trust. Advance will deliver the Maia Service – a dedicated service for young women and girls (aged 13 to 25) at risk of domestic abuse, exploitation and contact with the criminal justice system. This is an exciting time to join Advance as we embark on our journey to reach even more young women and girls in need of support using best practice youth, gender-, trauma-informed and holistic approaches.

The Maia Service will provide support to YWG in the London boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Camden, Islington and Westminster in our safe, YWG-only spaces. The Maia Service is designed to enable YWG to escape harm and to thrive in their lives and aspirations. The Maia service achieves this by supporting YWG to build confidence, self-esteem and resilience, manage their health and wellbeing and access and engage with other support services. YWG will be able to access dedicated, one-to-one support from YWG Mentor Advocates, as well as mentoring and a programme of prevention and awareness-raising groups and workshops.

YWG Mentor Advocates will deliver consistent, holistic support to a small caseload of YWG, working to build relationships of trust, empower YWG to explore their identities, sense of safety and aspirations, and providing practical help and advocacy where needed. Working as part of an innovative and newly-funded service, the postholder will also work closely with the Maia Service Manager to capture and share feedback and learning from the project, using this to inform the ongoing development of Advance’s ways of working with YWG and disseminating findings widely across key partners and networks.

Key Responsibilities and Duties

The YWG Mentor Advocate will support the mobilisation, development and delivery of the Maia service. They will:



Work intensively with a selected cohort of YWG (aged 13-25), providing centre-based and outreach services and adopting a YWG-centred, strengths-based approach to deliver a range of support and interventions designed to: increase awareness and understanding of healthy relationships; reduce risk and increase feelings of safety; build self-confidence and confidence in professionals and support services; and empower YWG to assert their rights and make choices about future goals.

Identify and assess the needs, strengths and goals of YWG on an ongoing basis, carry out safety planning and develop, review and support YWG in line with individual support plans which seek to address health and wellbeing, relationships, education, training and employment and risk of contact with criminal justice system.

Identify when YWG would benefit from specialist support in relation to ethnicity, culture, religion, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, health and other intersecting aspects of her unique identity, making referrals as appropriate and ensuring that discrimination and hardship she may be facing as a result of her identity is highlighted for further awareness-raising and advocacy by Advance.

Proactively assess risks and safety concerns, raising concerns with the Maia Service Manager, ensuring that, where possible, concerns are discussed openly with YWG, working within local safeguarding frameworks and taking appropriate action to safeguard YWG whilst working within a model of empowerment.

Develop and maintain excellent working relationships with a range of professionals (including Youth Offending Teams, Probation, Police, Health, Education, Jobcentre Plus, Local Authority and local voluntary and community organisations), participate in multi-agency working and meetings, and use institutional advocacy to maximise positive outcomes for YWG and the appropriate reporting mechanisms to highlight persistent or recurring issues.

Work closely with the YWG Mentor Coordinator to pair YWG with Volunteer Mentors, liaising with their assigned mentor to ensure YWG experience a smooth referral process and receive consistent messaging and complementary programmes of support across the Maia Service.

Work closely with the YWG Groups Coordinator to refer YWG to and support the delivery of group based interventions which support YWG to learn about, discuss and reflect on the challenges they have faced and empower YWG to support each other and move forward with their lives.

Assist the Maia Service Manager to develop and maintain links with partner agencies (statutory and non-statutory, including children and young people's and women and girls' voluntary services) across the six boroughs, supporting the Manager to raise the profile of the Maia Service, develop referral pathways for YWG and, where necessary, provide guidance and training for agencies and professionals working with YWG at risk.



Utilise a range of methods to regularly obtain feedback from YWG regarding their experiences at all stages of the Maia Service, sharing and reflecting on feedback with the Maia Service Manager and staff team and using this to inform the development of new resources and Advance's wider ways of working with YWG where appropriate.

Maintain accurate records, collate all relevant monitoring and evaluation data, keep the Maia Service Manager informed of any issues and successes on an ongoing basis and support her in the production of quarterly monitoring and evaluation reports.

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, as well as participating in Maia Service team meetings, peer support, reflective practice and contributing to the development of a culture of open communication and critical reflection within the Maia Service team.

Participate in supervision, training and other 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 violence against women and girls (VAWG), criminal justice, youth work, social work, education or other relevant area, or equivalent professional experience spanning VAWG, criminal justice and/or youth work.	D
A strong understanding of the challenges facing vulnerable young women and girls, including the impacts of domestic abuse, exploitation, mental health and contact with the criminal justice system, and of the practical and emotional support needs specific to this group, including education, confidence and relationship-building.	E
Knowledge of trauma informed, gendered approaches in supporting young women facing multiple forms of disadvantage.	E
Current knowledge of safeguarding practice, procedures and legislation, including an understanding of approaches to safeguarding in a framework of empowerment.	E
Thorough understanding of, and commitment to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice	E
EXPERIENCE	
Significant experience of working with young women experiencing issues related to violence against women and girls and/or the criminal justice system and experience of community engagement, advocacy and support work with young people.	E
Experience of risk management, needs assessment, safety and support planning, particularly with young women and girls with complex/multiple needs	E
Experience of using motivational interviewing and coaching techniques, using a girl/young woman-centred approach to build trust and rapport.	E
Experience of developing and delivering group work appropriate to the needs of young women.	D
Experience of working in partnership with relevant statutory and voluntary groups and developing and maintain constructive working relationships.	E

Experience of working with youth support agencies or in a youth support setting.	D
Experience of setting and maintaining professional boundaries with service users whilst delivering an excellent standard of service, including how to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour, de-escalate tension, and enable women and girls to manage strong feelings in a safe manner.	E
TECHNICAL/WORK BASED SKILLS	
An ability to work well within a team and responsibly on own initiative, prioritising and organise own workload where appropriate and working under direct supervision.	E
Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, particularly in relation to building good rapport and supportive relationship with a wide range of service users and partner agencies.	E
A flexible, proactive approach and the ability to remain calm and objective in stressful situations.	E
Good time management skills, working effectively under pressure with the ability to manage conflicting priorities whilst adhering to deadlines.	E
Ability to network, influence, problem-solve and apply solution-focused approaches to increase access and safety, facilitating positive outcomes for women and girls.	E
A demonstrable passion and drive to motivate others and enable change with a track record of engaging “hard-to-reach” service users.	E
GENERAL SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	
Demonstrable multicultural skills and variable approaches to equity, diversity and inclusion	E
Committed to Advance’s charity ethos and key values which are Listen and Support, Empower, Innovate, Collaborate, Quality and Accountability	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.