MISSINGLINK. cutting edge women's mental health services

NEXTLINK. changing the face of domestic abuse support services

SAFELINK. transforming victims' lives

Next Link Service Job Description

Post:	**Female Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) – DRIVE Programme**
Responsible to:	**DRIVE IDVA**
Hours:	**22.5 hrs per week** **Occasional On Call and Saturday working on a rota basis**
Contract:	**Permanent**
Salary:	**Point 12 (not qualified) £29,542 per annum pro rata** **Point 15 (qualified) £31,015 per annum pro rata**

JOB PURPOSE:

This post will be based within Next Link Domestic abuse services providing outreach, and community-based support to high risk victims of domestic abuse across South Gloucestershire and Bristol.

Working across Next Link with victim's whose perpetrators are part of the DRIVE Programme in South Gloucestershire and Bristol and close partnership working with the Lighthouse, MARAC and the DRIVE Project to provide co-ordinated package of emotional and practical support, advice and advocacy to survivors of domestic violence and their children.

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

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- 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

- Providing support to enable survivors to safely maintain their current accommodation, access welfare benefits, legal advice alternative housing, and support services.

- Maintain an effective support service with the aim of enabling the survivor and her children to develop the skills and resources necessary to move on and maintain independence and self-reliance.

- Co deliver Survivor programmes (e.g. Freedom Programme), Family and Peer Support group work activities

- 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 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

1.1 Promote the service through building positive relationships with the Police, Lighthouse, current and potential referrers and service users to ensure a steady flow of appropriate referrals.

1.2 To carry out risk assessments including DASH, co-produce safety plans with the service user 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 attend the MARAC and refer service users when appropriate.

1.3 Carry out needs assessments which effectively establish the support needs of individuals and families and enable support to be offered as quickly as possible. Respond flexibly as the individuals or families needs and risks change

1.4 When appropriate, using our established protocols, make referrals to local agencies for Substance Misuse support services and AWP Mental Health services for a mental health assessment.

1.5 Liaise closely with applicant and referral agencies and keep informed of progress and outcome of their referral/assessment.

2 Support

2.1 In conjunction with the service user/family complete the power star and draw up a 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.

2.2 Ensure that survivors currently living 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.

2.3 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.

2.4 Work in partnership with other agencies e.g. the police, DRIVE, 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 To maintain knowledge of local services, encourage engagement and reduce the family's isolation.

2.7 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, Gypsy Traveller Communities, disabled people, male survivors, women with complex needs and other hard to reach groups.

2.8 Maintain an up to date working knowledge of housing legislation, housing and welfare legislation and the welfare benefit system.

2.9 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.

2.10 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, DHI, probation, to ensure access and engagement with other services is maximised, according to the agreed support package.

2.11 Provide recovery orientated support, psychologically informed interventions and practical support to individuals on caseload.

2.12 Co-deliver Survivor (e.g. Freedom Programme), Family and Peer Support group work activities, to enable service users in the development of skills and confidence to maximise independence and wellbeing.

2.13 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/Access and Response as necessary

2.14 Respond to emergency and crisis situations by providing support, advice, signposting or direct interventions as necessary.

2.15 At an appropriate time and in a planned way, negotiate and agree with service user the planned withdrawal of Next Link's support.

3 Record keeping and monitoring

3.1 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.

3.2 Ensure all client records, outcome and monitoring data is accurately recorded using the organisation 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.

4 Developing of self and others

4.1 Actively participate in regular one-to-one supervision, reflective practice groups, annual appraisals.

4.2 Attend and make a positive contribution to staff / team meetings and to participate in organisational training and development events as required.

4.3 Provide support and guidance to trainees, relief/agency workers and volunteers when required.

4.4 Develop your understanding of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) approach in engaging and supporting clients and embed PIE into your day to day practice.

5. General

5.1 Work within a rota system including regular evening and weekend work and take part in the on-call rota as required.

5.2 Provide cover for and assist in the delivery of the Duty telephone helpline

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 Work flexibly within a team setting; liaise with other workers as necessary and as appropriate to provide cover for holidays and staff absence.

5.6 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.

5.7 Ensure the service is delivered in a culturally sensitive way for all service users, including challenging stigma and discrimination.

5.8 Observe organisations equal opportunities, confidentiality, data protection policies.

5.9 Understand and contribute to the overall objectives of the organisation and follow all existing organisational policies and procedures.

5.10 Undertake other duties and responsibilities in keeping with the nature of this post as may be required from time to time.

It is essential to the development of our service delivery that the post holder is able to respond flexibly to changes in the requirements of this post. This job description is therefore a guide and not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities the post holder may have over time, with the job description being subject to review and periodic amendments.

Missing 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.

Missing 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.)***

Person Specification: South Gloucestershire IDVA

Skills and qualifications	Essential	Desirable
IDVA qualified	✓	
Strong numeracy, written communication and organisational skills	✓	
The ability to undertake effective casework management and support planning with evidence of a methodical and well organised approach to work	✓	
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	✓	
The ability to encourage survivors and their children to take control of their lives and set realistic objectives and goals	✓	
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		✓
Experience	**Essential**	**Desirable**
Proven experience of working with women / men and children who have survived domestic abuse	✓	
Experience of supporting high risk victims	✓	
Experience working with the police, Lighthouse, MARAC and DRIVE	✓	
Proven experience working in homelessness / supported housing sector providing support to individuals to sustain/ manage their tenancies and avoid tenancy breakdown	✓	
Experience of assessing the risks and needs of vulnerable people who have experienced domestic abuse and/or complex needs	✓	
Experience of co-producing short and longer term risk management, safety planning and support with survivors and their children experiencing Domestic Abuse	✓	
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 of working with victims of sexual violence		✓
Experience working with people with mental health needs, substance misuse, other complex needs		✓
Experience of working within the civil and criminal justice system		✓
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge of criminal and civil legal remedies and housing law relating to domestic abuse	✓	
Demonstrable understanding of the diverse needs of families experiencing domestic violence and the discrimination issues as they relate to survivors escaping domestic violence	✓	
Knowledge of Domestic Abuse risk assessment tools including DASH and extensive understanding of the MARAC process	✓	
Knowledge of health and safety issues specific to survivors fleeing domestic abuse and lone working	✓	
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		✓
Knowledge and understanding of the impact of working with domestic abuse and complex needs on individuals and the need for support.		✓
Values	Essential	Desirable
A commitment to the Victim's Code of Practice	✓	
Commitment to diversity and equal opportunities at work	✓	
Commitment to service user participation and involvement	✓	
Other	Essential	Desirable
Be available and committed to be part of the out of hours on call rota and work flexibly including some Saturday mornings on a rota basis	✓	
A current, full driving licence and access to appropriate motorised transport	✓	