

JOB DESCRIPTION – Peer advocate worker

Reporting to Homeless Health Link Manager

Salary £27,100 Per Annum

Location Twickenham, London

Hours 37.5 hours per week

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. This post holder will strive to uphold the rights of vulnerable people and support them towards living more secure, independent and fulfilled lives. SPEAR enable people 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.

Having had similar life lived experience, the peer advocate can build a level of trust and offer a more holistic approach utilizing the knowledge and expertise, creating deep understanding with a rapid response approach to the problems, empowering and promoting independence not dependence by being a role model.

This service is for single homeless people who have slept rough or are 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.

- Ensure that the service is working broadly in line with Homeless Health Link Service advocacy model, while taking in to account geographical variations in the support infrastructure available to service users in Richmond and Kingston.
- 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 the role of advocacy and the service and can make appropriate referrals to the team.

- To work alongside, respect and provide support to peer volunteers.
- To be aware of current trends and issues around mental health, other relevant health services, and forms of advocacy.
- To raise awareness and understanding of the role of the advocacy service, and the difficulties that clients face, undertaking presentations on the project within organisational guidelines and the support of the manager.
- To foster and develop professional links and good quality relations with statutory, and other agencies in conjunction with the manager; 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.
- To facilitate regular Health and Wellbeing sessions and Drop-in sessions in the community.

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 attend meetings as appropriate, assisting the manager 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.
- To work alongside other department and colleagues at SPEAR.
- Support clients to learn information on their health and health agencies and address their health issues.
- To support clients in understanding their options, accessing 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 clients' needs priorities and changes of caseload.
- To ensure strict confidentiality is maintained at all times.

To be responsible for contributing to the running of SPEAR's integrated services for homeless people

- Contribute to regular team meetings.
- Participate in staff management and support systems in line with SPEAR's policies and procedures.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate physical environment for staff and service users, in line with SPEAR's Health and Safety Policy.
- Liaise and work with all internal stakeholders to deliver an effective SPEAR-wide service.
- Undertake other duties as your line manager should require in keeping with the responsibility of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE

- 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

- Good administrative and organisational skills
- Experience/understanding of working with vulnerable people and or/those with challenging behaviours
- Ability to work with a range of organisations providing services to service users with differing needs
- The ability to work under pressure and with multiple SPEAR teams

DESIRABLE

- Lived experience preferable
- Working knowledge of vulnerable people's rights and relevant legislation
- Knowledge and understanding of the issues facing homeless service users
- 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. This should be based on personal experience or direct involvement with service provision
- Experience of homeless services and pathways
- Able to follow instructions and comply with the service duties

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 using 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.