



HEALTH CONSUMERS'  
COUNCIL

# Position Description

## Advocacy Officer

POSITION	LOCATION	REPORTING RELATIONSHIP
Advocacy Officer	Mount Lawley	Reports to the Senior Advocate

### ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Health Consumers' Council of WA (HCC) is an independent community-based organisation, which has operated since 1994, representing the consumer voice in health policy, planning, research and service delivery.

The Council provides an advocacy service to health consumers experiencing difficulties in the health system as well as training and support for consumers who want to support reform processes as a consumer representative.

### POSITION OVERVIEW

The Advocacy Officer provides individual advocacy to health consumers who have contacted our service for help in resolving an issue they are experiencing within the WA health system. Many consumers face considerable difficulties and resistance in having their concerns addressed, or dealing with health service providers, and therefore, we aim to offer a safe, trauma-informed service to all people. Our approach to establishing a good working relationship with health consumers is to be non-judgemental and helpful, while working from a strength's-based approach and being consumer led.

The Advocacy Officer is responsible for developing an advocacy plan with their consumers to achieve the consumer's goals, as agreed by both parties. Advocacy efforts may include attending consumer appointments, letter writing, and contacting health service providers with or on behalf of the consumer. The complexity of the issues faced by consumers may vary widely. The advocate will use their knowledge of the WA Health System to support consumers in navigating the system, while maintaining a high level of professionalism with health service providers and other stakeholders.

As an Advocate, you would need to be able to carry an individual case load, consult with fellow advocates as needed, and operate in a professional and highly organised manner.

### VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE AND VALUES

#### Our Vision

Equitable, person-centred, quality healthcare for all West Australians.

#### Our Purpose

To increase the capacity of all people to influence the future direction of health care and to make informed choices.



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### Our Values

**Respect:** valuing diversity and seeking everyone's contribution.

*Respect is the foundation we build our relationships on.*

**Kindness:** considering other people's worldviews, experiences, and emotions.

*Kindness and listening to validate can have far-reaching positive effects.*

**Equity:** advocating for the whole community.

*We challenge ourselves to look beyond stereotypes and meet people where they are.*

**Working together:** collaborating to achieve positive outcomes.

*We can go further and faster in partnership*

**Integrity:** aligning actions with our values and measuring outcomes to continuously improve.

*We reflect on what we do and why we do it. We transparently report on our outcomes.*

**Empowerment:** sharing knowledge and resources to support informed choice and positive change

*We believe in informed choices and the importance of lived experience to drive positive change.*

### KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

#### A. INDIVIDUAL ADVOCACY

- Engage with individuals seeking advocacy support, assess needs, and develop an advocacy plan utilising the least complicated approach
- Seek consumer consent for all advocacy actions
- Articulate any potential barriers for consumers in achieving their goals, while working within HCC's scope
- Advocate with or alongside the health consumer in person, on the telephone or in letter writing
- Maintain a high professional standard of work in all dealings with consumers, co-workers, and external stakeholders, always ensuring to maintain the consumer's confidentiality
- Promote self-advocacy tools
- Facilitate referrals to other community services should an issue arises outside of HCC's scope

#### B. ADMINISTRATION AND REPORTING

- Maintain records to a high and professional standard, ensuring case notes are brief, factual and objective
- Close cases in a timely manner once assistance has been provided to the consumer
- Seek consumer feedback of service experience
- Assist with report writing relating to systemic advocacy as required
- Read and comment on policy and circulating draft papers as requested



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- Performs other duties as required/ requested

### C. Training and Education

- Attending professional training courses as deemed appropriate/necessary
- Read circulating newsletters and materials to keep informed of consumer movement and health issues

### D. Meetings

- Attending scheduled staff and advocacy team meetings
- Attend meetings as requested by the Senior Advocate

## CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

- Ability to be guided by cultural advice from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) community members
- Demonstrate an understanding of Aboriginal primary health care and the social determinants of health.
- Have an understanding of Noongar culture, be willing to engage with Aboriginal families, culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities and work in partnership and collaboration

## EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS

### ESSENTIAL

1. Understanding of the value of advocacy for consumers experiencing issues within the health system
2. Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills to be able to advocate, negotiate, influence, mediate, de-escalate, and develop effective workplace relationships with consumers and other stakeholders
3. An understanding of the social determinants of health, systemic barriers and complex trauma when working with people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage, and the ability to operate from a trauma informed lens
4. Substantial experience in the provision of information and referrals in a service delivery environment, with good working knowledge of community service organisations and referral pathways
5. Ability to work autonomously with strong organisational skills to manage competing priorities simultaneously, to meet deadlines
6. Highly developed analysis and report writing and computer skills

### DESIRABLE

7. Previous experiencing providing individual advocacy
8. Tertiary qualification in social, behavioural or health sciences (e.g., social work, psychology, sociology), or substantial previous advocacy experience or lived experience in navigating the WA health system
9. Experience working with community groups not from the dominant culture, including the Indigenous community or people from non-English speaking backgrounds
10. Understanding of the WA health system and the Mental Health Act 2014



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### OTHER EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Must be eligible to work in Australia
- Must be proficient in the use of technology including email, the internet and Microsoft Office products
- National Police Clearance (obtained within the last six months)
- Current COVID-19 vaccinations and up to date boosters, or valid medical exemption certificate

Creation Date: 11/10/2021

Date Reviewed: 01/11/2022

Exec Director Approval: