

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY OFFICER – HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Job Description

Responsible to: County Manager Hours of Work: 37 per week

Those wishing to Job-Share this post are encouraged to apply.

Responsible for: No staff **Salary:** WMWA Band 4 Point 10

Objective of the Post:

* Work with Worcestershire Housing to ensure that appropriate temporary accommodation and support are provided for those fleeing domestic abuse for whom refuge / safe house accommodation is not available
* Provide client-centred and trauma-informed advocacy and support to women and children affected by domestic abuse who are placed in temporary accommodation.
* Support individuals and families that are presenting with homeless applications and are placed in temporary accommodation (such as B & B’s) or placed with friends and family to increase their access to specialist Domestic Abuse Support.

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| Work with Worcestershire Housing to ensure that appropriate temporary accommodation and support are provided for those fleeing domestic abuse for whom refuge / safe house accommodation is not available | * Lead on the assessment of need for women and families who present as homeless as a consequence of domestic abuse, ensuring that appropriate solutions are identified which are most likely to meet their identified needs * Liaise with refuge and safe accommodation in Worcestershire, and beyond into West Mercia, to secure space in suitable safe accommodation if that in Worcestershire is either full or not appropriate * Engage with the national WAFE ‘No Woman Turned Away’ project to ensure that those women who are ‘hard to place’ are not denied access to accommodation * Provide support and advice to colleague housing/homelessness officers across the county in engaging with, and in identifying appropriate safe accommodation for,  women and their dependent children who are fleeing from domestic abuse * Support the work of the newly established Domestic Abuse Panel and assess support needs for individuals in emergency accommodation arrangements who are referred to WMWA for support. * Support the County Manager to set up Domestic Abuse Panels in other Worcestershire Housing districts. |
| Provide client-centred and trauma-informed advocacy and support to women and children affected by domestic abuse who are placed in temporary accommodation. | * To complete a relevant risk assessment and provide safety planning to those who experience domestic abuse * To provide face to face and telephone-based advocacy and support to those experiencing domestic abuse placed in temporary accommodation. This may be through the delivery of evidence-based group programmes, or 1:1 support, or drop-in arrangements – as determined by local requirements and opportunities. * Ensure that women who are housed in emergency accommodation (including B&B, or stay with friends and family ) in the county are supported by specialist domestic abuse services, and by networks in their local communities where appropriate * To ensure that pathways for support are seamless and accessible between different WMWA services, and across to other local community networks and specialist services.      * To ensure that the accommodation arrangements are sufficient to meet their individual needs. * To complete structured support and safety planning programme with each individual /family to deliver agreed outcomes * To work effectively in partnership with other agencies in ensuring a cohesive package of co-ordinated support for the individual/family |
| Service Development | * Maintain a core knowledge of the issues for the victims of domestic abuse and of the evidence base of programmes and interventions that can provide effective support * Champion the ongoing development of outcome-focussed partnership working with and between housing providers and community-based agencies that support families in crisis. |
| Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults | * To participate in the work of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, following WMWA policies and procedures |
| Joint Working | * To work closely with other support workers in the organisation to ensure that users have access to the full range of services provided by WMWA * To work in collaboration with other agencies and to facilitate joint working on behalf of service users where appropriate |
| Service User Involvement | * To secure feedback from all service users at the conclusion of their engagement with WMWA and to review and improve practice in light of service user evaluation. * To promote and facilitate service user consultation. * To promote continued service user participation through the WMWA Survivor Network. |
| Out of Hours | * To provide 4 sessions of out-of-hours cover per month, on the helpline and on-call rotas |
| General Duties | * To maintain accurate records and monitoring and evaluation information * To attend supervision sessions and staff meetings * To undertake training as agreed at supervision sessions * To take active steps to work within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice * To undertake all other reasonable duties as required by Service Managers 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 |
| Experience | * Experience of advocacy and support work with vulnerable people * Experience of delivering support by telephone |
| Skills and Abilities | * Excellent active listening skills * Good verbal and written communication skills, including completion of electronic forms and recording of data * Good IT skills * Ability to work co-operatively and in partnership with other practitioners, singly and in interagency contexts, on behalf of users of the service * Ability to organise workload and respond to unplanned demands * Ability to work as part of a support team, providing a cohesive and comprehensive service to users with a wide range of needs * Ability to work with minimal supervision on a day-to-day basis, within agreed schedules and guidelines |
| Knowledge | * Good knowledge and understanding of homelessness and housing legislation as it relates to the victims of domestic abuse * Good knowledge and understanding of domestic abuse issues and the needs of women and children affected by it * Good knowledge of safeguarding children processes and practice * Working knowledge of disability, mental health and drug and alcohol issues, and issues for those aged over 55 * Basic knowledge of benefits and legal assistance available to women seeking freedom from domestic abuse, including housing, civil law and criminal justice processes * Knowledge of and agreement with Women’s Aid aims and principles |
| Essential Attitudes | * Understanding of and commitment to anti-discriminatory working practices * Commitment to Women’s Aid values and principles * Commitment to the empowerment of women and children affected by domestic abuse |
| General Requirements | * Willingness to work evenings and weekend hours on a rota basis * Car user essential with daily access to a vehicle |