

Job description

Job title: Employment and Learning Manager

Reports to: Head of Advice

Salary: £42,000 plus benefits

Contract: Permanent

About us:

The Cardinal Hume Centre is dedicated to preventing and tackling youth and family homelessness. We aim to break the cycle of poverty, focusing on long-term solutions to empower individuals and families to build stable and independent lives. Our services include:

- Offering a safe home with support for 39 young people
- Providing support to children and families in housing crisis or other need
- Delivering housing and welfare rights advice to help people keep or find a stable home and manage finances
- Advising and coaching people to find work, learning or training
- Providing expert immigration advice to help people secure their legal right to remain in the UK to access homes, work and benefits.

Last year we helped over 1,300 people including nearly 600 families and 300 children and young people. Our approach is personalised, acknowledging the unique complexities of each person's situation, drawing on our range of services to provide bespoke and often wrap-around support. Our focus is to break the generational cycle of poverty and homelessness.

The Centre is based within five minutes' walk from Parliament but works in an area where homelessness has increased. Around 3,800 children from Westminster are homeless and live in temporary accommodation, 30% of children live in poverty. Families face unaffordable housing costs, a challenging labour market and rising levels of crime.

With an annual income in the region of £3.5 million, the Centre currently employs around 65 dedicated staff and around 45 volunteers who share our commitment to helping those in need.

About the role:

We are seeking a passionate and values-led individual to lead the development of our Employment and Learning Service. You will work to ensure they remain central to our holistic approach to alleviating the impact of homelessness and poverty for young people and families.

Our Employment and Learning Service is among the most impactful support we offer, with the potential to help individuals and families build long-term resilience. You will play a pivotal role in strengthening and expanding this service, particularly in demonstrating its effectiveness and scaling our ability to reach more people in need.

Our approach follows the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, which helps clients to identify and pursue meaningful employment and learning goals based on their preferences and aspirations. Our learning service includes: homework and exam preparation for children, English conversation classes and access to ESOL support, life-skill development, digital inclusion and access to vocational courses and higher education.

Job description:

1. Lead on the development and growth of the Centre's Employment and Learning Service to ensure it has a long-term impact on people's resilience to homelessness.
2. Focus on addressing barriers to accessing services to reach clients sooner, ensuring that the services enhance our integrated service model.
3. Demonstrate values-aligned leadership skills in supporting the Employment and Learning team.
4. Effectively manage the caseload of the team to achieve outcomes and deliver on their personal and collective objectives. This should include maintaining a small personal caseload of employment advice clients.
5. Ensure appropriate systems are in place for effective and consistent case management within the service; this includes the use of the Centre's InForm database.
6. Ensure regular file audits are carried out and analyse reports to monitor the take-up and quality of service.
7. Work collaboratively with other Centre service managers and leadership to ensure the Centre's values are reflected in all our service provision.
8. Ensure that Employment and Learning advice is effectively embedded throughout the Centre's services, for example in our outreach programmes and study club.
9. Lead on the development and delivery of a mentoring scheme that connects professionals who volunteer their time to support our clients.
10. Be curious about the data we collect and draw insights from our evaluation approaches to improve service delivery and contribute to the design of our theory of change.
11. Develop strong partnerships with key stakeholders including service providers, funders and corporate partners to offer our clients high quality opportunities and access to services.
12. Build on our ability to support clients, particularly young people, into meaningful learning opportunities that will help further their career development.
13. Represent the Centre's mission and key priorities at external events and partnership groups.
14. Oversee the management of volunteers that support the delivery of our services, supporting the team to contribute to these programmes.
15. Work closely with the Centre's fundraising team to articulate our service's distinctiveness, identify opportunities, successfully gain funding and report outcomes.
16. Ensure that effective safeguarding of clients and professional boundaries are maintained across the service.

Person specification

Essential:

1. Experience at effectively managing, supporting and supervising a team to deliver a high-quality service.
2. Experience of delivering high-quality employment and learning advice and casework with a NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance as a minimum
3. Understanding of the factors that make services hard to reach for clients and experience of adjusting services to make them more accessible.
4. Experience of working collaboratively with other services within an organisation to improve outcomes for clients.
5. Experience working with external organisations to deliver partnerships that have added value for clients or service users - for example with a corporate or not-for-profit sector partner.
6. Ability to recruit, manage and develop meaningful volunteering opportunities to meet the needs of our clients.
7. A strong commitment to the Centre's mission, values and behaviours; a strong belief in the value of every individual.
8. A strong commitment to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults to the highest of standards.

Desirable:

1. Experience of managing an Employment and Learning advice service.
2. Experience of delivering the IPS model for Employment and Learning advice.
3. Experience of delivering outreach programmes that reduce barriers to services and reach clients sooner.
4. Experience of working in a charity or organisation working with vulnerable people.
5. General knowledge and awareness of the issues around youth and family homelessness.

More about Employment and Learning advice at the Cardinal Hume Centre

We are delighted you are interested in joining our Employment and Learning team. We are passionate about achieving high quality outcomes for our clients to help them achieve their career aspirations and goals. You are joining at a time when we are actively piloting projects to reach young people and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness sooner. We aim to lower the barrier to entry to our service through outreach projects, and you will be tasked with leading the team to build and engage in this project.

