

JOB DESCRIPTION & PERSON SPECIFICATION



Volunteer Support Worker - Community Link

Job Title: Volunteer Support Worker - Community Link

Hours: 2-3 days per week

Reports to: Community Link Manager

Working Schedule: flexible, to be arranged

Start Date: November 2023

Base location: The WISH office is located at 15 Old Ford Road, London, E2 9PL, St. Margaret's House, 2nd floor. There is one room used as an office, and two used as Counselling/ Meeting Rooms. The office has multiple windows, lots of natural light, and is facing the interior garden of St. Margaret's House. There is access for wheelchair-users, including a chair lift. There is also a fully adapted toilet in the adjacent building on the same premises.

Contract length: We would expect the successful candidate to be able to offer a longer-term commitment to WISH of at least one year.

About WISH: Established in 1987, WISH is the only national, user-led mental health charity in the UK working with women in prison, hospital and the community. We develop pioneering gender-specific and trauma-informed support services for underserved women, share evidence of what works to improve services and outcomes for all women, and campaign together for social justice.

Empowered by our own lived experience, we help women connect and open up - often for the first time. We stand together with them for the long term – through the ups, downs, relapses and revivals—offering them trust, relational security and guidance. Helping them build their own positive pathways under their own agency and control.

Community Link supports women leaving prison and mental health units in London and the South, enabling them to successfully and confidently move back into the community.

We are a small but passionate team with lots of work on our hands.

Job Purpose:

We are currently looking for two dedicated volunteers to support WISH's Community Link service, ensuring its smooth, effective and efficient operation and contribute to the documentation of the experiences of women leaving secure settings.

WISH is a user-led organisation and encourages applicants with personal experience of using services. Due to nature of WISH's work, this role is designed for people who identify as women and non-binary people. (Equality Act 2010, Schedule 9, Part 1)

We embrace diversity and inclusion for innovation and growth. We are committed to building inclusive teams and an equitable workplace for our employees to bring their true selves to work. We are taking actions to tackle issues of inequity and to support our diverse talent, clients and communities.

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Responsibilities:

1. Support Community Link members who may need a greater level of input
2. Keep good records of work done with women and communicate on a regular basis with your line manager
3. Work within the Community Link Project and WISH framework and philosophy
4. Develop good working relationships both externally and within WISH
5. Maintain relevant up-to-date knowledge and skills through training and professional development.

Key tasks:

- 1. Support Community Link members who may need a greater level of input**
 - Ensure that women gain the level of 1 to 1 support which they identify; enabling progress at their own pace, accessing centralised support through the day resource through to social inclusion in their local community.
 - Develop individual programmes of support and information for women in partnership with them including Support Plans; Star chart; Risk assessment.
 - Ensure that women are supported to identify their own goals and monitor achievement
 - Regularly talking to women about how they feel that they are progressing.
 - Carry out the support plan depending on the level of intensive support needed through meeting with women, including keeping in touch by telephone and attending official appointments.
 - Respond to crises as they arise for women either: by phone or in person.
 - Work with the Community Link team on a weekly basis to manage caseload, prioritise support and deal with any crisis as they happen.
 - Support women users who take up voluntary work placements in the WISH office.
 - Provide support in organising workshops for women.
- 2. Keep good records of work done with women and communicate on a regular basis with your line manager**
 - Keep up to date and accurate records of all work undertaken including case files; monitoring figures; progress reports; impact monitoring; assessments.
 - Updating membership records as necessary.
 - Contribute to the development of the project and to documenting women's experiences of using the project in conjunction with the Community Link Manager.
- 3. Work within the Community Link and WISH framework and philosophy**
 - Operate a women-centred approach
 - Support moving to independence and recovery as identified by each woman, at their own pace
 - Profile the long-term social inclusion goals within local communities
 - Ensure that the project has effective links with other WISH services in terms of the women's journey through the system
 - Approach the work in a way that upholds WISH's' philosophy that women users know what their needs are and that they are the leading agents in their own recoveries
 - Be aware of the vital importance of equal opportunities in the work and to always apply these
 - Work within the WISH and Community Link policy frameworks
 - Work within legislative requirements, for example Adult Safeguarding and Child Protection

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4. *Develop good working relationships both externally and within WISH*

- Establish and develop positive working relationships with relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies including accommodation providers, education and training providers, welfare advice agencies, community mental health teams, counselling, advocacy and user-led support services.
- Establish and develop positive working relationships with staff in secure settings, in particular the care/resettlement teams responsible for individual women using the project.
- Become familiar with all aspects of the London/South team's work to function effectively as a team member.
- Adopt an open and flexible approach to teamwork and carry out any tasks that can reasonably be expected of the post holder.
- Be committed to regular supervision and team meetings.
- Participate in annual appraisals.
- Carry out administrative work associated with the post with a special regard to monitoring and record keeping.

