

**LEAD ADVOCATE WORKER
JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Reports to:	Director of Hackney Doorways
Hours of work	37 hours per week (includes some evening and weekend work)
Salary	£29,000 (5% employer contribution to pension, 3% employee)
Annual leave:	25 days plus bank holidays
Based at:	Office in Clapton and various night shelter venues across the borough of Hackney

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

To ensure that Hackney Winter Night Shelter continues to offer an effective emergency accommodation service that is centred on the needs of guests experiencing homelessness.

Context

Hackney Doorways and Hackney Winter Night Shelter is entering a new stage in its development and the post-holder is expected to be a key part of this change.

Currently, Hackney Winter Night Shelter opens in November and closes at the end of March. During the out of season months, the Lead Advocate will be responsible for closedown of the winter shelter, as well as planning and preparation for the coming season.

The Charity has a very small team of paid staff and we expect people to be highly flexible in their roles, with a “can do” attitude, willing to turn their hand to anything that needs to be done. This role description therefore provides only a summary of the main duties and other tasks may be required, particularly during the summer months.

Key responsibilities and duties

Pre Shelter Opening:

- Work alongside Shelter Manager to organise and facilitate coordinator and volunteer training
- Update referral and reporting systems where necessary prior to opening
- Arrange introductory meetings with local agencies and key partners including local authority housing officers and homelessness agencies to discuss the forthcoming shelter season and referral procedures
- Make links with homelessness services, private sector landlords, hosting agencies and other housing providers to develop a wide range of move on options for guests

Guest-related

To oversee referrals and assess individual's suitability for the night shelter, according to HWNS criteria

To manage the shelter referral system, including the waiting list and keep referral agencies up to date on likely length of wait for their clients

To offer advice and local knowledge/network information to referring agents where guests are refused a place on the waiting list

To develop trusted and professional relationships with guests

To ensure that guests are aware of where the shelter venues are each night, provide them with information and the guest handbook

Ensure that all guests have signed and understand the Guest Agreement and receive a copy of the Guest Handbook

To assist guests to find longer term accommodation where possible, including liaising with local authority housing teams, local homelessness agencies, other night shelters and landlords in the private rented sector

To facilitate regular case review meetings

To arrange for guests to go to Crisis at Christmas for one week over Christmas

To be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of guests at all times

Supervision of staff

To allocate casework to Night Shelter Advocate Worker and oversee the casework of the charity

To ensure that all case notes are completed and that data monitoring and databases are kept updated

To work with the Director to recruit Advocate Workers for the winter season or as required at other times during the year.

To induct, train and supervise any contracted or permanent Advocate Workers for the winter night shelter and ensure they are fully supported in their role

Working with shelter coordinators (Volunteers)

To ensure that the nightly guest list is sent to coordinators before 4pm every day (before midday at the weekend when possible)

To brief the shelter coordinator on the guest list prior to the shelter opening

To work in partnership with coordinators to oversee behaviour in the shelter and ensure that all guests observe the rules

To participate in and contribute to volunteer and coordinator training sessions

Working with external partners

To develop effective working relationships with a variety of external partners, including inward and outward referral agencies

Monitoring and evaluation

To develop effective monitoring and outcome measures, which clearly demonstrate the immediate and longer term impact of our work

To ensure that guest monitoring information is provided regularly to the Director

To facilitate guest feedback sessions throughout the winter, evaluate the findings and make recommendations for improvement of the night shelter and the guest experience

Administration and data

To create and maintain confidential referral and guest files on our database

To maintain and keep up to date records of all casework

To log incidents and interview positively if any problems occur, taking note of any risk issues

To record and update monitoring information relating to attendance, guest details and guest outcomes using our database system

To manage the budget for the Discretionary Assistance Fund, ensuring that the monies available are distributed fairly, according to need and remains within the overall annual budget

Development of new services

To develop and initiate a programme of summer advocacy work for ex-guests, homeless people or those at risk of homelessness who are referred to us for support

To develop a programme of tenancy sustainment for a caseload of guests who have been rehoused locally and continue to support them through advocacy and tenancy support

Evenings and Weekend on call

To organise cover for evenings and weekends, ensuring that an Advocate Worker attends the shelter every weekday evening, and sends the guest list at the weekend, and very occasionally to respond to emergencies

DBS and references

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

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE		
A good standard of education	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of supervising or managing people	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Experience of working in the voluntary sector		<input type="checkbox"/>
Experience of supporting clients' tenancy sustainment		<input type="checkbox"/>

Hackney Winter Night Shelter

Experience of developing services for homeless people		<input type="checkbox"/>
SKILLS		
Excellent interpersonal skills, including an ability to work with guests, teams of volunteers and external professionals	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to maintain good communications and working relationships with Shelter Manager and Core Group of Co-ordinators (volunteers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to handle challenging behaviour and resolve situations of conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to provide a compassionate and understanding response to guests who are vulnerable and often traumatised	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to maintain confidentiality and appropriate professional boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good administrative skills and ability to organise time effectively and manage a busy workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Excellent written and oral communication skills including the ability to communicate with guests, volunteers and professionals from a variety of fields of expertise	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Computer literacy with experience of using Microsoft Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING		
Awareness of the causes and consequences of homelessness and the types of people it can affect	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Knowledge of trauma-informed approaches		<input type="checkbox"/>
Familiarity with law relating to homelessness including rules regarding eligibility for local authority assistance and priority need	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Familiarity with welfare benefit regulations including eligibility and housing benefit restrictions	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Good understanding of the public sector including Housing and Social Care teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Understanding of and empathy with the needs of marginalised and vulnerable people	<input type="checkbox"/>	
An understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity and anti-discriminatory practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	
OTHER		
Flexibility and willingness to work extended and variable hours when the night shelter is open	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Commitment to the vision and values of the charity	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ability to use public transport or other means to travel around the borough	<input type="checkbox"/>	



Closing date for applications: 31st August 2019

To apply:

Please send your CV and a supporting statement telling us why you are interested in the role and how you meet the person specification.

Send your completed application by email to:

Christina@hwns.org.uk

Or by post to:

Christina Ball
Acting Director
Hackney Doorways
Room 3, Old School Rooms
Round Chapel
2 Powerscroft Road
London E5 0PU

Provisional Interview dates:

First week of September

Position start date Early October