



Church Lane, Kilkenny, R95 PP3F
056 7722566



JOB TITLE: Housing First Project Worker

JOB HOLDER: Vacant

REPORTS TO: Housing First Team Leader Kilkenny/Clonmel

LOCATION: Focus Ireland Offices in Kilkenny

Purpose of the Post

Support people who are sleeping rough and/or experiencing long-term and multiple exclusion homelessness to move into secure, permanent housing at the earliest opportunity, without preconditions for sobriety or treatment compliance.

The Project Worker will be responsible for supporting people prior to, during, and following their move through case management and key working, to build their capacity to meet their goals, address their support needs, and sustain their housing: processing referrals, conducting assessments; care/support planning and implementation of care/support plans; engaging with service users; supporting service users with move on plans; managing maintenance issues; participating in practice supervision.

Where appropriate the Housing First Worker will play a key role in recruiting, mentoring and supporting staff and students (if applicable) in order to ensure that the highest level and standards of social care practice are further developed and maintained in the service.

Environment of the Post

Focus Ireland Offices in Kilkenny

Guidance and Authority

The post-holder will report to and be supervised by the Housing First Team Leader.

They will also act on behalf of the Housing First Team Leader for the whole service as designated during periods of leave of the Team Leader.

The post-holder will liaise closely with the Team Leader and relevant stakeholders in the Local Authority, Health Service Executive and other agencies.

Principal Accountabilities & Key Indicators

Service User Support

- To provide leadership by demonstrating the highest standard of social care practice.
- To ensure that the service responds effectively to the needs of the service users in areas such as referral, induction, key working/ case management and move on.
- Ensure service users access services / community supports/ welfare allowances which they are entitled to.

Quality

- To ensure a consistently high standard of care for the service users and that the rights of the service users are protected and promoted.
- To continuously work towards the achievement of "Putting People First" and the implementation of the National Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services and National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare.
- To work to the highest standards of the Homeless Agency's Homeless Sector Competency Framework.

Communication

- To carry out duties in accordance with the values, ethos & mission statement of the Focus Ireland.
- To contribute to the on-going development of standards, policies and procedures in (Focus Ireland)

Policy

- To ensure staff-handovers are conducted to the highest standards, are effective, and in-line with (Focus Ireland) policies and procedures.
- To attend regular team-meetings with all staff to ensure effective communication sharing, discussion and review of practice, service user welfare and outcomes.
- To report to the Team Leader challenges, changes or resources needs as they arise
- To attend and participate in supervision with Team Leader.
- To provide the Team Leader with the data and information required for meetings, and to attend meetings and present reports as required.
- To manage and maintain data and information in accordance with best practice
- To maintain and manage an information data-base as may be required.

Office Building

- To monitor and ensure that all aspects of Health and Safety standards are met within the service in accordance with the Health and Safety policy.
- To report any Health and Safety concerns or issues to the Team Leader.
- Manage a maintenance system and ensure accommodation is maintained to a high standard.

Information Management

- To support and monitor the further development of appropriate information management systems.
- To support and monitor compliance with Data Protection legislation and the Service Users Confidentiality Policy.

Confidentiality

- To insure confidentiality is maintained at all times, in accordance with best practice, with regard to both service users and case management files.
- To contribute to and further imbed a culture of confidentiality as appropriate.

Case-Management Files

- To contribute to and support the implementation of progressive Information Technology systems, so as to facilitate the improvement of record-keeping and case-management systems
- Maintain standard of all files and record keeping systems.
- Engage with referral agents and facilitate regular support/care plan reviews
- Complete 'move in'; 'case management' and 'move out' processes in line with policies and best practice in social care.

Monitoring Resources

- To advise the Team Leader of efficiencies, pressures or requirements in relation to resources.

Crisis Management

- To have the ability to deal with and resolve difficult situation, when they arise in a calm and professional manner. Using proven crisis management techniques (MAPA/TCI) and following policy and procedures to ensure safety and relationships are maintained.

Deputing for the Team Leader on occasions (if appropriate and reflects your organisations structures – if not omit as necessary)

- To act on behalf of the Team Leader as required, i.e., during annual leave, sick leave, or other necessary times as requested.

