



Job Description: Advocacy Coordinator

About The Connection at St Martin's

The Connection is based in the heart of London, near Charing Cross Station and Trafalgar Square. Our history of working with people experiencing homelessness can be traced back to the First World War, and we offer both short-term practical help and more intensive long-term support to clients who are sleeping rough or vulnerably housed. Westminster is the epicentre of rough sleeping in the UK, and we work closely with people who find themselves on the edge in Central London, with nowhere else to turn.

We deliver a range of services from three sites:

- A Triage and Brief Intervention Service for people experiencing housing crisis to understand their situation, signpost, provide housing advice and access to health care where appropriate
- A Resource Centre providing facilities that give dignity and practical support to our clients - including showers, laundry, c/o address, IT access, basic healthcare services and meals
- Resilience and Recovery work including a therapeutic group work programme, support with training and employment, and routes into mental health and drug and alcohol treatment
- A Housing and Resettlement advice service which helps people to access supported accommodation and the private rented sector, reconnect to places where they have roots in the UK, and undertakes immigration case work.
- A Street Engagement Team which includes an innovative day-time outreach service that works across the West End with those on the streets that face multiple disadvantage.
- Two sites at which teams offer short to medium-term accommodation options for clients, with a wraparound support offer. This enables people to recover in a safe and secure environment with a roof over their heads.

Background Information

We have all of the elements that we need to make our advocacy work a success - knowledge and expertise in homelessness and its underlying causes, a significant profile for a local organisation, links with other homelessness organisations and physical proximity to decision making bodies. We're therefore seeking a postholder with experience in strategically planning and delivering advocacy actions on behalf of a charity, to take our policy and campaigns work to the next level. The experiences of people on the edge matter. We want to tell their story to those in a position of power and influence, so that homelessness, exclusion and isolation are not acceptable features of life in the UK.

The Government has prioritised homelessness through a Rough Sleeping Initiative run from the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities since 2019. Subsequent to this, the Government responded to homelessness during the Pandemic through the Everyone In initiative and through legislation to restrict evictions. We have, as a consequence, seen a huge drop in rough sleeping and very limited Covid infections in the homeless population. These are huge achievements and the homelessness sector aims to maintain the low level of rough sleeping that has been achieved.



The Connection is ready to bring our expertise to this work. This postholder will ensure that we contribute our voice and experience in support of existing campaigns – such as the campaign to repeal the vagrancy act; and lead on a campaign advocating for increased access to treatment services (drug and alcohol and/or mental health) as an essential way of addressing the underlying issues that lead to and perpetuate individuals’ homelessness.

With this as our backdrop, we have created an 18 month fixed-term role of Advocacy Co-ordinator. This will give us the skills and capacity to significantly increase our influence with policy makers locally and nationally to achieve systemic changes for people sleeping rough, drawing on the experiences of our clients and practitioners. As the Advocacy Co-ordinator you will:

- Establish and maintain links with relevant campaigning organisations in the sector
- Stay on top of the launch of relevant campaigns, reports, budget announcements etc. and co-ordinate The Connection’s involvement in and public response to the above.
- Work closely with The Connection’s Service Delivery team to identify the policy changes that would have the greatest positive impact on people sleeping rough
- Create a strong link with a treatment specialist agency with an advocacy function to support this work (could be substance misuse or mental health), bringing credibility and additional connections/network
- Develop and deliver a well-evidenced and dynamic campaign, calling for increased access to treatment services for people experiencing homelessness.
- Establish links with the relevant local and national government bodies (e.g. Westminster Council, APPG for Ending Homelessness) and policy makers (local councillors, MPs, the Lord Mayor of Westminster), in support of our proposed policy changes.
- Co-ordinate the Connection’s participation in the debate about the repeal of the Vagrancy Act and emerging alternatives.
- Create key messages for the media on our work, to cover issues with the potential for reputational risk (begging, use of tents, enforcement etc.).

