

JOB DESCRIPTION

REFUGE SUPPORT OFFICER
DEPARTMENT : REFUGE ACCOMMODATION SUPPORT SERVICES
REPORTS TO: REFUGE SERVICES TEAM LEADER
MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB
<p>To provide support services to vulnerable families in domestic abuse refuges. To provide support and advocacy to survivors of domestic abuse. To support and implement the aims and objectives of Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid.</p>
PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES
<p>Managing service delivery and performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide information, support, advocacy and appropriate referrals for service users on issues such as: - Domestic Abuse, Housing, Education, Health, Employment, Counselling, Welfare Benefits, Legal Rights, and Child Protection. • To develop individual support and risk management plans which address the risk of harm to survivors of domestic abuse and their children, and to ensure that such plans are in place for each service user. • Engage service users with an individual support plan which will support their progress towards self-reliance and other goals within set timescales to achieve outcomes and fresh review dates. • Through effective support planning, risk and additional needs assessments early identify of other factors such as mental ill-health, substances misuse, safeguarding and debt issues, this will improve support planning and a sustained move on process. • Signpost service users to specialist support, including but not exclusively to BCWA's complementary services, including child support, support groups, volunteer support and group activities and opportunities. • Signpost service users to external agencies for specialist support as identified in individual support plans. • Implement the terms of service users' occupancy agreements including eviction. • Liaise with the Volunteer Coordinator in order to facilitate volunteer support as appropriate for individual service users • Implement the allocation of refuge spaces, ensuring the minimisation of void levels and fulfilment of performance targets, taking all appropriate steps to enable new referrals into the service. • Ensure efficient collection and management of rental income from service users, including

housing benefits and service charges. Work closely with BCWA's Finance Officer and provide information as needed.

- To assess benefit requirements of women escaping domestic violence and to ensure prompt take up of housing and other benefits.
- Be aware of key responsibilities and reporting duties for Health & Safety and environmental issues.
- Developing and ensuring service user participation.
- Maintaining up to date knowledge on issues relevant to the service users accessing support.
- Assisting in the development of continuous improvement of BCWA services.
- Work proactively to seek out solutions to problems with solution focused approach to team meetings.
- Follow all legal, procedural and policy requirements, including the Health and Safety and Risk Assessment policies.
- Ensure that case files are updated and reviewed regularly, and uploaded on BCWA's database.
- To provide support and information to MARAC and multi-agency meetings.
- To work and deliver support in such a way that promotes service users independence, dignity and choice at all times and be accountable for the decision making process.
- To participate in the on-call rota, to ensure effective out-of-hours coverage of the service.
- To ensure that any issues in relation to safeguarding children or vulnerable adults are brought to the immediate attention of your line manager, or if unavailable another manager.
- To work in partnership with other agencies and to advocate for survivors to ensure their needs are met.
- To ensure that survivors are aware of their rights to legal protection for themselves and their children, arranging for the provision of legal advice as required.
- To 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.
- To be an ambassador for BCWA, working in partnership with other agencies to ensure an effective, coordinated community response to survivors of domestic violence and their children.
- To work within BCWA's quality management system following all policies and procedures.
- Produce reports and provide required data to facilitate Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures.
- To ensure that the views and experiences of women and agencies are sought actively, recorded carefully and inform the development of the service.

- To maintain confidentiality and to ensure that professional boundaries are observed when working with service users, staff, volunteers and external bodies and to work within BCWA's Code of Conduct.

Managing security

- To maintain the security and well-being of survivors of domestic violence and their children within the premises, and to communicate immediately with management of any breaches of security, house rules or occupancy agreements especially where there is concern about safety.
- To control access to the refuge when on duty and ensure safety of refuge
- To check efficient working of CCTV systems daily.
- To ensure that security of sensitive information is maintained and complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Managing health and safety

- To support the management of health, safety and security within a refuge, including carrying out visual checks and recording regular fire and health and safety checks, ensuring that fire equipment and fire doors are in working order and not obstructed.
- Ensure the upkeep and general maintenance of the refuge working closely with BCWA's Housing Management Officer
- To ensure that the accommodation is always attractive and comfortable and that a good standard of hygiene is maintained in the refuge. To carry out cleaning and other light manual duties when required.

General Duties

- To act in accordance with and implement all BCWA's policies and procedures
- To attend and participate in regular training when required.
- To attend regular supervision, staff and other meetings.
- To undertake any duties consistent with the post as may be reasonably requested by BCWA

THIS JOB DESCRIPTION ACCURATELY REFLECTS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOB AT THE TIME OF WRITING BUT MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE ORGANISATION.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: REFUGE SUPPORT OFFICER

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Individual Requirements

Section	Essential Criteria	Desirable Criteria
Education and Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good standard of education (demonstrable qualifications and/or experience in the field of domestic violence accommodation and support). 	
Experience, Knowledge and Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of providing advice and advocacy support in one or more of the following areas: - Housing, Welfare Benefits and/or Domestic Violence. • Knowledge of key-working and support planning needs assessment. • Knowledge of relevant legislation relating to Domestic Violence, housing and/or benefits. • Knowledge of issues facing women and their children who have experienced domestic violence. • Knowledge of Health and Safety in a supported housing environment. • Experience in the field of domestic abuse, victim's support and/or criminal justice. • Knowledge and understanding of issues impacting on women and children experiencing domestic violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with minority groups. • Relevant experience outside BCWA. • Up to date knowledge and understanding of Support Services delivery, management and good practice. <p>Understanding of the Quality Assessment Framework for Supported Housing.</p>
Technical and Professional Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication skills. • Experience of managing basic administrative systems. • Good working knowledge of IT systems and datases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with voluntary & statutory agencies on behalf of women. • Training and qualifications in the provision of advice and advocacy on issues such as housing, welfare benefits and domestic abuse

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Personal Attributes

- Understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunities
- Commitment to social justice and the empowerment of women who have experienced domestic violence.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a team.
- Good attendance record and ability to cope with pressure.
- Adaptability to changing situations positively
- Suggests ideas for new ways of working.
- Takes initiative.
- Self motivated, proactive.
- Meets deadlines without needing to be chased/monitored.
- Consistently achieves objectives on time.
- Deals effectively with internal and external contacts.
- Resolves conflict effectively.
- Maintains an even keel with contacts even when under pressure.
- Possession of sound keyboard skills and good skills using Windows software and In-Form Database system.
- Able to devise systems and procedures to support the quality of work.
- Ability to provide clear and concise written and oral advice on complex and sensitive issues.