

Safe Accommodation Development Officer - Herefordshire

(12 month contract)

Job Description

Responsible to: Herefordshire County Manager Hours of work: 37

Responsible for: No staff Salary: WMWA Band 9

Objectives of the Post:

1. Work with the social housing provider partner to establish and maintain up to 9 units of dispersed safe accommodation in Herefordshire.
2. Ensure the properties meet the needs of those with protected characteristics, and male victims.
3. Manage the day to day operation and maintenance of the accommodation.

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| **Accommodation Set up and Management**  | * Furnish, manage and maintain the establishment of up to 9 units of dispersed accommodation in Herefordshire.
* Assess new properties for suitability, completing risk assessments in collaboration with the County Manager and Police
* Help to source and deliver donations to safe ‘temporary’ accommodation and for clients moving into permanent move on accommodation
* Work in partnership with Connexus, the social housing landlord to deal with all housing and utility queries
* Welcome new residents to the accommodation, completing all relevant paperwork and ensuring that they are familiar with the building and able to settle in as quickly as possible. This includes the provision of health and safety information about living in the accommodation
* Facilitate additional security measures and systems for properties as appropriate
* Ensure that relationships with neighbours remain cordial and that the low profile presence of safe accommodation is maintained.
* Create and maintain a system for managing and distributing donations
* Maintain and update the occupancy and property void records.
* Complete the monthly health and safety checks, and ensure that all records are up-to-date and that follow-up work is completed where required.
* Record and report any and all incidents and accidents in accordance with the WMWA Health and Safety Policy.
* Prepare vacant properties. Undertaking cleaning duties, collecting and distributing donations and movement of furniture.
* Co-ordinate the general maintenance of the buildings and grounds, and liaise with external contractors to ensure that all essential facilities are in good order
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| **Provide specialist domestic abuse and practical support for service users** | * Ensure that there is access to emergency supplies for new residents or for those with few resources: this can include clothing, nappies, toiletries and food
* Help residents to understand and adhere to their tenancy or licence agreement throughout their stay at the accommodation.
* Provide information to new residents to assist them in their orientation in the local area – specifically, where to locate essential services such as schools, GP surgeries, housing offices, solicitors etc
* Provide practical support to residents in engagement with local services, supporting them by attending appointments with them as and when appropriate
* Support residents in accessing other WMWA services as and when appropriate
* Help residents to access other local support services where they have unmet needs – including substance misuse and /or poor mental health.
* Assist residents with application for benefits, and with budgeting and the management of debt, where required
* Support residents with housing applications, housing appointments and re-housing, advocating on their behalf with housing providers
* Provide specific support to residents from minority communities, applying an understanding of cultural needs and experience. This includes the need to recognise the dynamics of Honour-based Violence, Forced Marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls that – whilst evident in all communities – this will have particular implications for individuals who are isolated by their experiences or where English is not their first language. Where residents have No Recourse to Public Funds, or where their immigration status is impacted upon by their need to seek refuge – ensure that they have access to the advice and advocacy that they need in order to be able remain safe and continue to safeguard their children.
* Assist residents when re-settling into permanent accommodation. This can include making applications on their behalf to local charities for grants for furniture and/or sourcing these for themselves.
* Issue residents with hardship monies, travel warrants etc as required.
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| **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults** | Comply with WMWA and local area requirements for best practice in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults |
| **Participation and Service Development** | * Enable and encourage residents to participate in ongoing discussion about the development of WMWA services and of safe accommodation in particular, ensuring that their views continue to shape provision.
* Assist managers in the induction, training and mentoring of volunteers working with the project
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| **Partnership Working** | * Work closely with Connexus and the Local Authority Housing Solutions team to offer suitable accommodation which meets the needs of the client.
* Work with colleagues across all services managed/led by WMWA to ensure that users have access to the full range of support and advocacy services provided by WMWA including supporting the refuge team to provide cover for leave/sickness etc.
* Work in collaboration with other agencies and community groups to facilitate joint working on behalf of service users where appropriate.
* Represent WMWA and the project in local community forums.
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| **Out of Hours** | * Provide up to 4 sessions of out-of-hours cover per month, on the helpline and on-call rotas. An additional allowance is paid per session.
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| **General Duties** | * Attend supervision sessions and team meetings
* Undertake training as agreed at supervision sessions
* Take active steps to work within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice
* Undertake all other reasonable duties as required in furtherance of the objectives of this post
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Accommodation Development Officer - Safe Accommodation

Person Specification

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| Qualifications | * Minimum of A-Level standard of education or equivalent
* Full driving licence
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| Experience | * Track record of successful housing/accommodation management
* Experience of working with vulnerable people
* Experience of working within statutory and legal frameworks associated with the area of work
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| Skills and Abilities | * Good active listening skills
* Good verbal and written communication skills.
* IT skills including the ability to use MS word, outlook and basic excel spreadsheets.
* Ability to work co-operatively with other practitioners, on behalf of service users.
* Ability to organise own workload, and respond to unplanned demands.
* Ability to work as part of a team, providing a cohesive and comprehensive service.
* Ability to work with minimal supervision on a day-to-day basis, within agreed schedules and guidelines
* Ability to undertake cleaning duties, collecting and distributing donations and movement of furniture.
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| Knowledge | * Good knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse issues; and the needs of women and children affected by it.
* Understanding of safeguarding issues.
* Knowledge of the benefits and housing benefit system.
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| Essential Attitudes | * A demonstrable ‘can do’ approach
* Understanding of and commitment to anti-discriminatory working practices.
* Commitment to Women’s Aid values and ethos.
* Commitment to the empowerment of women and children affected by domestic abuse.
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| General Requirements | * Car user essential with daily access to a vehicle necessary, due to the rural locations of the dispersed properties.
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