

**Next Link Job Description**

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

**Safe House and Floating Support Services - North Somerset**

**Responsible to: North Somerset Team Leader**

**Hours 37.5 per week**

**Location: North Somerset**

**JOB PURPOSE:**

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

* Providing safe housing and support to survivors who have experienced Domestic Abuse and may have other support needs e.g. substance misuse, mental health.
* Providing a co-ordinated package of emotional and practical support, advice and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence and their children, who are assessed as standard or low risk and:
* Moving out of safe housing and resettling in the community
* already living in the community
* still in abusive relationships

The role involves empowering survivors to increase their options, make positive choices/decisions, increase their confidence, safety and recovery.

**MAIN OBJECTIVES:**

**Safe House**

* To provide high quality safe house accommodation and housing related support to survivors and children who have experienced domestic abuse.
* To provide individual and group work support to survivors 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.

**Floating Support**

* Providing outreach, resettlement and tenancy sustainment support enabling survivors in the community to safely maintain their current accommodation, access alternative housing, welfare benefits, legal advice and support services.

**Both**

* To establish and maintain support to survivors and their children, with a victim centred approach, focussing on safety and recovery and ensure service users:
* Are safer
* Feel safer
* Feel more empowered and confident
* Have an increased understanding of DA and risk factors
* Are more aware of safety measures; and
* Have an increased understanding of the abuse they are experiencing
* 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
* 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

## PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Referrals and Assessments both safe housing and community based floating support**
   1. To take part in the assessment of survivors / families referred to the safe house service; including gathering additional information from supporting agencies.
   2. Carry out risk assessments including DASH, co-produce safety plans with the client’s, regularly review the plans, enabling survivors to assess and manage risk to their own and their children’s safety. Amend plans as appropriate when circumstances change and refer survivors 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 Children’s Workers.
   5. When appropriate, using our established protocols, make referrals to Addaction for a fast track Substance Misuse support and North Somerset Mental Health services for a mental health assessment.
   6. To liaise closely with applicant and referral agencies and keep informed of progress and outcome of their referral/assessment.
2. **Support**
   1. In conjunction with the service user complete the Oasis needs assessment and support plan. Ensure your work with service users is recovery focused and strengths based, supporting survivors in a creative, consistent and assertive way to ensure positive outcomes are achieved. Review the support plan regularly and record changes agreed.
   2. Advise survivors on personal safety and safety procedures regarding the safe house
   3. Provide resettlement advice and information to families prior to their move from Safe House and support them practically and emotionally in their new accommodation and during the move itself.
   4. Ensure that survivors currently living in the community in abusive situations are aware of their rights and options. Give safety-planning advice and explain the effectiveness of criminal and civil sanctions available to them
   5. Enable and encourage survivors 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. .
   6. 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.
   7. 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 understand their experience
* Equips them with skills to recover and grow up to form positive, equal, safe relationships.
  1. Maintain knowledge of local services, encourage engagement and reduce the families isolation
  2. 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, male survivors, those with complex needs and other hard to reach groups.
  3. Maintain an up to date working knowledge of landlord and licensee legislation, housing and welfare legislation and the welfare benefit system.
  4. 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.
  5. 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, Treatment services, probation, to ensure access and engagement with other services is maximised, according to the agreed support package.
  6. Provide recovery orientated support, psychologically informed interventions and practical support to individual survivors on caseload.
  7. Deliver group work activities, including accredited training, to service users to enable the development of skills and confidence to maximise independence and wellbeing.
  8. 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 Care Connect as necessary
  9. 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.
  10. Respond to emergency and crisis situations by providing support, advice, signposting or direct interventions as necessary.
  11. At an appropriate time and in a planned way, negotiate and agree with service user the planned withdrawal of Next Link’s support.

**3. Housing Management – Safe Housing**

* 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 survivors 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 OASIS 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 taking part in the on-call rota as required.
   2. Provide cover for and assist in the delivery of the SPC 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.***

***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.***

***All posts are exempt under section7 (2) (f) of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975***

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**FEMALE SUPPORT WORKER SAFE HOUSE and FLOATING SUPPORT**

**North Somerset Domestic Abuse Services**

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|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Experience | * Experience of delivering support to adults from diverse backgrounds and with mixed abilities and complex needs in a supported environment; preferably in Domestic Violence Abuse (DVA) refuges or community based setting. * Experience of undertaking individual assessments including DASH risk assessments and developing and delivering safety and support plans. * Experience of co-producing short and longer term risk management, safety planning and support with survivors and their children experiencing Domestic Abuse * The ability to deal with and diffuse crisis and emergency situations in a professional and effective manner. * Demonstrable experience of being proactive rather than reactive: focuses on preventing problems in the future rather than just resolving immediate issues * Experience of lone working in the community and able to work on own initiative | * Experience of delivering group work and / or training * Experience working with people with mental health needs, substance misuse , other complex needs |
| Knowledge | * Demonstrable understanding of the diverse needs of survivors and children experiencing domestic violence * Demonstrable knowledge of strategies to empower service users to address issues of DVA * Knowledge of criminal and civil legal remedies relating to domestic abuse * Understanding of local and national approaches to tackling domestic abuse including MARAC, child protection, social and voluntary services approaches/involvement. * Knowledge of housing management procedures * Knowledge of health and safety issues specific to survivors fleeing domestic abuse and supported housing * A thorough understanding of safeguarding relating to vulnerable adults and children, including how and when to report concerns * Up to date knowledge of the welfare benefits system and the ability to ensure service users maximise their benefit entitlement | * Knowledge of mental health legislation * Knowledge of housing legislation |
| Skills | * Strong numeracy, written communication and organisational skills * Ability to work in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies, to achieve outcomes for service users * The ability to provide respectful, non-judgemental, and confidential support to survivors and their children. * Maintaining professional boundaries, show resilience and reliability under pressure * Ability to work as part of a team demonstrating a flexible approach including a commitment to being part of a rota and on-call system * Excellent level of IT literacy, operate case management systems and ability to carry out own administrative workload. | * Ability to apply psychologically informed practice * Ability to work with a recovery focused approach |
| Values | * A commitment to the Victim’s Code of Practice * An understanding and commitment to meeting the needs of vulnerable women * Commitment to diversity and equal opportunities at work * Commitment to service user participation and involvement |  |
| Other | * Be available and committed to be part of the out of hours on call rota and work flexibly * A current, full driving licence and access to appropriate motorised transport |  |

***\*Due to the specific requirements of this role, this post is exempt under the Equality Act (2010), Part 1, Schedule 9***

***(Genuine Occupational Requirement) Next Link is part of Missing Link Housing.***