

Refuge



**For women and children.
Against domestic violence.**



**Housing Advocate
Applicant Information Pack**

Introduction from the CEO

Thank you for your interest in working for Refuge.

We have a diverse team of incredible people who work together to provide an inclusive approach to ensure that every woman who needs support when facing domestic abuse, receives it.

We do this through a combination of frontline services offering immediate safety and support to women and their children. We also lead vital work to influence and change policies and practices that impact women and girls and use public engagement and campaigning to help change societal attitudes and norms.

We know that domestic abuse will never end until it is recognised by society as the crime that it is, and there is an understanding that it is underpinned by misogyny. We will not stop until we are able to challenge and shift harmful societal attitudes as well as drive policy and practice change that is needed to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). It is only then that women and children will be free to live their lives in safety, with control over their choices and without fear.

Whatever your role at Refuge, you will have the opportunity to grow and develop as part of an amazing diverse and inclusive team of inspirational and talented people who provide vital and specialist services to women and children when their lives are in crisis. This is not always easy work, but it is essential, it is lifesaving, and it is life changing. So, whether you work directly with clients, behind the scenes, or represent Refuge to the outside world, you will be an integral part of what we do.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Abigail Ampofo
Interim CEO





We want kind and empathic people to work at Refuge, who believe in equality, diversity, and inclusion, are experts in their area of knowledge, want to make a positive difference and improve the lives of the women and children we support.

This is an opportunity to join Refuge as Housing Advocate to supporting women and children who are impacted by domestic violence. You will work closely with victims of domestic abuse from the point of crisis, to provide high quality independent advocacy and support to survivors of domestic abuse at the highest risk and their children.

As part of this role, you will be required to participate in an out-of-hours on call rota.

Salary:

Full Time: £28,104 per annum, inclusive of London Weighting Allowance if applicable

Part Time: £14,052 per annum, inclusive of London Weighting Allowance if applicable

Employment term:

3 roles - Permanent, Full Time, 37.5 hours per week

1 role – Permanent, Part Time, 18.75 hours per week

Location:

Hertfordshire

Closing Date:

09:00am on 22nd July 2024

Interview Date:

29th July 2024

Employment Terms

Salary

The annual full-time salary for this role is £28,104 per annum. Please note that this includes a London Weighting allowance of £3,000 (pro rata for part-time employees), which may not be applicable depending on your location and homeworking arrangements. The part-time salary for this role is £14,052 per annum. Please note that this includes a London Weighting allowance of £1500.

Refuge is an accredited Living Wage Employer. This means that every member of staff working here will earn a real Living Wage. The real Living Wage is higher than the government's minimum, or National Living Wage, and is an independently calculated hourly rate of pay that is based on the actual cost of living. We voluntarily choose to pay the real Living Wage because we believe that a hard day's work deserves a fair day's pay.

Days and hours of work

The contracted hours of work are 37.5 hours per week. This is exclusive of an unpaid lunch for every full day worked. The working pattern is 9am – 5.30pm Monday – Friday, and 12pm – 8pm Fridays on a Rota basis.

Probation

All appointments are subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, further details will be provided when an offer of employment is made. The probation period for this post is 6 months.

Annual Leave

Annual leave allowance is 28 days per annum plus public holidays, rising to 30 days following completion of five years' service at the start of the annual leave year. Annual leave for part-time roles is pro rata.

Pension

Refuge operates a qualifying salary sacrifice pension scheme with Aegon.

Employee Benefits

Refuge offers a variety of exciting opportunities to learn, develop and grow in your career. We recognise the value everyone brings to the organisation in achieving our aims, and we are dedicated to developing and rewarding our staff.

We offer all our employees a competitive benefits package including:

- Competitive salary
- Clinical supervision for all staff
- Confidential support and advice service via an employee assistance programme available 24 hours a day which provides support on a range of work and personal issues
- Enhanced sick pay leave which increases with length of service
- Excellent sector leading maternity, adoption, parental and paternity pay and leave
- Generous life cover scheme valued at four times individuals' salary and covers death in service subject to insurers approval
- Eye care e-Voucher scheme
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Discounted membership with PureGym
- Access to Perkbox providing discounts to employees on a wide range of activities and online purchases

- Opportunity to join our wide range of Equality Network Groups
- Access to free Will writing service
- The ability to apply for flexible working from day one. There will be space to discuss flexible working at interview
- Interest free loans to purchase season tickets for travel to work and/or to pay deposits to secure rented accommodation, and for professional qualifications

Training and Learning

We are committed to supporting a culture that enables all staff to achieve their full potential by providing a range of professional and personal development opportunities including access to a wide range of e-learning resources.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Housing Advocate
Reports to	Deputy Service Manager
Location	1 x West Herts Housing Advocate, 1 x Central Herts Housing Advocate and 1.5 x Eastern Herts Housing Advocate. With the ability to provide cover to other areas when needed.
Responsible for	N/A
Working hours	Full Time, 37.5 hours per week, permanent and Part Time, 18.75 hours per week
Permanent role	
Working pattern	9am – 5.30pm Monday – Friday, 12pm – 8pm on Fridays on a Rota basis.

