

JOB DESCRIPTION – Peer Advocate Worker

(Fixed term contract until 31 March 2023)

Reporting to Homeless Health Link Team Leader

Salary £13,072.94

Location Kingston upon Thames or Richmond upon Thames

Hours 22.5hrs, Mon-Fri

ABOUT US

We are SPEAR, a charity dedicated to helping homeless people across five South West London boroughs to find secure accommodation and work towards a positive future. For almost 35 years, we've worked tirelessly to support homeless people to recover from their personal issues and break down the barriers that they face. We recognise that homelessness is much more than just a housing issue, so we provide a range of accommodation and support services to help people reach their full potential.

PURPOSE OF JOB

This role will be responsible for the delivery of high-quality services offered by the Homeless Health Link Programme focusing on the engagement of homeless clients, including rough sleepers, into a range of primary care, mental health and substance misuse services. The post holder will strive to uphold the rights of vulnerable people and support them towards living more secure, independent and fulfilled lives.

SPEAR enable clients to understand their options, communicate their preferences and ensure they are heard. Advocates support their clients to negotiate their next steps, whilst addressing the barriers that are holding them back.

This service is for single homeless people who have slept rough or at risk of sleeping rough in the London boroughs of Richmond and Kingston.

DUTIES

Service Delivery

- To promote, support and facilitate the delivery of the Homeless Health Link Advocacy Service in the locality of Kingston and Richmond to homeless men and women, those who face a high complex needs mixture of health, housing, financial, family and social problems.
- Provide information and advocacy support to clients of HHLS, informing them of their rights and arranging representation at appointments or meetings where this is required.
- Linking in with other services locally where appropriate, including other organisations, to provide the most relevant service.

- Promote the service to relevant stakeholders, such as NHS and council services as well as voluntary organisations so that they understand role of advocacy and the service and are able to make appropriate referrals to the team.
- To work alongside, respect and provide support to peer advocates.
- To be aware of current trends and issues around mental health and other relevant health services, and around forms of advocacy.
- Undertaking presentations on the project within organisational guidelines and the support of the team leader.
- To foster and develop professional links and good quality relations with statutory, and other agencies in conjunction with the team leader; however, the post holder will be required to retain an 'appropriate distance' in such dealings with service providers and other agencies who may ultimately be challenged by the advocate on the client's behalf.

Resource Management

- To ensure the independence of the service, and function in accordance with the advocacy philosophy, policies and procedures, as defined by HHLS and by the charitable status of the organisation.
- To take an active part in the recruitment, mentoring of volunteers and peer advocates.
- To attend meetings as appropriate, assisting the team leader to prepare operational reports and partake in a comprehensive external evaluation of the service.

Casework Management

- To work with clients ensuring provision of advice, support, motivation, crisis intervention and future planning is appropriate to the expressed needs of service users.
- To assess the advocacy support needs of those who are referred or self-refer to our service.
- To provide appropriate advocacy support to those who may wish to use HHLS services, ensuring that the client remains in control of the advocacy process at all times.
- Support and give practical assistance to clients attending and understand health appointments and to make choices.
- Support clients to learn information on their health and health agencies and address their health issues.
- To support clients understanding their options, access the healthcare they need and signposting clients to appropriate services.
- Facilitate communication between clients and professionals.
- To keep up-to-date, accurate factual records relating to the service users and their cases, using appropriate office systems and the client database.
- Complete the required data entry onto the case management system and ensure that other records of work undertaken are maintained as required to enable the performance management of the service.
- To work in a very busy team and respond to management flagged client's needs priorities and changes of caseload.
- To ensure strict confidentiality is maintained at all times.
- Undertake other duties as your line manager should require in keeping with the responsibility of the post.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ability to communicate with, support, promote the rights and motivate vulnerable people
- Excellent verbal and written communication with clients, service providers and staff

- Ability to be self-motivating in managing, organising and prioritising workload and volunteers
- Solid IT skills with the ability to record sound and accurate records in a timely fashion on IT applications such as CHAIN and Inform.
- Experience/understanding of working with vulnerable people and or/those with challenging behaviours
- Ability to work with range of organisations providing services to service users with differing needs
- The ability to work under pressure and with a with multiple SPEAR teams

DESIRABLE

- Working knowledge of vulnerable people's rights and relevant legislation
- Knowledge and understanding of the issues facing homeless service user.
- Knowledge and understanding of the principles of advocacy and empowerment and a well-developed awareness of the benefits and issues involved for people who use services, service providers and planners.
- Experience of homeless services and pathways.

VALUES

Working together

We work alongside service users, partners, staff and volunteers to provide services that meet the needs of the people we help. Together we overcome challenges.

Aspirational

We aim high, aspiring to achieve the very best outcomes for our clients. We see potential in everyone and encourage our staff and clients to achieve their own goals, dreams and ambitions. We aspire to the highest standards of professionalism.

Respectful

We respect everyone, regardless of their background or circumstances. We view everyone as an individual with their own personal journey. We always listen to and value people's views.

Determined

We work tirelessly to support people experiencing homelessness to recover from their personal issues. We break down the barriers people experiencing homelessness face.

Visionary

We try new and innovative ways to provide long-term solutions and reduce the isolation of homelessness. We are always willing to take a new approach, learning from what works (and what doesn't) and use this to guide our work.

At SPEAR, we welcome and encourage applications from everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. We are facing diverse problems, so need diverse people to tackle them.