

Job Description: Community Practitioner (The Community)

About The Connection

When you work for The Connection, you're part of a life-changing team. We help people sleeping rough in the heart of London. It can be a long journey off the streets, and it's not an easy path. We get to know every individual, so our approach can tailor to what they need. We don't do one size fits all, and we don't give up when things get tough.

Working here means being open-minded, resilient, and pragmatic. It means being willing to go the extra mile and stick with people through thick and thin. It means being part of a team who really care about the individuals we support, and who are creative about finding better ways to help them.

Together with our donors, volunteers, and partners, we are a supportive and vibrant community who are determined to make a real difference. We believe that no one should have to sleep rough on London's streets and that everyone should get the support they need to find a place to call home.

About the Role

At The Connection Community, just off Trafalgar Square, we provide a safe and welcoming space where people can find respite from street homelessness, build social connections, and access vital support. Our multi-disciplinary team is dedicated to reducing the harms associated with rough sleeping, fostering inclusion, and empowering individuals to move towards stability and independent living.

As part of our creative and committed team, you'll play a key role in:

- Building trusting relationships with people facing multiple exclusion.
- Understanding peoples' needs and providing harm minimisation support.
- Helping individuals take steps towards securing a place to call home.
- Contributing to a pioneering new approach to homelessness support in Westminster.

We see relationships as the key tool for change. As a Community Practitioner you will build relationships of trust and solidarity that will help people to access our comprehensive professional support network, including NHS health services, DWP benefits advisors, migration specialists, and drug and alcohol support teams – all offering their services inside the Community.

Together we are piloting a psychologically-informed, trauma-responsive model with an embedded specialist NHS psychology team. This means you'll receive high-quality training, 1:1 consultations, and reflective practice to enhance your skills, and to support you and your team to pioneer best practice in homelessness services.

Responsible to:	Team Leaders (The Community) and Service Manager
Responsible for:	Clients; volunteers as required
Liaison with:	Outreach/In-reach services, other day-centres and voluntary organisations across Westminster, and internal teams
Job Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting high-quality service delivery in the community • Welcoming new clients into the community, and diverting clients who don't meet the criteria to alternative sources of support • Developing trusting relationships with members of the community to support them on their journeys out of homelessness • Managing support plans, risk assessments and incidents as part of a high functioning Community Team • Developing and adopting joint-working approaches with partners
Salary	£35,252-£39,420 (Scale Points 19-25)
Contract:	Permanent, Full-time position

Responsibilities

1. Supporting high-quality service delivery in the community

- Support the effective day-to-day delivery of the resource centre, creating a psychologically, gender and culturally informed environment, embedding the core principles in all interactions and interventions

2. Welcoming new clients into the community, and diverting clients who don't meet the criteria to alternative sources of support

- Welcome new clients into the community, aiming to understand their needs, often over time rather than in a single meeting, and always in a way that takes into account their psychological wellbeing, and readiness for engagement
- Provide a proactive and preventative response, ensuring new people accessing the service are signposted to the right service at the right time (e.g., referrals into relevant housing and wider support services, as well as safeguarding, both internally and externally)

3. Developing trusting relationships with members of the community to support them on their journeys out of homelessness

- Support clients who face multiple exclusion (often with physical and mental health challenges, alongside substance use), build supportive, trusting relationships, and creating a positive atmosphere
- Participate in the delivery of a range of groups and activities, to enhance engagement, wellbeing, and community connection for our clients

4. Managing support plans, risk assessments and incidents as part of a high functioning Community Team

- Co-produce personalised support plans with clients which are realistic and enable them to progress towards their goals
- Travelling alongside clients as they move towards their goals, by providing a supportive relationship, as well as physically accompanying people into new contexts when necessary
- Promote client safety, and ensuring ongoing assessment and management of the risk in their lives by collaboratively forming and following meaningful and realistic risk management plans
- Follow a strength-based and psychologically-informed approach to all interactions, including incident management
- Keep client records and files up to date in line with CSTM Policies and Procedures
- Provide support to clients to access relevant external and internal services to enable them to make progress towards their goals, including but not limited to support with benefit applications, and making referrals to housing and other specialist support services

5. Developing and adopting joint-working approaches with partners

- Undertake support work in partnership with external stakeholders and internal frontline teams to enhance engagement
- Develop productive relationships with partner organisations to improve service outcomes
- Demonstrate strong commitment to the functioning of the staff team and to support colleagues in providing a high level of service to clients
- Involving clients in the design, development and delivery of services
- Adhere to safeguarding policy and procedures, and report safeguarding concerns promptly

The above list of duties is not exhaustive. The post holder may be expected to undertake other tasks commensurate with the scope and grading of the role.

Person Specification

Knowledge
<i>Essential:</i>
An understanding of psychologically-, gender, and culturally-informed approaches to supporting people with interconnecting needs
Knowledge and understanding of the causes of street homelessness, and the difficulties faced by individuals with complex trauma, issues around substance misuse, and mental health difficulties
Knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, data protection and other key policy areas associated with services for those with severe and multiple disadvantage
Knowledge of housing, homelessness and related legislation
<i>Desirable:</i>
Knowledge of relevant external agencies, resources, and accommodation options for people experiencing street homelessness
Knowledge of/proficiency in a second-language other than English (eg Polish, Romanian, Russian, Arabic)
Experience
<i>Essential:</i>
Experience in providing support for people experiencing street homelessness with interconnecting needs
Experience in responding quickly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns
Experience of working in partnership and collaboration with other agencies eg, outreach teams, and drug and alcohol and health services
Experience in multi-agency working with statutory and voluntary sector partners
<i>Desirable:</i>
Experience in creating opportunities for co-production with clients to co-design and improve service/system provision
Experience of researching and implementing best practice and innovative ideas to improve services
Experience of working with volunteers and peer-mentoring
Skills and Attributes
<i>Essential:</i>
The ability to implement values-based practice in line with The Connection Way of Working, including cultural values, expectations, and behaviour: Being Curious, Safe, Together and Motivated
Strong organisational skills and an ability to manage a complex workload
The ability to communicate information effectively, both verbally and in writing, to clients and colleagues
The ability to manage personal and sensitive information about individuals in accordance with CSTM's policies and procedures, and to observe the duty of confidentiality
The ability and willingness to travel to locations across London (central location Westminster)
Strong skills in data input and review (including good IT skills)
The ability to demonstrate resilience and respond appropriately and effectively when faced with challenging behaviour
A willingness to work flexibly, including occasional evenings and weekends as required.