

Support and Advocacy Worker - Refuge

Job Description

Responsible to: WMWA County Manager

Responsible for: No staff

Objectives of the Post: Provide support and advocacy to refuge residents.

Manage the day to day operation of the refuge.

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| **Provide specialist domestic abuse support for service users** | * Provide ongoing support to all residents in response to their individual needs, as assessed on admission and through regular review. Record all reviews, plans and essential information in a timely manner and in accordance with WMWA policy for data recording and information management.
* Welcome new residents to refuge, 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 refuge.
* 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 licence agreement throughout their stay at refuge.
* 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
* Provide residents with listening and reflective support and help in understanding and recovering from the physical and emotional impact of domestic abuse, using evidence-based models where appropriate in either a group or individual setting
* 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 – 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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| **Refuge Management** | * Support residents in living together in a communal setting, helping them to address tensions and resolving conflict. Issue warnings and/or Notices to Quit to those residents whose conduct compromises the health and well-being of other residents and/or staff
* Maintain refuge security, ensuring that that access points and the CCTV system are appropriately managed and maintained.
* Ensure that relationships with neighbours remain cordial and that the low profile presence of refuge is maintained.
* Collect, record and provide receipts for Personal Charge from residents, ensuring that this is managed within WMWA procedures and securely transferred to the Finance Office.
* Ensure that Housing Benefit accounts are up-to-date for each resident, and that arrears are pursued with Housing Benefit.
* Maintain and update the refuge occupancy and room void records.
* Complete the monthly refuge health and safety checks, and ensure that all records are up-to-date and that follow-up work is completed where required. (Worcester and Kidderminster only)
* Record and report any and all incidents and accidents in accordance with the WMWA Health and Safety Policy.
* Prepare vacant rooms (including cleaning).
* Co-ordinate the general maintenance of the refuge building and grounds, and liaise with external contractors to ensure that all essential facilities are in good order
* Support the County Manager with the induction process for volunteers working in refuge.
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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 refuge in particular, ensuring that their views continue to shape provision. Hold regular house meetings for residents.
* Assist managers in the induction, training and mentoring of volunteers working in refuge
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| **Partnership Working** | * 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.
* Work in collaboration with other agencies and community groups to facilitate joint working on behalf of service users where appropriate.
* Represent WMWA and the refuge 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** | * Monthly purchase of items required in the refuge
* Attend supervision sessions and refuge 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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Person Specification

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| Qualifications | * Minimum of A-level standard of education or equivalent
* Full driving licence
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| Experience | * Experience of working in a hostel and/ residential environment
* Experience of working with vulnerable people
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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
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| Knowledge | * Basic knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse issues; and the needs of women and children affected by it.
* Understanding of safeguarding issues.
* Basic knowledge of the benefits and housing benefit system.
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| Essential Attitudes | * 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 preferred
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