

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| **Job Title:** | Safe Housing and Occupancy Caseworker  |
| **Date:** | February 2022 |
| **Department:** | Community Services  |
| **Line Manager:** | Senior IDVA |
| **Grade/Pay Scale** | £22,500  |
| **Location:** | Head Office – working across all sites as needed |
| **Status:** | 37.5 hours (Maternity Cover 12 months)Every employee is advised that their employment continues only as long as The Haven Wolverhampton remains able to fund it. |

# Job Purpose

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| This role will work with women who are at risk of becoming homeless and/or need support on their tenancy rights including priority housing rights, advice for secure and joint tenancies. This role will be innovative and will develop pathways for women in housing under current housing legislation and the Domestic Abuse Bill, including safe options for women with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The postholder will be required to carry a caseload and provide intense one to one support, liaise with professionals and proactively seek information, including timely legal advice on housing law and local housing policy.You will support with admissions into our safe houses and provide support to clients residing there to ensure applications are made for the correct benefits in a timely manner.  |

# Scope of Job – main tasks, duties and responsibilities

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| **Housing and Occupancy Sustainment** * To hold a caseload of cases with complex issues in relation to housing.
* Minimise upheaval and disruption to women’s housing, giving advice to access and maintain tenancies in their own right; seek specialist independent legal assistance in respect of Landlord & Tenant Law where needed in matters of e.g. joint tenancies and rights of both parties.
* Assist women to secure homes e.g. Sanctuary Scheme/Fire Service referrals and provide ongoing support in relation to safety options and staying safe in their own homes.
* Monitor rent payments and minimise rent arrears providing assistance where required to reduce rent areas.
* Advise women on maintaining the security of their home e.g. explaining how to lock up and manage appropriate access, support women to gain extra security measures where needed.
* Liaise, consult with and actively assist women at housing association meetings, encouraging participation in decision making processes
* Provide advice & assistance to women to understand and comply with the tenancy conditions to ensure tenancy, accommodation and facilities are secured and maintained.
* Work proactively with other staff, offering advice and guidance on individual cases and pathways for women.
* Ensure women access services to maintain their tenancy, including welfare benefit support, local community services and budgeting support.
* Identify individual tenancy sustainment needs through assessment and develop a Housing Plan detailing risk, tenancy sustainment needs and move on plans.
* To support women and their children who are residents in our safe houses that are located across the city. Ensuring applications for correct benefits/Council Tax are submitted and move in paperwork is completed.

**Safe Housing Specialist DA Advocacy** * Work with women to secure accommodation under The Children Act 1989 with the local authority if needed.
* Ensure women are aware of their rights under their occupancy agreement.
* Advocate women’s rights and challenge decisions about housing rights with women at the forefront of the support you offer.
* Work with women to get housing rights under the Domestic Violence Rule (DV Rule) and the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession (DDVC)
* Ensure women access legal advice early and proactively seek information to support individual complex cases of housing.
* Deliver casework ensuring that contractual requirements are met, defined service standards are maintained, and compliance with policies and procedures are adhered to.
* Support and advise on alternative safe accommodation and assist with housing applications and bidding process or escalate with housing agencies in cases of domestic abuse.

**Development of Service** * *Partnerships*: You will develop links with key agencies to work with and will attend meetings and events as identified by line manager. Develop effective working relationships with referral agencies, including Housing and Homeless Services and Housing Association and other Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities.
* *Public Relations*: Represent Haven at appropriate meetings, conferences, and advocate for rights of women and safe homes
* *Referral Pathways*: You will develop referral pathways for external referrals into the service and will work with Helpline Manager to further develop these pathways to ensure the service is accessible to all women who require this support
* *Advocacy on behalf of women*: Raise awareness of Housing and Priority needs for victims of abuse, challenge where appropriate local connection when fleeing abuse, and help create pathways for women to self-refer to this service.
* *Quality and Accessibility*: Review needs and demand of service users and gain feedback from women. Identify gaps in service ie in relation to equality and diversity, and recruit/create specialisms to meet those needs
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# Special Conditions (if applicable e.g. unsociable hours, extensive travel etc.)

