

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title	Advocate Worker 7 month fixed term contract (October to April)
Salary	£26,000 p.a. (pro rata for 7 months) 5% employers' pension contribution, 3% employee 25 days annual leave plus bank holidays (pro-rata for seven months)
Hours of work	37 hours per week, to include daytime, evening and some weekend work
Place of work	Old School Rooms, Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Road, Clapton E5 and working at various locations around Hackney
<i>Reports to</i>	Lead Advocate
<i>Works closely with</i>	Shelter Manager Volunteer co-ordinators

Job context

The vision of Hackney Doorways is to provide a route out of homelessness for street homeless people in Hackney. We run Hackney Winter Night Shelter which provides a warm welcome, a hot meal, and a bed for homeless people from the start of November to the end of March, with a one week break over Christmas. During the day, our Advocate Workers provide holistic support to help guests find more suitable accommodation and generally rebuild their lives.

During the 2018-19 season we accommodated 103 homeless people, and the Advocate Workers helped almost 70% of our guests to move on to more long-term accommodation.

Purpose and scope

We are now recruiting one of two Advocate Workers.

During the five-month opening period of the night shelter, two Advocate Workers share the work. They are responsible for operating our referral and waiting list system. Agencies referring a potential guest call or email the Advocate Workers. They will then assess the referral and decide whether or not the guest is placed on the waiting list. If the referral is not accepted the Advocate Worker will signpost the referrer to more appropriate accommodation where possible and may utilise the local network to assist with this.

One Advocate Worker attends the night shelter each evening, to ensure that the expected guests arrive at the shelter and to work with the coordinator and the other volunteers in providing a welcome for guests. The Advocate Worker on shift has an important role in settling guests into the shelter and providing continuity through the working relationships they have developed with the guests.

During the day Advocate Workers work with guests to assist them to move on to more settled accommodation, to apply for benefits and to support them to access health care. Advocate Workers may support guests with other needs as and on occasion will work with ex-guests where necessary and appropriate.

Main duties

Take part in a rota system with the other Advocate Worker, so that one of you attends the shelter every evening. If possible, we try to give advocate workers a break from attending the shelter at weekends using an on-call system, but that will depend on circumstances.

Working with shelter coordinators (volunteers)

- Send shelter coordinator nightly guest list prior to 4pm every day (before midday at the weekend when possible)
- Brief shelter coordinator on guest list prior to shelter opening
- Work in partnership with coordinators to oversee behaviour in the shelter and ensure that all guests observe the rules

Referrals and assessments

- Manage the shelter referral system including the waiting list and keep referrers up-to-date on likely length of wait for their clients
- Offer advice and local knowledge/network information to referring agents where guests refused a place on the waiting list

Working with guests

- Develop professional and trusting relationships with guests
- Assist guests to find longer-term accommodation where possible including liaising with local authority housing teams, local homelessness agencies, other night shelters and the private rented sector
- Manage a caseload of guests supporting them with a range of matters as and when appropriate: for example, assisting them to maximise their income through welfare benefits or seeking employment, helping to access health care including local GP surgeries, drug and alcohol services, counselling and signposting to legal services, immigration advisers, debt advice etc.

Working with external partners

- Develop and maintain excellent working relationships with a wide range of local partners, including referring agencies, private landlords, council housing departments, supported housing providers, and services to which we signpost guests
- Maintain good up to date local knowledge of available services and support networks for guests

Administration

- Create and maintain confidential referral and guest files on our database
- Log any incidents of note and intervene positively if any problems occur, taking note of any risk issues
- Record and update accurate monitoring information relating to attendance, guest details and guest outcomes using our database system

General

- Ensure adherence to Hackney Doorway's policies including safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection, health and safety, and equality and diversity
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the Safeguarding Lead

DBS and references

Appointment will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and an Enhanced DBS check

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Position: Advocate Worker, Hackney Winter Night Shelter

Date: October 2018

	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE		
• A good standard of education	✓	
• Experience of working with vulnerable people (such as homeless people, people with a history of offending, people with drug and alcohol misuse or people with mental health issues)	✓	
• Experience of working in the voluntary sector		✓
SKILLS		
• Excellent interpersonal skills, including an ability to work with guests, teams of volunteers and external professionals	✓	
• Ability to maintain good communications and working relationships with Shelter Manager, Shelter Administrator, Trustees and Core Group of Co-ordinators (volunteers)	✓	
• Ability to handle challenging behaviour and resolve situations of conflict	✓	
• Ability to provide a compassionate and understanding response to guests who are vulnerable and often traumatised	✓	
• Ability to maintain confidentiality and appropriate professional boundaries	✓	
• Ability to assess risk and handle emergency situations with confidence, and produce and implement sound solutions where necessary. Able to challenge guests when appropriate and to cope with potentially stressful situations calmly including calling emergency services and liaising with the police and mental health practitioners	✓	
• Excellent administrative skills and ability to organise time effectively and manage a busy workload	✓	
• Excellent written and oral communication skills including the ability to communicate with guests, volunteers and professionals from a variety of fields of expertise	✓	
• Computer literacy with experience of using Microsoft Office, Google docs	✓	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING		
• Awareness of the causes and consequences of homelessness and the types of people it can affect	✓	
• Familiarity with law relating to homelessness including rules regarding eligibility for local authority assistance and priority need	✓	
• Familiarity with welfare benefit regulations including eligibility and housing benefit restrictions	✓	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good understanding of the public sector including Housing and Social Care teams 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of and empathy with the needs of marginalised and vulnerable people 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice 	✓	
OTHER		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility and willingness to work extended and variable hours when the night shelter is open 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the vision and values of the charity 	✓	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use public transport or other means to travel around the borough 	✓	

How to apply

To apply for the position, please send your CV (limited to two pages) and a supporting statement of no more than two pages to jobs@hwns.org.uk or by post to Hackney Winter Night Shelter, Room 3, The Old School Rooms, Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Road, London E45 0PU.

In your statement please describe how your skills and experience match the job description and person specification. Highlight why you are interested in this role and why you think you are a suitable candidate.

The closing date for applications is 30th August 2019

Provisional interview dates: 5th and 6th September