JOB DESCRIPTION	
Responsible to:	Communications Manager
Responsible for:	N/A
Job Purpose	Deliver advocacy elements of The Connection’s Communications Strategy
Salary and Scale:	Points 26 – 30 £34,164 – £37,496
Contract:	18 months fixed term post

Key responsibilities

- Create a detailed two-year plan for a campaign to put in place high quality treatment services designed for rough sleepers with complex needs to move away from the streets and recover;
- Work with the CEO to select a specialist treatment agency to link with, creating a partnership agreement and associated arrangements to bring credibility to our campaign;



- Work with our service teams to design and cost out a treatment model suitable for our clients;
- Identify and synthesise evidence to support our case for a more substantial treatment response for rough sleepers in central London, liaising with the Data, Evidence and Impact Team;
- Liaise with clients to ensure their voice is heard and included in our campaigning work;
- Consult with external partners and other relevant experts to test and refine this model;
- Extend our networks within the health service to bring together shared interests between homelessness and health policy makers to support change;
- Explore our proposed approach with policy makers locally, regionally and nationally to effect changes to RSI and statutory spending priorities for rough sleepers with complex needs;
- Draft policy briefings, communications documents, speaking notes and stakeholder engagement advice for the senior team ahead of key meetings or external events including liaison with politicians;
- Liaise with the CEO and other senior managers to promote our proposed approach and build momentum for this to be adopted in central London and beyond;
- Explore the rationale for the repeal of the Vagrancy Act, exploring the alternative proposals and consulting internally to agree our position;
- Represent The Connection at external meetings to ensure the Connection’s position on treatment, the Vagrancy Act Repeal and other agreed policy/campaigning issues is included;
- Liaise with national organisations such as Homeless Link and Crisis as well as Westminster delivery partners such as The Passage and St Mungo’s to show a united front on our key policy priorities;
- Provide appropriate content for our social media feed and other core communications to share our position with supporters and others with overlapping interests;
- Undertake research into key contentious issues (begging, use of tents, enforcement etc.) and agree key statements for us to use in response to the media;
- Support the Communications Manager and other senior staff to respond to media enquiries and use opportunities to share our key campaign priorities.

Person Specification

This person specification sets out the essential experience and abilities needed by the successful candidate for this post. Please bear these points in mind when completing your application form, as these requirements will be taken into account at both the shortlisting and interviewing stages.

1. Knowledge, interest and experience
Educated to degree level
Experience of developing strategic advocacy plans and the ability to deliver these plans with a senior staff team
An understanding of how to navigate local authorities, City Hall, Westminster and Whitehall
Experience of translating knowledge, experience and accompanying data into corresponding advocacy asks
Experience of communicating complex issues and data to a range of different audiences across a wide variety of formats to include: meetings; round tables; emails; e-newsletters and social media platforms.
Experience of creating key messages

Experience of producing a range of written, visual and audio materials in a range of formats, including policy statements, press releases, consultation responses and briefing materials
Ability to use Microsoft Office packages, some experience of using basic website builder and/or graphic design programmes would be an advantage.
Experience of working creatively on own initiative within an organisation, sharing ideas and skills
3. Abilities and Skills
An ability to work with the experts in our team to identify which specific health and homelessness policy areas and initiatives might make a real difference to people who are rough sleeping.
Skills to liaise with people who have experienced homelessness to co-produce campaigning materials and liaise with staff from all levels and departments within the charity
Ability to communicate appropriately and sensitively with and about people facing severe and multiple disadvantage, including rough sleeping, mental health or drug and alcohol recovery
Ability to understand and analyse complex information, data and insights including research reports, statistics and legislation and use these to inform work plans and campaign strategies
Ability to identify and mitigate risks associated with working with the media
Extremely strong written and oral communication skills, including the ability to communicate with a range of audiences and to present information in an engaging way
Skills to build relationships with a wide variety of external stakeholders, including policy makers, politicians and key partners in the sector
The ability to organise events or functions as a platform through which to disseminate campaign information and garner support
Skills to work pragmatically and constructively with partner organisations
Self-starter with ability to work independently using own initiative, taking responsibility for own performance standards and reporting requirements
Ability to manage time and prioritise workload effectively
Willingness to work flexible hours on occasion
Ability to participate in the development of CSTM's common systems, policies, procedures and written materials
Ability to demonstrate imagination, initiative and flexibility in problem solving in an environment of change