Duties and Responsibilities

Making Contact:

- Work collaboratively with other agencies engaged in Outreach and Emergency accommodation services, to establish and maintain contact with people in (Insert County) who are sleeping rough and/or experiencing long-term and multiple exclusion homelessness.
- Follow up on referrals received to insert name of service and through the Homeless Action Team (HAT).
- Advise people of the supports available through the Housing First Service and how Housing First differs from other approaches.
- Signpost people to more appropriate services where necessary.
- Ensure consent for record-keeping, information-sharing, referral and advocacy prior to proceeding with any of those activities.

Housing Assessment, Access and Allocation

- Assess the urgency of the person's housing need by use of agreed tools for prioritisation.
- Identify any risks to the person or to others which would eliminate a particular area or type of housing or which would require the implementation of a plan to minimise risks.
- Establish what housing options will be available to the person by determining the person's eligibility for Local Authority allocations, RS/HAP/RAS housing assistance, and Social Welfare payments, and facilitate participants in accessing same.
- Wherever possible, offer people choices in terms of housing allocations, and honour their decisions and right to self-determination.
- Communicate with team members, including Team Leader, to make recommendations around allocations and to advise of any concerns arising.
- Adhere to the Housing First approach to allocations, which does not impose preconditions relating to sobriety, treatment compliance, or wellness, and which includes a commitment to the re-housing of participants whose tenancies have broken down.
- Provide general housing information and advice to the participant and facilitate access to mainstream or specialist housing information and advice.
- Support participants in identifying housing preferences and options.
- Advocate / liaise with Department of Social Protection and Local Authority to facilitate application processes for housing.
- Organise and attend viewings of housing available.
- Act as liaison with landlords, explaining lease agreements, rights and responsibilities, managing tenancies in crisis, explaining of the Residential Tenancies Act as needed.

Key Working, Support Plans and Case Management

- Proactively identify and engage with service users experiencing homelessness.
- Assess how the Service can assist them and prioritise their support needs.

- Complete screening/ initial assessment, develop and implement care/support plans, and conduct regular key working appointments as appropriate to the service user's needs.
- Carry out risk assessments and risk management plans as appropriate.
- Work with the person to identify areas for support which may include: Physical and Mental Health, Independent Living Skills, Substance Use / Addiction Support, Education, Employment and Training goals, Family / Child Contact and other issues which impact upon the person's well-being and housing stability.
- Work with the tenant to devise and regularly review support plans with the understanding that the type, level and duration of support provided should be determined by the tenant.
- Ensure access to Health Services as appropriate. Identify any urgent or immediate health needs and refer as appropriate to medical, mental health, addiction and counselling services.
- Identify other agencies that the person is involved with for support and, with permission, make contact with them in order to establish a Case Management approach. Where appropriate, take on the Case Manager role in relation to the shared support plan.
- Organise and attend inter-agency meetings as appropriate to support and progress the shared support plan.
- Use skills such as motivational interviewing to work with the person toward considering options for positive changes
- Facilitate and encourage accessing both specialist and mainstream medical /mental health services, addiction and counselling as appropriate.
- Provide assistance in form filling, medical card, social welfare benefits, housing entitlements.
- Provide home visiting (where possible in the context of risk assessment) and carry out practical support as needed to help the person to build independent living skills and coping strategies as needed.
- Work with the person according to their wishes and preferences to maintain and/or build a social network / contacts and relationships with family and friends
- Assist people in building the competence and capacity to meet their own personal needs: e.g. personal hygiene, cooking skills, laundry, budgeting, diet and healthy living, sexual health etc.
- Assist and advise the participant in building positive relations with neighbours including avoidance or resolution of disputes.
- Ensure that all paperwork is completed including consent forms, enabling the service to advocate as appropriate with external agencies.
- Foster positive relationships with external agencies in order to maximise the supports and resources available to clients to help them address the issues which have resulted in them becoming homeless.
- Attendance at the weekly Homeless Action Team meeting as delegated in Team Leader's absence.

Addressing problems and tenancy breakdown

- Ensure that tenants know their rights and responsibilities are familiar with the Residential
- Tenancies Act (RTA) and make informed decisions regarding actions which may threaten their tenancy.
- Work closely with the tenant as well as with team members, specialist staff, supervisor, landlord and other support agencies as appropriate to identify issues which may threaten the person's housing stability and to coordinate a plan to address those issues.
- Support the person through difficulties and advocate for his/her needs while working proactively to maintain positive links between Focus Ireland and property owners, neighbours, and other voluntary and statutory services.
- In the event that a tenant loses his/her housing, continue to work with the person according to his/her support plan, and work toward re-housing at the earliest opportunity. When appropriate, review the

circumstances leading to housing loss with the person and agree a plan to prevent tenancy breakdown in the future.