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| * To undertake such other duties, training and/or hours of work as maybe reasonably required, and which are consistent with the general level of responsibility of this job.
* To have personal responsibility for maintaining personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job and The Haven, by undertaking appropriate training and development activities. This includes encouraging and supporting staff and managers in their training and development.
* To undertake any health and safety training and related activities such as First Aid, Fire Marshall, Duty Hold, Health & Safety representative etc. as required for the post and as required by The Haven Wolverhampton to ensure their Health & Safety Policy is implemented effectively.
* To ensure equality of opportunity both in service provision and employment, having regard to the needs of the diverse communities we serve.
* To act in accordance with the organisations standing orders, financial regulations and financial procedures.
* To supervise and support volunteers and placement as required
* To comply with legislation and The Haven’s policies including Confidentiality, Information Sharing, Data Protection, Computer Security, Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, and Human Rights.
* To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grading of the post subject to reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act.
* The duties of the post may change and develop from time to time in the light of new legislation.
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| Signed (Jobholder) |  |
| Print Name |  | Date: |  |
| Signed Line Manager |  | Date: |  |



**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

The Person specification provides a list of essential and desirable criteria which a candidate should possess to be able to perform the job. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured through one or a combination of the following: A = Application form/CV; I = Interview; D = Documentation; R = References and T = Test.

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| **Date:** | January 2022 |

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| **factors** | **essential** | **DESIRABLE** | **HOW IDENTIFIED** |
| Experience | * At least one year of housing advice/advocacy work for an agency that works to the Legal Services Commission Housing Specialist Quality Mark Standard for a Caseworker appointment.
* Sufficient work with Homeless People to acquire a good understanding of the causes and effects of homelessness.
* Experience of liaison and negotiating with statutory and voluntary agencies.
* Experience of effectively managing own case load and ensuring a thorough record is maintained.
* Experience of managing a case load of high risk clients
* Experience of managing/leading on a project
* Demonstrable experience of working with those affected by domestic and sexual abuse
* A sound understanding of the practical, emotional, social and economic issues facing women and children affected by domestic violence
* Experience of risk assessment and management and safety planning
* Experience of working within a multi-agency framework
* Ability to manage own caseload, working under pressure and prioritising workload
* Strong crisis management skills and the ability to deal with challenging situation
 | * Experience of working with survivors of domestic violence.
 | ADIR |
| Knowledge & Understanding | * Ability to learn and retain detailed legal knowledge
* Extensive knowledge of housing options and legislation
* Knowledge of, and the ability to, confidently advise on the range of options available to survivors of domestic abuse including criminal justice and civil remedies
* Essential sound knowledge of safeguarding for adults and children
* Knowledge and experience of current legislation relevant to this role.
* Demonstrate sound knowledge and understanding of Housing Law and the Domestic Abuse Bill
 |  | AIRT |
| Skills & Abilities | * Excellent communication skills.
* Excellent written and verbal skills.
* Keep and maintain accurate and confidential records of all work undertaken
* Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative when line managing a team.
* Ability to communicate effectively with External agencies, build links and maintain an appropriate data resource to ensure best practice within the project delivery.
* Possess an organised approach to all tasks with administrative skills e.g. ability to use it DATA systems
* High level of written skills complete assessment plans and reports on the project outcomes – which will be delivered to Senior Management and Funders.
* Ability to collect and review performance management information, with a view to ensuring continuous improvement is achieved within the project.
* Demonstrate the ability to respond appropriately and effectively when faced with difficult situations.
* Ability to prioritise urgent matters and ensure they are dealt with effectively before deadlines set by either your line manager or project requirements
 | * The ability to speak one or more of the community languages of Wolverhampton.
 | AIR |
| Qualifications & Training | * Practical experience in housing work
 | * Level 2 Certificate in Housing Practice accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) or equivalent.
 | DI |
| Other Special Requirements | * Able to work unsociable hours on occasions if required to undertake internal activities.
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