Main Purpose

This is a new and exciting role in Refuge, the post holder will be embedded within district borough housing teams to facilitate dual working that will ensure that survivors' safety and housing needs are met. The housing advocate will be collocated within the council offices of their designated area to help facilitate -

- Close working relationships with Housing colleagues
- Provision of specialist knowledge relating to DA for Housing Officers and Homelessness Teams to draw on
- Specialist support for survivors at the moment of crisis
- Provision of advocacy; supporting survivors to access safe accommodation
- Joint working with the IDVA or Domestic Abuse Outreach services to ensure all the survivors' needs are met.

This recognizes that many survivors will approach Housing at moments of crisis, when they are either considering fleeing, or have already fled.

The housing advocate will carry a caseload of survivors that require additional support. They will work closely with survivors of domestic abuse from the point of crisis, to provide high quality independent advocacy around housing needs.

They will empower survivors by providing them with emotional, practical and individual safety support. They will ensure that survivors are provided with a safe, supportive and welcoming environment, enabling them to access their rights, make decisions and increase their life options.

Co-located housing advocacy is another form of community-based specialist domestic abuse advocacy support that focuses on victim/survivors' self-identified needs, rather than needs defined by the service and any pre-defined actions the agency thinks victim/survivors should take. The work is undertaken with the victim/survivor around their individual needs and for a period dictated by need, not targets.

Key Accountabilities and Deliverables

- Providing practical and emotional support to people experiencing forms of domestic abuse, applying the principles of effective casework when supporting survivors of domestic abuse and their children and to advocate for survivors to ensure their needs are met.
- Establishing the risks to and the needs of survivors of domestic abuse, identifying and prioritizing those at the highest risk.
 - Developing and delivering individual support and risk management plans to address the risk of harm to survivors of domestic abuse and their children, working directly with all key agency partners to ensure that their plans are coordinated through the MARAC.

- Advocating, both verbally and in writing, where housing advocacy is the main need.
- Working in partnership with other agencies, including participation at the MARAC. To contribute to the design of interventions, and the design of plans which protect survivors and their children whilst maintaining an independent role on behalf of the survivors, keeping their safety central to the plans.
- Being an ambassador for Refuge, working in partnership with other agencies to ensure an effective, coordinated community response to survivors of domestic abuse and their children.
- Ensuring that any issues in relation to safeguarding children or adults at risk are brought to the immediate attention of the Service Manager, or if unavailable another manager.
- Recognizing, respecting and addressing the needs of service-users who face particular barriers when seeking help to access the advocacy service, including those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, LGBT communities, disabled people and other hard to reach groups.
- Supporting the empowerment of survivors, assisting them to recognize the dynamics of domestic abuse present in their own situation, and to help them regain control of their lives.
- Delivering presentations and training on a needs basis to the district boroughs the housing advocate is collocated in.
- Carrying out periodic and regular case reviews in liaison with the line manager, to review ongoing risk and needs, using the outcomes to inform action planning.
- Reporting any problems/difficulties/complaints to the line manager and participate in follow up investigations as required.
- Working within Refuge's quality management system following all policies and procedures
- Providing statistical monitoring or reports as required.
- Ensuring that the views and experiences of service-users and agencies are sought actively, recorded carefully and inform the development of the service.

General responsibilities

- Demonstrating an understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of the role.
- Promoting and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of self and others in line with our Safeguarding Adult and Children Policies, Health & Safety Policy, together with any other requirements aimed at keeping people safe from harm in their interaction with Refuge.
- Ensuring that the confidentiality and security of information is maintained in accordance with our Confidentiality, Data Protection, IT and Security policies.
- Promoting sustainable working practices and reducing the environmental impact of Refuge's work.
- Adhere to Refuge's Policies and Procedures at all times.
- Cover for other members of the team and division as necessary.
- Being proactive in reviewing and evaluating own performance and identifying and acting upon areas for improvement and development.
- This list is not exhaustive, there may be other duties necessary to undertake the role.

Team: Housing Advocacy Team, within the existing Hertfordshire IDVA Service.

