

**NEXT LINK JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Post:** **Female Support Worker**

**Safe House Services**

**Responsible to: Safe House Team Leader**

**Hours: 37.5 per week**

**Mon to Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm**

**Some additional evening and weekend working on a rota**

**basis**

**JOB PURPOSE:**

This post will work within an integrated team within Next Link Domestic abuse services.

* Providing safe housing and support to women who have experienced Domestic Abuse and may have other support needs e.g. substance misuse, mental health.
* Providing support to women and children with a victim centred approach, focussing on safety and recovery
* Providing support to empower women with complex needs engage in treatment services and to move on to independent or lower level supported accommodation.

**MAIN OBJECTIVES:**

* To provide high quality accommodation and housing related support to women and children who have experienced domestic abuse.
* To provide individual and group work support to women and their children who are living in the Safe Houses. Ensure that service users are provided with a safe, supportive and welcoming environment to supporting them to stabilise, gain independence skills, sustain their tenancies, and access appropriate move-on accommodation.
* To have a Think Family Approach by ensuring:
* Children and Young People’s voice is central to informing services
* Addresses safety, educational, health and emotional needs
* Supports them to understand their experience
* Equips them with skills to recover and grow up to form positive, equal, safe relationships
* Champion service user empowerment and involvement by ensuring our services:
* Are accessible to all potential service users;
* Value and respect service users as the experts of their experience;
* Work in strength-based and solution-focused ways with clients;
* Facilitate agreed actions into practice; and
* Use service user feedback and involvement to improve our service
* To work within a recovery and psychologically informed approach, supporting women to maximise their safety, independence and wellbeing, start to address their support needs, sustain their accommodation and help build positive futures.
* To liaise effectively and collaboratively with all appropriate agencies and community groups to ensure the best access to services and meaningful community engagement for service users.

## PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Referrals and Assessments**
   1. To take part in the assessment of women / families referred to the service; including gathering additional information from supporting agencies.
   2. To carry out risk assessments including DASH, co-produce safety plans with the client’s, regularly review the plans, enabling women to assess and manage risk to their own and their children’s safety. Amend plans as appropriate when circumstances change and refer women to MARAC when appropriate.
   3. Carry out needs assessments which effectively establish the support needs of families and enable support to be offered as quickly as possible. Respond flexibly as the survivor's or families needs and risks change
   4. Where relevant, refer children and young people needing additional specialist support to the Family Workers.
   5. When appropriate, using our established protocols, make referrals to ROADS for a fast track Substance Misuse enhanced service and Bristol Mental Health services for a mental health assessment.
   6. To liaise closely with applicant and referral agencies and keep informed of progress and outcome.
2. **Support**
   1. In conjunction with the service user complete the empowerment star and draw up a support plan. Ensure your work with service users is recovery focused and strengths based, supporting women in a creative, consistent and assertive way to ensure positive outcomes are achieved. Review the support plan regularly and record changes agreed.
   2. To advise women on personal safety and safety procedures regarding the safe house.
   3. Enable and encourage families to take advantage of all services relevant to their safety such as legal advice, housing and benefits rights, education, medical treatment, counselling etc. Assist clients in gaining access to solicitors, benefits agencies, housing departments, education, medical treatment, counselling etc. .
   4. To work in partnership with other agencies e.g. the police, local authority, health, social services, education, youth service and the voluntary sector to ensure efficient mechanisms for referrals and to advocate for survivors to ensure their needs are met.
   5. To maintain knowledge of local services, encourage engagement and reduce the families isolation
   6. Recognise, respect and address the needs of service-users who face particular barriers when seeking help to access the service, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, LGBT communities, disabled people, women with complex needs and other hard to reach groups.
   7. Maintain an up to date working knowledge of landlord and licensee legislation, housing and welfare legislation and the welfare benefit system.
   8. Carry out a financial assessment for each service user assisting them to maximise their income, address debts, budget and pay bills and support them to make appropriate welfare benefit claims.
   9. Provide support as part of an integrated approach, by working closely with specialist statutory and/or voluntary agencies such as mental health, criminal justice, homelessness, ROADS services, probation, to ensure access and engagement with other services is maximised, according to the agreed support package.
   10. Provide recovery orientated support, psychologically informed interventions and practical support to individual women on caseload.
   11. Deliver group work activities, including accredited training, to service users to enable the development of skills and confidence to maximise independence and wellbeing.
   12. Safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk; working within Missing Link’s safeguarding policies, South West Child Protection Procedures and local procedures for safeguarding adults at risk. Monitor all safeguarding concerns and make appropriate referrals to First Response/Care Direct as necessary
   13. Advise and support service users with the range of move on options available, draw up and deliver move-on plans. Ensure service users engage in the move on process and are supported to move on within target timescales. Monitor tenancy sustainment for ex service users as directed.
   14. Respond to emergency and crisis situations by providing support, advice, signposting or direct interventions as necessary.
   15. To keep the Resettlement team informed at all stages of move on.

