

JOB DESCRIPTION

Employer	Ashiana Network. A Company limited by guarantee and a registered Charity
Post	Advice Worker
Reports to	Housing Services Manager
Grade	NJC Scale Point 29 + Outer London Weighting
Working Hours	28 hours per week Overtime will not be paid. Time off in lieu will be granted for any hours worked in excess.
Annual Leave	20 days per annum plus public holidays (pro rata).

BACKGROUND

Ashiana started operating in 1989 and specialises in helping young women, aged 16 - 35 years, from South Asian, Middle Eastern & Iranian communities who are at risk of domestic violence and sexual violence.

OUR SERVICES

Ashiana runs three refuges with a total of 21 bed-spaces; specifically for women aged 16-35 fleeing forced marriage. This multi award winning project is the only service of its kind in the UK and is highly innovative in terms of addressing an area of significant need not met in other refuge provision. Within these refuges we designate a number of bedspaces for women with no recourse to public funds. We offer an advice and support service to women and girls who are experiencing domestic violence/sexual violence, enabling them to make informed decisions and exit violent relationships. We provide counselling for women and girls affected by domestic violence and sexual violence. We also deliver an education programme for young people in secondary schools in East London aimed at preventing domestic violence and enabling young people experiencing domestic violence to access appropriate services. We deliver a range of awareness raising workshops for young people in the community and training on domestic violence for professionals in the voluntary and statutory sector.

PRIMARY TASK

To be responsible, alongside the Management Committee, the Director, Managers and other workers for the effective running of the Project, in accordance with Management Policy. Ensuring that it meets the needs of young South Asian, Middle Eastern and Iranian women who have been made homeless as a result of physical, sexual, emotional or mental abuse and women resettled by the Project.

- ❑ The post holder will be expected to be sensitive and aware of Asian, Middle Eastern & Iranian cultural and community needs in all aspects of their duties and responsibilities
- ❑ To be responsible for providing Pan-London Housing advice and case work on housing options to women and girls affected by all forms of VAWG, achieving positive outcomes as per funding requirements
- ❑ To provide housing advice and casework to women in our refuges and Advice Service
- ❑ To expand knowledge and best practice around housing and how it relates to VAWG across the organisation and the Ascent Partnership
- ❑ To be responsible for raising awareness around VAWG, in particular, BME women, NRPF, harmful practices and LGBT

MAIN DUTIES

Advice Work:

- ❑ To establish and maintain contact with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies and organisations pan London
- ❑ To form a professional relationship with service users to enable them to develop their own self awareness, confidence, responsibility and independence
- ❑ To support and where appropriate, accompany residents to the Housing Department, DWP, Solicitors, and Courts etc.
- ❑ To share in the consideration of referrals and assessment of prospective service users
- ❑ To ensure that necessary advice and support is available to service users on Harmful practices, their housing, legal, financial and where appropriate, marital situation
- ❑ To support women through the criminal justice system

Housing Advice:

To deliver excellent standards of housing advice and casework to women who have been affected by all forms of VAWG BY:

- ❑ Delivering housing case work, ensuring that contract requirements are met, defined services standards are maintained and compliance with policies and procedures
- ❑ Working closely with other teams, Ascent partners and services to develop the service and support pathways
- ❑ Positively promoting the Ascent service internally and externally
- ❑ Identifying housing options and pathways across all of London
- ❑ Ensuring the quality of the information and advice given meets the demands of funders, Ascent quality standards, internal and external standards including any quality marks

Case Work:

- ❑ To be responsible for co-ordinating work within advocacy and support on behalf of the Network. To work specifically with women and girls who have experienced harmful practices such as forced marriage, honour based violence and female genital mutilation
- ❑ To undertake specific direct face to face work with women and girls in the community
- ❑ To provide support, advice and advocacy services primarily to BAMER women and girls in relevant boroughs who are experiencing domestic violence/sexual violence, enabling them to make informed decisions and exit violent relationships
- ❑ To provide support, advice and advocacy services to women and girls currently in our accommodation projects who insecure immigration status. To work sensitively with vulnerable women and girls and act as an advocate for them, making others aware of their particular needs
- ❑ To attend relevant case conferences and meetings held by statutory agencies
- ❑ To keep accurate hard copy and computerised files, records and data pertaining to individuals

Support Groups:

- Set up and facilitate support group sessions for women and girls in allocated Boroughs
- To promote the groups widely in particular to all domestic violence partner agencies and take referrals from these agencies

Training Sessions:

- To prepare and deliver a small number of awareness raising Training sessions to professionals with a particular focus on harmful practices and NRPF
- To prepare and deliver presentations on harmful practices and NRPF to community based organisations

General Duties:

- To set up and maintain information, record keeping and monitoring systems in line with agreed practices and procedures
- To attend staff meetings, supervision sessions and contribute to the effective management of the Project
- To maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to the Project and service users
- To attend training as and when required
- To observe Equality and Diversity policy, Health & Safety and other relevant policies
- To carry out any other duties commensurate with the objectives of the post as requested by the Management Committee, Director and Management

Please note that this list is indicative of the key responsibilities of this role but is by no means exhaustive. Ashiana is an organisation responding to complex and challenging issues and a 'Can do' attitude and flexibility to take on other related tasks is essential. This job description does not form part of the contract of employment.

Employee's Name:

Signature of Employee:

Signature of Director:

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE

Essential

- A minimum of one year experience working women and girls aged 16+
- Experience of understanding of working with women affected by VAWG
- At least two years experience of working with a housing agency

Desirable

- Experience of working with young women survivors of sexual abuse
- Some experience of working in the voluntary sector
- Some experience of fund-raising
- Fluency in at least one of the following languages: Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Bengali, Turkish, Farsi

KNOWLEDGE

Essential

- A clear understanding of the options available to women who experience VAWG including up to date knowledge of welfare benefits, housing and immigration
- Sound understanding of equal opportunities in practice
- A clear understanding of the issues facing women affected by VAWG

SKILLS & ABILITIES

Essential

- Ability to liaise effectively with people at a variety of levels in statutory authorities and other agencies
- Ability to form supportive, professional relationships with service users
- Ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines
- Ability to work on ones own initiative
- Ability to work as a member of the staff team and within a hierarchical structure
- Ability to participate in and make use of supervision from Line Manager
- Ability to work within Project policies

AWARENESS

- An understanding of the concept of confidentiality in working with service users
- A commitment to and the promotion of equal opportunities in the provision of the Project's services
- An understanding of the aims and objectives of the Project and a commitment to Ashiana's core values

CIRCUMSTANCES

The post requires occasional evening and weekend work.