Lone working: Yes

Travel: Yes

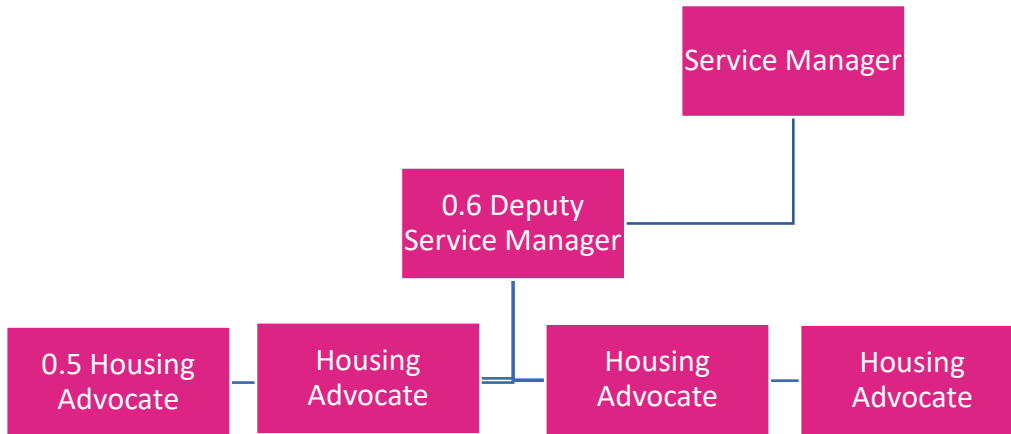
On Call: Yes

It is essential to the development of Refuge's service delivery that the post holder can respond flexibly to changes in the requirements of this post. This job description is therefore a guide and not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities the postholder may have over time.

As part of this role, you will be required to participate in an out-of-hours on call rota.

We are committed to safeguarding therefore we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. As part of this commitment, we undertake basic disclosure checks (DBS) in accordance with the DBS Code of Practice for all roles. We undertake an enhanced DBS check for our roles working directly with survivors.

Team Structure Chart



Who Are We Looking For?

For us it is important that you are passionate, committed and care about the work Refuge undertakes. Not all roles require previous experience in the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) sector. You may be able to bring relevant experience from another industry or transferable skills from a different type of role or volunteering/community experience.

For us, a role description is a useful guide. But please don't discount yourself if you feel you don't meet all the criteria and believe you have the potential. Above all we value individuals who are committed to working hard but looking after yourself, flourish in an inclusive environment and want to make a positive difference to the communities we support.



Person Specification

Experience Knowledge and Qualification

- Knowledge and understanding of the gendered nature of Domestic Abuse
- Knowledge and understanding of housing legislation and options available to survivors of domestic abuse
 - In depth knowledge and understanding of the issues facing women who have experienced domestic violence and abuse and/or sexual violence.
- An understanding of the impact of multiple, intersecting oppressions (e.g., sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, etc) and the consequent barriers for some survivors of domestic abuse to accessing services.
- Knowledge of options for and rights of women experiencing DVA and proven ability to use in casework, including knowledge of relevant legislation relating to DVA.
- Knowledge and understanding of trauma and trauma symptoms.
- At least two years' experience of working within the DVA sector (desirable).
- Experience of conducting needs and risk assessments.
- Experience of providing needs-led support to clients with a variety of support needs.
- Experience of building and maintaining partnerships with other agencies.
- Experience of delivering training to professionals
- Degree level education or similar/relevant professional qualifications.
- Formal / informal training in a range of gender violence issues.

Skills

The skills we are particularly looking for are:

- Ability to work under pressure.
- Ability to plan own workload, to manage time effectively and to deal with changing and competing demands.
- Ability to think creatively and show initiative.
- Ability to communicate sensitively with women who may be distressed.
- Ability to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries when working with women who are experiencing crisis.
- Ability to communicate effectively with a range of professionals.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills including report writing and presentation, and including excellent spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Ability to maintain effective administrative and monitoring systems.
- Proficient in word-processing, spreadsheets, and databases, preferably using Microsoft Windows.

Personal Qualities

It is important to us to have kind, flexible, adaptable, and empathic individuals within the team. Therefore, your contribution to the organization should be one that supports creating an inclusive and safe environment. You will consciously aim to use your position within the organization for the enablement of others by creating a collaborative, empowering, respectful, and inspiring environment where people look forward to coming to work.