Induction to Accommodation

- Visit properties with prospective tenants and insofar as is possible (depending on source of housing), ensure that housing is of a good and clean standard at move-in and has all essential equipment.
- In the case of Focus Ireland or social rental properties, provide the person with an introduction to the property and, if needed, the local area amenities, shop, etc.
- Provide details of the accommodation, tenancy agreements
- Advise of Fire & Health & Safety equipment and regulations etc.
- Explain the model of service and the roles and responsibilities of the staff and tenants.

Accommodation

- Advocate with external agencies for the provision of appropriate housing
- Report defects in housing and arrange repaired quickly.
- Maintain positive relationships and communication with property owners involved in social rentals or private rentals to which (insert service name) refers tenants.
- Adhere as closely as possible to the principle of separation of housing and support functions within available resources, while maintaining flexibility to carry out duties where necessary to support tenants in maintaining tenancies.

Finance

- Account for petty cash and record receipts for any money spent
- Work with Housing Officers (if applicable in your service) and administrative colleagues to address any rent arrears or issues around payment
- Ensure uptake of correct benefits and entitlements.

Record Keeping

- Maintain accurate, objective, professional and up to date records tenant's files
- Generate the required statistics for Focus Ireland and for statutory agencies
- Maintain current records on PASS for everyone in your caseload.
- Provide weekly, monthly, quarterly or annual reports as requested by Team Leader, include specific management structures here and/or statutory funders.
- Engage with and support the evaluation of the project as required.

Research

- To participate in relevant research/audit projects within the service in order to improve outcomes and standards in addiction and homeless services.
- To participate in initiatives that improves the quality of all aspects of the service. To contribute to any service improvement plans as a result of evaluation or audit.
- To ensure that service user opinion and feedback is sought in relation to all service development projects.
- To be flexible in relation to service delivery as the needs of the service dictate i.e. out of hours and provision of new service initiatives.
- To co-operate with staff policy and review procedures.

Team Work & Personal Development

- Participate in, and report to Homeless Action Team meetings as requested.
- Work as part of a team to reach the overall objectives of Focus Ireland while managing own caseload.
- Help to develop best practice and work within these guidelines.
- Carry out any other appropriate work as requested by the supervisor.
- Act as a collaborative member of an interdisciplinary case management and specialist support team comprising colleagues from Focus Ireland, and external voluntary and statutory agencies. Attend internal and external meetings, team meetings, working groups and planning days.
- Develop and maintain positive and mutually beneficial work relationships and partnerships with other agencies, both voluntary and statutory ensuring good communication and minimise obstacles to support, services, and accommodation.
 - To engage in all training needs analysis.
 - To maintain a commitment to further education and training.
 - To maintain internal supervision to reflect and review practice.

General

- To co-operate with the introduction and continued operation of new training programmes, identified as a result of international research, best practice, changing demands etc. in order to improve the quality of services provided.
- To co-operate with the development of new services (Focus Ireland) or initiatives by the HSE Social Inclusion and/or Lead Local Authority. This will necessitate undertaking a broader and lower threshold case mix in the future.
- To co-operate with the implementation of the Homeless Strategy / National Drug Strategy, Regional Homeless Action Plan and HSE SIO Operational Plan.
- To co-operate with various methods that may be introduced to establish service user experience with service provision.
- To co-operate/participate in initiatives to improve the quality of services, including joint audit.
- To co-operate with on-going monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of services being provided, i.e.:
 - Accountability.
 - Service Outcomes.
 - Service objectives/priorities.
 - "Value for Money" initiatives.
- To co-operate with flexible working i.e. unsociable hours.
- To co-operate with all aspects of the design, installation and operation of new technology i.e. service user management and information systems.
- To carry out any other duties that may be assigned by the relevant Line Manager.
- Risk Management
 - To be aware of the principles of risk management and to be individually responsible for risk management issues in your area of work to include all Health & Safety policies.
 - To identify risk situations and take appropriate action.
 - To work in a manner to minimise risk.
- Have a working knowledge of the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) Standards as they apply to the role for example, Standards for Better, Safer Healthcare (HSE) and the National Standards for Homeless Services and comply with associated HSE protocols and SE Homeless Services for implementing and maintaining these standards.