**3. Housing Management**

* 1. Welcome new residents; showing them around premises, settling into accommodation, providing information packs, (clothing and food where needed),
  2. Be responsible for the safe houses, ensuring a supportive, homely and safe environment is maintained and a daily staff presence.
  3. Complete sign up paperwork, including licence agreement (explaining rights and responsibilities), explain house rules, answer any queries and to deal with concerns, complete welfare benefits claims ensuring they are accurately completed and promptly submitted.
  4. Facilitate house meetings encouraging women to participate and to contribute to decisions affecting the management of the houses.
  5. Take primary responsibility for the collect of rent and other charges payable. Work closely with the resident and Finance Department to minimise and manage arrears.
  6. To carry out promptly inspections of void rooms and prepare for relet.
  7. Work closely and co-operatively with the Housing Worker to ensure that:
* weekly fire alarm tests and routine health and safety checks in the safe house take place, and ensure these are accurately recorded
* accommodation standards are maintained including reporting to the Housing Worker repairs, furniture and equipment replacement and health and safety concerns
* liaising with contractors to manage day to day maintenance and servicing of equipment. Keep up to date maintenance requests and repairs records
  1. In liaison with the Team Leader deal with all complaints on licence related matters, including disputes between licensees or involving neighbours by visits and letters as appropriate.
  2. In the event of a Notice to Quit being issued, to work closely with the licensee and all relevant agencies to ensure whenever possible and necessary the provision of alternative accommodation and support.

**4. Record keeping and monitoring**

* 1. Maintain up to date, accurate, legible and accessible records of all work and contact with service users, other agencies/professionals and others (e.g. carers, families), ensuring that they meet the requirements of data protection and confidentiality.
  2. Ensure all client records, outcome and monitoring data is accurately recorded using the Paloma case management system and any other record/monitoring systems, prepare any additional information or reports used for the monitoring and evaluation of the services as required.

**5. Developing of self and others**

* 1. Actively participate in regular one-to-one supervision, reflective practice groups, and annual appraisals.
  2. Attend and make a positive contribution to staff / team meetings and to participate in organisational training and development events as required.
  3. Provide support and guidance to trainees, relief/agency workers and volunteers, when required.
  4. Develop your understanding of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) approach in engaging and supporting clients and embed PIE into your day to day practice.

1. **General**
   1. Work within a rota system including regular evening and weekend work and take part in the on-call rota as required.
   2. Provide cover for and assist in the delivery of the Duty telephone helpline
   3. Act as a representative of Next Link at internal and external meetings, as required, promote the organisation through building professional links with outside bodies as appropriate.
   4. Uphold the values and good name of Missing Link at all times, represent the organisation in a way that is consistent with its philosophy and ethos and within the Missing Link’s Code of Conduct.
   5. Work flexibly within a team setting; liaise with other workers as necessary and as appropriate to provide cover for holidays and staff absence.
   6. Work within Next Link’s Health and Safety policy and guidance and to ensure your own health and safety and that of others at all times.
   7. Ensure the service is delivered in a culturally sensitive way for all service users, including challenging stigma and discrimination.
   8. Observe organisations equal opportunities, confidentiality, data protection policies.
   9. Understand and contribute to the overall objectives of the organisation and follow all existing organisational policies and procedures.
   10. Undertake other duties and responsibilities in keeping with the nature of this post as may be required from time to time.

***This job description is for guidance only and outlines the general ways in which it is expected you will meet the overall requirements of this post. The list of tasks is not exhaustive and duties may be varied from time to time, with the job description being subject to review and periodic amendments.***

***The post holder must be female. Section 7 (2) (e) of the Sex Discrimination Act (1979) applies.***

***Next Link is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk of abuse, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***

***Next Link is committed to Equal Opportunities.***