

Community Advisor POSITION DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Community Advisors are a team of professionals who provide information, guidance and support exclusively to people impacted by multiple sclerosis. As MS affects everyone differently, the CA team supports the person with multiple sclerosis, and those close to them, to navigate how MS impacts their lives in a non-clinical context. The Community Advisors listen and learn without judgement. They are then able to utilise their extensive knowledge, experience and unique helicopter-view to provide salient guidance, resources, referrals and connections to help support the best outcomes at the present time and for what is around the corner. This function fills a gap in the current health services and is rated by the MS community as being the most valued of all our services.

The goal of Community Advisor intervention is that people living with MS are empowered, equipped, supported and informed to move forward on their MS journey with confidence.

As Multiple Sclerosis impacts many aspects of life, the Community Advisor team works alongside whānau to navigate all non-clinical aspects of this complex condition. They help to support the best outcomes at the present time and also empower people with information, services and support for what is around the corner.

SCOPE

The Community Advisors report to the Senior Community Advisor and are responsible for providing support and information to people with MS and those close to them.

The three main areas of focus within the role are:

Inform & guide

- Provide practical non-clinical information and guidance

Promote wellness

- Support people to navigate local health and community services
- Promote achievable positive lifestyle changes as appropriate for that person
- Recommend available financial support where appropriate

Connections

- Provide referrals and recommendations into the best network of supports and connections for that member and their whānau
- Recommend support groups, peer support and other MS Auckland programmes for connection and community support as appropriate

The Community Advisor service is a professional support and guidance service, operating in a specialised context of non-clinical impacts of multiple sclerosis. For member needs outside this scope, referrals to appropriate services are essential to ensure the wellbeing of the member and sustainability and mana of the Community Advisor role. The Community Advisor service is not a catch-all or general problem-solving service for people with MS.

KEY FUNCTIONS

The Community Advisor is the face of the organisation. They are always required to act in a professional, kind, non-judgemental and caring manner.

Key functions of the role are:

- To provide support and information for people with MS, their whānau, caregivers, employers, and friends
- To effectively assist people with MS to gain meaningful life adjustments within the changing nature of their condition
- To assist people with MS to access information, support and services as required
- To provide referrals and recommendations where appropriate to external agencies
- To highlight opportunities for people with MS to manage their symptoms and live well in their daily lives despite their diagnosis
- Maintain current knowledge of credible services and programmes of interest to the MS community
- To assist with workshops, events and other programmes organised by MS Auckland
- To report monthly on activities

PROFESSIONAL & FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal

Senior Community Advisor

Community Advisor team

General Manager

Other office staff

Accredited Supervisor

External

People with MS and their whānau

MS Nurses, Neurologists, and other health professionals

Te Whatu Ora / Whaikaha

Employers

Community groups

Related service providers such as Auckland Transport

Statutory agencies (i.e. WINZ, HNZ)

MSNZ

Other MS Community Advisors in NZ

KEY ACTIVITIES AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Key Activities	Expected Outcomes
▪ Provide customised support, guidance, connections and advocacy to people impacted by MS in Auckland ▪ Represent effectively the views and needs of the person with MS and MS Auckland within professional settings and in public ▪ Respond in a timely fashion to incoming member enquiries ▪ Provide proactive contact to those members who have requested to be contacted at intervals ▪ Advocate for clients as required and as appropriate within guidelines ▪ Refer where appropriate to other agencies	▪ People with MS and those close to them are supported in understanding and managing their condition ▪ Build awareness in the community ▪ Enable members and whānau to resolve problems for themselves ▪ Provide correct assessment of peoples' functioning and needs ▪ Peoples' rights are maintained and respected ▪ Working with other agencies to support best outcomes ▪ Effective and timely services delivered ▪ Appropriate advocacy

▪ Liaise with and help to maintain alliances with other agencies as required ▪ Provide reporting statistics as required (a requirement for funding)	▪ Accurate, complete records of all work undertaken
▪ Work as a team with other Community Advisor(s) and the Senior Community Advisor	▪ People with MS are well supported, receive an efficient service and develop trust in the Community Advisor service
▪ Encourage connection between members for mutual support ▪ Tautoko volunteer-led member functions including Peer Support and Support Groups to facilitate member connections	▪ Groups operating that bring together people with MS for support and friendship ▪ Linking people together by consent to support one another
▪ Maintain accurate and up to date client records ▪ Keep appropriate records of evaluations, plans, referrals, discharges and other key information and ensure this remains confidential and secure	▪ Accurate, up to date and securely maintained client records
▪ Participate in meetings as required ▪ Produce monthly report on activities conducted during that month ▪ Provide relevant information for MS Auckland external communications – Multiple News, e-news, Social Media ▪ Provide feedback on members needs and challenges to feed programmes such as informational webinars	▪ Keep up to date with new information to assist with decision making and advice ▪ Accountability ▪ Trends and issues in the community are brought to the fore to be addressed through communications and/or programmes ▪ Members needs are met
▪ Participate in staff training as required and attend national conferences if required ▪ Involvement in regular supervision and annual appraisal process ▪ Adhere and abide to the appropriate Code of Practice as agreed and by the rules of the Privacy Act (2020), the Human Rights Act (1998) and the Health and Disability Act (2001). ▪ Adhere to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi	▪ Consistently maintaining up to date information and extending knowledge. Community benefits from best practice ▪ Aware of member's beliefs and traditions ▪ The rights of people with MS are respected and maintained at all times ▪ Obligations of a community support organisation in Aotearoa New Zealand are fulfilled

QUALIFICATIONS, KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Qualifications

Applicants are ideally qualified in **one** of the following:

- Social Work
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Speech Language Therapist
- Mental Health professional
- Other health background

Knowledge and Experience

- Knowledge of Multiple Sclerosis and health networks across the Auckland Region will be highly advantageous, but not necessary. Training provided.
- Good knowledge of the health system (i.e. DHB's, Primary Health Organisations)
- Experience in community work
- Experience in working one-on-one with clients, particularly those in vulnerable situations
- Experience in facilitating groups and seminars

Skills

The incumbent must demonstrate the following skills:-

- Highly proficient verbal, written, presentation and listening skills
- Analytical and problem solving skills
- Decision making skills
- Computer skills and technical competency
- Stress and time management skills
- The ability to be self-directed and work unsupervised
- The ability to maintain clear boundaries between yourself and members

The role also requires a current, clean drivers licence and is subject to a clear Police check.

Personal Attributes

The role requires maintaining strict confidentiality of client information. The Community Advisor must also demonstrate the following personal attributes:-

- Empathetic and caring of others
- Non-judgemental
- High degree of integrity
- Sound work ethics
- Ability to adapt to changing working environments and organisational needs
- Actively support and demonstrate MS Auckland's values of trustworthiness, warmth and whanaungatanga