Health & Safety

Staff must make themselves aware of health & safety policies affecting the workplace and to conform to regulations regarding safe practices and the use of safety equipment.

- Comply with no smoking rules, use of protective clothing, glasses, gloves or footwear etc. where deemed necessary by Insert service name.
- Comply with all health & safety standards and work with due regard their own safety and the safety of others.
- Participate in courses pertaining to health & safety and manual handling.
- Ensure up to date Children First training and take action where necessary, including liaising with Social Workers and making Child Protection reports.

Housing First Key Performance Indicators

- Moves from Long Term / Multiple Exclusion Homelessness into Housing
- Housing Retention Rates
- Responsiveness to tenants' changing needs and challenges
- Continued engagement with participants whose tenancies have broken down
- Successful re-housing of tenants where tenancies have broken down
- Positive participant feedback
- Positive relationships with Landlords / Property Owners / Approved Housing Bodies
- Positive relationships with colleagues, and with other statutory and voluntary agencies
- Critical incidents managed successfully
- Accuracy & quality of records and statistics
- Demonstrated commitment to the Housing First / rights based approach
- Active participation in training, team meetings, planning, problem solving
- Successful collaboration with and support to colleagues in various roles

The above Job Specification is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all duties involved and consequently, the post holder may be required to perform other duties as appropriate to the post which may be assigned to him/her from time to time and to contribute to the development of the post while in office.

Eligibility Criteria

Qualifications and/or experience

i) Possess the National Diploma in Applied Social Care Studies awarded by awarded by Quality & Qualifications Ireland, (QQI) (Dearbhu Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann) / DIT.

Or

ii) Possess the Diploma in Social Care awarded by awarded by Quality & Qualifications Ireland, (QQI) (Dearbhu Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann) (formerly HETAC) / /DIT.

Or

iii) Possess the Diploma in Applied Social Studies/Social Care from DIT.

Or

iv) Possess a BA (Ord) in Social Care Practice (Level 7 on the QQI framework).

Or

v) Possess Open Training College National Diploma in Applied Social Studies (Disability).

Or

vi) Possess an equivalent qualification

And

1. Candidates must have a suitable standard of professional attainments.

And

1. Candidates must have the requisite knowledge and ability (including a high standard of suitability and ability for the proper discharge of the duties of the office).

Experience

- Not less than 2 years' experience in residential social care services; preferably in the homeless sector
- leadership experience in social care services, including supervision of social care staff would be a distinct advantage
- Extensive experience in working with behaviours that may challenge and supporting care-staff in similar environments
- Supporting organisational change in a complex environment
- Recording, reporting and information management

Post Specific Requirement: Ability to demonstrate

- A thorough knowledge of principles of Social Care / Community Work
- A knowledge of Social Care supervision
- Knowledge of health and safety legislation; data protection, report writing, funding structures for homeless services
- In depth knowledge of case management, key working & needs assessment, and use of PASS Database.
- Knowledge of the principles of Non-Violent Crisis Intervention such as MAPA and/ or Therapeutic Crisis Intervention would be an advantage
- Understanding of management principles in social care settings
- Knowledge and understanding of relevant Government policy on homelessness and the Quality Standards Framework for Homeless Services

Skills & Competencies

Person Centeredness

- Demonstrate the importance of adopting a client centred approach; where the needs and preferences of the individual are recognised and supported.
- Provide, receive and evaluate information that contributes to identifying the needs for service provision and planning future developments.

Respect

- Work with individuals and colleagues to identify aspects of the environment, practice and behaviour that are beneficial to creating an inclusive culture for everyone.
- Respond appropriately where people are found to be excluded.
- Committed to ensuring that equality and diversity are promoted within your organisation, for individuals and for staff members and those who may come into contact with your organisation.
- Support others with whom you work, to work in ways that: recognise and respect individuals' beliefs and preferences.

