

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION AND WORK RELATED REQUIREMENTS

Position title:	Youth Mental Health Advocate
Employment Instrument:	Engaged by the Chief Mental Health Advocate under a contract for services pursuant to s350 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> . See <i>Terms and Conditions of Engagement of Youth Mental Health Advocates</i> attached.
Role of MHAS:	<p>The Mental Health Advocacy Service (MHAS) is established by the Chief Mental Health Advocate (Chief Advocate).</p> <p>Part 20 of the <i>Mental Health Act 2014</i> sets out the functions and powers of the Chief Advocate and Mental Health Advocates.</p> <p>In summary the role of MHAS is to provide advocacy and rights protection for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• people who are subject to involuntary mental health treatment orders, including hospital and custody orders, some voluntary mental health patients, and residents of psychiatric hostels (identified persons); and• residents of a declared place (the Bennett Brook Disability Justice Centre) pursuant to the <i>Declared Places (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 2015</i> <p>to ensure their voices are heard.</p>

REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to: Specialist Senior Mental Health Advocate (Senior Advocate)

Positions reporting to Youth Mental Health Advocates: Nil, but Mental Health Advocates may seek assistance and support from the Youth Advocate and there are other Youth Advocates engaged by the Chief Advocate who may confer.

MHAS VALUES

- Empowerment of consumers and “pure advocacy”
- Respect for people’s rights, dignity, culture and diversity
- A person-centred, recovery focussed and holistic approach
- Working together and supporting each other
- Integrity, transparency and accountability
- Ongoing improvement

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF ROLE

The Youth Mental Health Advocates (Youth Advocates) have specialist expertise and skills for engaging with children and young people to ensure:

- their rights are protected;
- their voices are heard at both an individual and systemic level;
- there are sufficient and appropriate services available and those services do not adversely impact on the health, safety or welfare of youth;
- the ‘best interests’ of the child (under 18 years) is always considered; and
- collaboration between the child/youth, family and treatment team is undertaken in all treatment, support and discharge planning.

STATEMENT OF DUTIES OF YOUTH ADVOCATE

The Youth Advocate duties are set out in Part 20 of the Act, in particular sections 352, 357 and 363 in so far as they relate to children (aged under 18) and young people (aged 18-24), collectively called youth, and include:

1. visiting or otherwise contacting:
 - a. children (aged under 18) within 24 hours ; and
 - b. young people (aged 18-24 years) within 7 days;of them being made involuntary, and all youth within 24 hours of them or someone on their behalf requesting contact;
2. inquiring into or investigating any matter relating to the conditions of mental health services where youth are detained or treated and cared for that is adversely affecting, or is likely to adversely affect, the health, safety or wellbeing of identified persons;
3. inquiring into or investigating the extent to which youth have been informed by mental health services of their rights, the extent to which those rights have been observed and assisting them to protect and enforce their rights under the Act including access to legal services;
4. inquiring into and seeking to resolve complaints made by youth about their detention, treatment or care by mental health services including applications and representation to the Health And Disabilities Services Complaints Office;
5. advocating for and facilitating access by youth to other services, in consultation with the medical practitioners and mental health practitioners responsible for their treatment and care;
6. ensuring the youth is involved in their treatment, support and discharge planning throughout their admission;
7. ensuring that families/carers of children are informed of their rights and involved in treatment, support and discharge planning as appropriate;
8. preparing and representing youth and their families at Mental Health Tribunal hearings (held within 10 days of them being made involuntary);

9. attempting to resolve issues by dealing directly with the relevant staff members of the mental health service concerned and/or referring issues to their Senior Advocate or the Chief Advocate;
10. drafting letters, reports and briefing notes or assisting the Senior Advocates or Chief Advocate to draft letters, reports and briefing notes relating to issues involving youth, including contributing to the MHAS Annual Report laid before Parliament;
11. preparing and / or conducting training and other presentations about youth issues and the role of the MHAS Youth Advocates;
12. supporting Mental Health Advocates who may be working with youth, particularly in regional areas;
13. attending mental health service management and other meetings relating to youth mental health or other services with or on behalf of the Senior Advocate or Chief Advocate;
14. representing the Chief Advocate / MHAS at forums, conferences and seminars relating to youth issues; and
15. taking part in a weekend roster calling mental health services to check if any children have been made involuntary.

WORK RELATED REQUIREMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT AS YOUTH ADVOCATE

The following work related requirements are assessed for suitability in the context of the services to be provided by Youth Advocates.

- 1. Qualifications, training and/or experience relevant to children and young people and mental health issues, including contemporary concepts, as well as a strong commitment to human rights.** This can include the applicant's lived experience, work experience, training and/or other studies.
- 2. High level communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to engage with children and young people from all walks of life.** Applicants should highlight their knowledge, understanding, skills and experience in interviewing, engaging with and presenting information (both verbal and written) tailored to suit different audiences, including people from different age groups, people with Aboriginal and / or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, sexuality and gender diverse individuals and individuals at different stages of their recovery journey.
- 3. High level advocacy, negotiation and investigative skills in a range of situations.** This may include investigation reports and analytical and problem solving skills as well as the ability to make oral submissions to a legal tribunal.
- 4. Good letter and report writing skills.** These are important skills in ensuring that written advocacy work is clear, complete and persuasive. Written submissions and investigation reports may need to be provided to legal tribunals and other agencies.
- 5. Good organisational and time management skills to work effectively both independently and as part of a team.** Applicants will need to work independently taking responsibility for, and managing their work, to effectively prioritise and meet expected performance deadlines and outcomes with the direction, support and guidance of the Chief Advocate, Senior Mental Health Advocates or other delegate.
- 6. Good computer skills.** Includes the ability to use the internet, email, smart phone, databases and case management systems. Mental Health Advocates are required to enter reports on all consumer contacts into a case management system and instructions and work tasks are provided on a dashboard which they need to access and check regularly while working in the field.
- 7. Strong commitment to working ethically with integrity, professionalism and commitment.** Includes complying with the standards and protocols set by the Chief Advocate, Senior Advocates or other delegate.