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**NEXT LINK JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Post:** **Female Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)**

**Responsible to: Bristol IDVA Manager**

**Hours 37.5 per week**

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

**JOB PURPOSE:**

This post will work in an integrated team within Next Link Domestic Abuse Services providing short term intensive support to survivors at risk of domestic abuse.

Working within a dynamic, fast paced, advocacy and support service providing high quality support.

To advise women on criminal justice and civil remedies and related matters, support women to attend court where necessary.

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

To promote the service, establish positive, proactive and innovative working relationships with housing services and partner agencies and coordinate the provision of multi-agency support.

**MAIN OBJECTIVES:**

* To establish and maintain support to women and their children at risk of domestic abuse, 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
* Respond to emergency and crisis situations by providing support, advice, signposting or direct interventions as necessary.
* Working with women for whom housing and risk of tenancy breakdown is a factor, where possible supporting clients to maintain their tenancies and prevent homelessness
* 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
* Have a Think Family approach
* To liaise effectively and collaboratively with partner agencies to respond to women and children at risk, maximising safety and achieve positive outcomes

## PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Referrals and Assessments**
   1. Promote the service through building positive relationships with current, potential referrers and service users.

* 1. Take referrals directly from victims directly; Bristol City Council housing services/ housing providers; the Police; A&E departments; IRIS; Next Link Duty service or other voluntary or statutory sector agencies
  2. Ensure effective access to the service for women and encourage their engagement with the service, through multi agency working and service flexibility.
  3. Carry out comprehensive needs and risk assessments (including DASH) for women experiencing domestic violence, carry out short and longer term risk management, safety planning and support; and identify and refer to services appropriate to their needs, including attendance at specialist/dedicated courts and MARAC as required. Amend plans as appropriate when circumstances change.
  4. Proactively assess the needs and safety of any children that women using the service may have, ensure that any risks/needs identified are addressed directly with the woman, and take appropriate action to safeguard them.
  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. Work with referrers or potential referral agencies to introduce the service and encourage practitioners to identify domestic violence, respond appropriately and refer to the service. This may include offering briefings and information to upskill housing and other workers and improve their response to domestic abuse

1. **Support**
   1. Provide practical and emotional support to woman and children for up to 4 weeks
   2. Develop individual support plans that include delivery of high-quality face to face or telephone intervention, information, advocacy and support, in respect to criminal and civil remedies, housing, health, welfare rights, children’s legislation and other appropriate interventions whilst focusing on safe tenancy sustainment and homelessness prevention.
   3. Advise women of their rights and options for seeking help and support from other agencies, making referrals and co-ordinating the provision of multi-agency support where necessary, and proactively advocate to ensure barriers to accessing support and protection are minimised
   4. To help women experiencing domestic abuse to remain in their home, advise and assist with perusing immediate criminal or civil sanctions and remedies including liaison with a solicitor; attending court or assisting with breaches of an injunction
   5. For women who need to move out of their home assist her to find an appropriate refuge in Bristol or outside the city. Assist the woman / family to secure a travel warrant / financial support and help her to get to the bus or train station.
   6. Participate in multi-agency conferences in respect of children and adults at risk as required, providing reports and undertaking actions as necessary.
   7. 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.
   8. 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 understand their experience
* Equips them with skills to recover and grow up to form positive, equal, safe relationships.
  1. 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.
  2. Maintain an up to date working knowledge of housing legislation, housing and welfare legislation and the welfare benefit system.
  3. 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

**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, 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, 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.**

**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.**

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