About the team

This role reports to the Head of Advice and works closely with other service managers in the Centre to deliver integrated support. There are currently three members of the team in total alongside volunteers that support our ability to offer study/homework clubs, English language support and digital inclusion sessions.

Direct reports: 2x Employment and Learning Advisors; 1x Life Skills Coordinator

Areas of focus

As an organisation, we prioritise supporting young people, children and their families. We triage cases to ensure we focus our resources on those clients where their case is strong and could have a significant and life changing impact. Our team of advisors focus predominantly on:

- In-depth vocational/career profiling and an agreed learning and employment action plan
- Preparing a CV, Job searching, filling in application forms and writing cover letters
- Accessing education (non-statutory) and training
- Work experience placements and voluntary work
- Interview and work preparation support
- Support with starting work, in-work support & job retention
- Identifying and sourcing funding for courses when required

Alongside this, our Life Skills Coordinator works closely with our supported accommodation and family service teams to ensure we support young people and children to develop skills and work towards independence.

The Centre recognises the pressure this type of advice can bring, so we offer reflective practice, additional wellbeing leave (two days in addition to annual leave entitlements). Given so much of our funding is unrestricted, we have greater flexibility and work hard to be client rather than contract and target led.

How Employment and Learning advice fits into the Centre's wider services

The Cardinal Hume Centre starts with a simple belief: Each person matters, each person has potential. Yet the consequence of this belief is clear: it means people must be able to live lives free from poverty, it means having a safe and secure home. It means having the opportunity to make the most of your potential and a life free from discrimination.

Child poverty and homelessness is inextricably linked. Homelessness and poor housing is a cause and consequence of poverty and inequality. The biggest indicator of future homelessness risk as an adult is poverty as a child.

The Cardinal Hume Centre therefore focuses its efforts on young people, children and families in need. We work to tackle homelessness, poor housing and poverty at an early age and break its cost and cycle into later life.

We offer advice and advocacy in housing, welfare and immigration rights, we provide employment and learning support, emergency accommodation for young people and a specialist family centre for children and parents. For those clients who need it, we provide integrated support across a range of needs to help provide immediate crisis support and avert future housing need.

Secure employment is one of the most effective routes out of poverty and therefore from housing need. We pride ourselves on offering support beyond what statutory services can provide. We work to help clients consider their long-term aspirations, breaking their achievement of goals into smaller achievable steps. Our bespoke guidance and advice is not time-limited and can be combined with wider advice and support from other Centre services. This includes advice from housing, welfare rights and immigration specialists – helping people manage the complexities they often face.

Our life skills worker supports children and young people in our family centre and supported accommodation. She provides bespoke and targeted learning to develop skills and confidence to help children and young people in their studies and transition to independence. Alongside this, we have a team of volunteers who provide English language and IT skills support to reduce barriers into work.

You will be joining at a pivotal time. The Centre is growing and we're working to make our services more accessible to those in housing need. In particular, we want to better understand and evidence the impact our employment and learning service make, helping us strengthen our effectiveness and supporting our efforts to grow. You will play a key part in developing the way we evaluate the services of your team, helping us improve our impact and ability to achieve positive change. It is a critical role and a real opportunity for a manager to grow with the Centre.

We pride ourselves on being a place of welcome, making it easy for clients to access our support in space they know they are safe and can trust. In a recent survey of clients, 97% said they felt staff listened to them well, 96% said they felt staff made them feel welcome and relaxed. 88% said they felt better able to meet their family's needs and 82% said they felt clearer about their options for their future. (August 2024)

Our commitment to building a more inclusive Centre

We want to be a Centre that welcomes and includes. For us this means that we want to actively celebrate the diversity found in our local community and strengthen the diversity in our team. We therefore want to do everything we can to encourage people from global majority ethnic and other under-represented groups to apply.

Today, our staff and volunteers are diverse in their backgrounds, their skills and experience. Many have lived experience of the challenges our clients face. But we know this is less true at a senior or Board level and this something we are working to address through recruitment, learning and development and through improved collaboration with our clients. We know this is key to building a welcoming and inclusive Centre and to improving our impact and support.

Our values

Our values and behaviours describe how we want to work with everyone – within our team, with people from other organisations and most importantly, with the people who use our services or make our home with us.

Our values were agreed by our Board of Trustees in 2020 and were developed in close consultation with staff, volunteers and with feedback from our clients. They are consistent with the Benedictine tradition of our founder, Cardinal Basil Hume and the social teachings of the Catholic Church. At their heart is the belief that each person matters, each person has potential. That dignity is innate and not earned.

Together, our values and behaviours are deliberately stretching. They set a vision for how we want to work and make decisions together. We believe we are most effective when our values and behaviours are embedded in everything we do as staff, volunteers and colleagues.

Our values, at the centre we will:

- Value each person
- Welcome and include
- Encourage potential
- Work together
- Learn, reflect and improve.

In a recent survey of staff 95% said they feel like they make a difference, 94% said they enjoy the work they do and 93% said they enjoy working with people at the Centre. 93% said they are trusted to do their role and make decisions that are relevant to their role. (March 2024)

You can read about the Centre's [Strategy, theory of change](#), our [values](#) and most recent [annual report](#) on our website. You can also see a film about our work here.