Professional Development

- Analyse and reflect on what is required for competent, effective and safe practice
- Continually monitor, evaluate and reflect on:
 - your knowledge and skills
 - your attitudes and behaviour
 - any experiences and personal beliefs that might affect your work
 - how well you practice and what could be improved
 - the processes and outcomes from your work
- Take action, with supervision and support, to access development opportunities that will enhance your knowledge and practice.
- Review the impact of such development opportunities on your work.
- Understand your role and responsibilities in the supervision process and you allocate adequate time and preparation to ensure it is a worthwhile and meaningful process for staff.

Promoting Health and Wellbeing

- Encourage and support individuals to examine aspects of their lives and environment that affect their health and well-being and to select positive options to promote their own health and well-being.
- Support individuals to communicate their views and preferences regarding their current and future health and well-being needs and priorities.
- Work with individuals to identify the care and support: they can and wish to undertake themselves that can be provided through the individual's support networks that needs to be provided by yourself and others within and outside your organisation.
- Identify opportunities to provide choice to individuals.
- Promote individual's rights to comment, complain or make suggestions to ensure choice and wellbeing.
- Advance the individual through services and/or programs to foster independence and well-being to achieve vision of eradicating homelessness.

Managing Challenging Behaviour

- Support individuals to: explore and communicate their feelings about their behaviour, recognise and understand the consequences of their behaviour and understand the affects of their behaviour on others and why it might be unacceptable.
- Support individuals to understand what might happen and the actions that would have to be taken, if they behave in ways that are: unacceptable to your organisation's policies and procedures outside the law.
- Support individuals to seek and acquire specialist support to help them understand and deal with their behaviour and the reasons for it.
- Seek additional support for yourself, to enable you to work more effectively with individuals who have challenging behaviour.

Team Skills

Communication

- Work with individuals to understand their preferred methods of communication and language and ensure that any specific aids they require are available.
- Encourage individuals to:
 - engage with others and to respond appropriately
 - express their feelings and emotions in acceptable ways

- overcome barriers to communication
- Access and update records and reports on your work with the individuals accurately, comprehensively and according to legal, organisational procedures and requirements.
- Record and report: any signs and symptoms that indicate a change in the condition and care needs of the individual, in their support requirements, any decisions you have made, actions you have taken about the individual's support needs and condition, conflicts that have arisen and actions taken to resolve these.
- Involve and support individuals to contribute and understand records and reports concerning them.
- Ensure the security and access to records and reports are according to confidentiality agreements and legal and organisational procedures.

Developing External Relationships

- Committed to building good working relationships with agencies, community networks and partnerships.
- Portray a positive and professional image of the Service.
- Participate, where appropriate in partnerships and community networks.
- Committed to sharing information between professionals, where confidentiality is respected, which is crucial to person centred care.
- Where appropriate participate in relevant interagency training.
- Demonstrate openness for learning from other agencies and organisations.
- Ensure that any activities you engage in with other agencies or organisations value and respect individuals and promote inclusiveness.

Planning & Organising Skills

Care Planning

- Participate in inter-disciplinary team working to support individuals and others to plan and implement individualised care plans.
- Support individuals and key people to identify and communicate: the individual's needs and preferences about their care and support and any risks arising from these.
- Contribute to consultations about the development of individuals' care plans taking into account their assessed needs and preferences.
- Contribute to meetings and discussions about revisions to care plans and their implementation.
- Record and report on the review and revisions of the care plan, within confidentiality agreement and according to your role and responsibilities.

Focus on Outcomes

- Work with others to identify possible options for individuals and any risks that have to be managed.
- Support the individuals and key people to identify the individuals' current skills and abilities and how these can be built upon to enable them to manage their lives and environment more effectively.
- Support individuals and key people to select methods which are most likely to enable them to make progress.
- Work with individuals, key people and others to assess their progress and highlight where extra support is needed.
- Work with individuals and others to review the individual's future needs.

Other Requirements Specific to the Post

- Ability to maintain motivation and work within a changing and developing service
- Ability to provide leadership in a rights-based service

- A high degree of professional and personal self-awareness
- Excellent listening, reflective and analytical skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to receive and contribute appropriate critical and reflective feedback
- Excellent reporting skills- ability to provide concise and relevant reports regarding clients, staff or service development
- Flexible, open to new ways of working
- Ability to be stay calm, objective, fair, independent and confident in challenging situations
- Ability to engage with service users

Remuneration: €17.82 per hour