5. *To maintain relevant up-to-date knowledge and skills through training and professional development*

- To undertake relevant training as identified through supervision
- To keep abreast of relevant issues, attend relevant conferences, etc and network with appropriate organisations

Perks:

- **Flexible working hours:** While the office is open between 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday, there is a flexibility in how the working schedule is agreed, either in between those working hours, or in particular cases, outside.
- **Great team:** We are a small, diverse and passionate team of seven employees and more than five volunteers, all working together to support women with complex mental health needs and campaign for change. Join us!
- **Cosy office in a well-connected buzzing area:** Our office is in Bethnal Green's St. Margaret's House, a hub of wonderful charities working in the arts, wellbeing and social spheres. At our doorstep we have an award-winning vegan cafe, a charity shop filled with goodies, Young V&A, the tube and the overground, and we're a few minutes away from Victoria Park.
- **Meet new people:** Through the role you will connect with like-minded people who share your passion, and you can expand your social and professional networks.
- **Increased Awareness:** You'll gain a deeper understanding of women's mental health issues and the challenges they face. This can lead to more compassionate and informed perspectives.
- **Upgraded CV:** Add new skills and areas of expertise that could be transferred to future roles.
- **Fulfilment:** Your work will directly make a positive impact in the lives of the women we work with.
- **Drinks & snacks:** Tea, coffee, hot chocolate and biscuits are on the house.

WISH POLICIES: Data Protection Act

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The post holder should be aware of the Data Protection Act and follow the organisation's codes of practice to ensure appropriate action is taken to safeguard confidential information.

Health & Safety

The post holder is required to take responsibility for ensuring Health & Safety Risk Assessment and Workplace Inspections, and to take responsibility for his/her own health and safety and that of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts of omissions.

The post holder is also required to co-operate with all staff to ensure that all relevant statutory regulations, policies, Codes of Practice and departmental safety procedures are adhered to.

Confidentiality

Your attention is drawn to the confidential aspects of this post. You must not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to the organisation or the service that it provides, or in respect of which WISH owes an obligation of confidence to any member or third party during or after your employment, or as required by law.

You must handle confidential documents in an appropriate manner and should not remove or copy any confidential documents or tangible items including software which belongs to WISH or which contain any confidential information from the Wish's premises at any time without authorisation. You must return to Wish upon request and in any event on the termination of your employment, all documents and tangible items which belong to WISH, or which contain or refer to any confidential information and which are in your possession or under your control.

A breach of confidence could result in dismissal.

You should be aware that regardless of any disciplinary action taken, a breach of confidence could also result in civil action for damages.

Equal Opportunities

You will be expected to work within the WISH Equal Opportunities Policy.

Person Specification:

		Essential	Desirable
Experience:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with women as a principal client group. Working effectively in a team context. Managing personal workload. Experience of secure/CJ/MH settings 	E E	D D
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate effectively both orally and in writing. Inter-personal relationships. Planning, organisation and administration including record-keeping and report writing. Negotiation. Working with clients on complex and 'drawn out' advocacy issues. Facilitating the empowerment of the client group by promoting self-esteem, self-confidence and personal choice. 	E E E E E	D

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer skills including email, excel, word. • Personal effectiveness • Listening skills • Counselling skills • Joint needs assessments with women 	E E E	D D
Values and Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand and be committed to women's empowerment. • To be non-judgemental, responsive and reliable in all contacts with women using the project. • To develop relationships with women using the project on the basis of mutual trust and respect. • To understand and be committed to working within an equal opportunities framework. 	E E E E	
Personal Qualities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop and maintain constructive professional relationships with professionals from other agencies • Advocate with and on behalf of women with tact, diplomacy and assertion. • Reflect on and question self-practice • Work within strict boundaries • Assertiveness 	E E E E E	
Awareness and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues around gender, mental health and the criminal justice system. • Of community-based services and entitlements 		D D
Special Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to travel within London • Able to work outside office hours (including participation in a possible out of hours rota) 	E	D