An Inclusive Workplace for All

- Our vision is to have a workforce that is reflective of the communities we serve; therefore, we actively encourage and welcome applications from candidates of diverse cultures, perspectives and lived experiences.
- We are committed to challenging the inequalities of society and will continue to learn and grow as an organization to ensure that we provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.
- We understand that people have personal lives, and these can sometimes impact on their time and availability. We will be as flexible as we possibly can be in terms of supporting staff to balance their work and their personal lives. If you need flexibility within your working hours, working pattern or location then do let us know and if the role and team can support that request, we will do what we can to support you.
- We are proud to have been awarded Disability Confident Employer. Refuge is aware that individuals with disabilities, or long-term health conditions or are D/deaf or neurodivergent are underrepresented in the sector. Refuge is committed to doing what we can to support our employees.
- We committed to paying a competitive salary for the sector because we want to help break the poverty cycle and reduce social economic barriers to those working within the sector. This is reflected in our commitment to the Show the Salary pledge and #Nongraduateswelcome and being an Accredited Living Wage employer.
- We understand that individuals who are Black, Asian and ethnically diverse are often underrepresented within the sector therefore we have signed up to the VAWG Anti-Racism charter, we have an EDI Steering Group and equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- We have created a [Respect Charter](#) to complement our values to support our EEDI journey in creating an inclusive and respectful environment both within Refuge and beyond.
- Furthermore, we have seven Employee Network Groups providing a safe space for staff to share their lived experiences and to challenge us as an organization to do better.

These groups are:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- LGBTQI+ Shine
- Anti-Racism
- Allies
- Families
- Women's
- Disability and Neurodiversity Matters

How To Apply

Key Information and Deadlines

To apply please access our online application form via our website:

<https://refugecareers.ciphr-irecruit.com/Applicants/vacancy>

Applications must be completed and submitted by 09.00am on 22 July 2024

- If you have any questions or want to discuss the post before applying, please contact us via email to recruitment@refuge.org.uk
- You can also find out more information about Refuge at www.refuge.org.uk

Interviews will take place via video conference on 29 July 2024.

Completing your application form

What matters most to us when recruiting new members to join the Refuge team, is the inclusive attitude and relevant experience you will bring to the organisation and the role, and how you will support our values of: *A FEMINIST FORCE FOR GOOD, NEVER SHY AWAY, BUILD IT TOGETHER, SHOW WE CARE, LEARN EVERY DAY*. The full values can be downloaded from our [website](#)

Please note that we do not accept CVs for this job vacancy and all applications must be submitted via our online application form. The application process will require you to complete various sections of the application form. It is important that you complete all sections. Please do indicate N/A (not applicable) should some areas of the form not apply to you.

Your Supporting Statement section of the application form describing your skills and experience against the job description and person specification, will also be used to determine who to invite for an interview. Therefore, please do give clear examples of how your skills and experience are relevant to the job you are applying for, and how and where you have used them. Your Supporting Statement should not exceed a maximum of 800 words.

For example, this can be:

- Relevant experience from your present or previous jobs.
- Skills and experience gained from community or voluntary work, work experience, leisure interests and activities in the home.
- Education and the training you have received.

We would like to thank you in advance for expressing an interest in working for Refuge. We look forward to receiving your application.

Applications from Refuge Service Users and Survivors

Former Refuge service users and other survivors supporting Refuge in its external work including for fundraising, policy, media and press can apply for all externally advertised job vacancies.

Survivors that are currently using our services cannot apply for Refuge job vacancies. This restriction is for the survivor's safety and to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

A confirmation of a conditional job offer to a former service user will be subject to a risk assessment. Where significant risks to Refuge and other service users cannot be mitigated, we may not be able to make a conditional offer of employment. If successful in securing the role, their data on Impact will be protected.

Our commitment to inclusive recruitment

Our People and Culture team will remove your name, address and date of birth before forwarding your information for shortlisting. Your education is only considered if it is a requirement of the role.

We want Refuge to be an organisation that is reflective of the society we are based in, therefore, we are committed to growing our diverse workforce. The information you provide on the diversity monitoring form is confidential and helps the People and Culture team to understand where you would have seen the role and how we may need to do better in ensuring everyone who wants to work for Refuge is aware of the opportunities as they arise.

Other information

Safeguarding is vital to our work, and we strive to prevent harm and promote and protect the welfare and safety of all adults and children that come in contact with the organisation. We have a collective responsibility to take a do no harm approach by prioritising the safety and wellbeing of the women and children accessing our services, as well as ensuring a duty of care to our staff and volunteers.

As part of this responsibility, we undertake basic disclosure checks (DBS) for all roles in accordance with the Codes of Practice and in line with our Recruitment of Ex-Offender and Disclosure Barring Services Checks Policy, and for our roles working directly with survivors, at an enhanced level check. Applicants are encouraged to apply for job vacancies, having a spent or unspent conviction will not automatically exclude you from being offered the role. If you are successful in securing the role, we will hold an open and measured discussion about any convictions that might be relevant to the role. Our Recruitment of Ex-Offender and Disclosure Barring Services Checks Policy is available to applicants on request.

Data Protection Act

Refuge is committed to protecting your privacy. Information provided by you in your application form will be kept for the purposes of monitoring. It will be copied for use during the recruitment process. Once the recruitment process is completed, the data will be stored for a maximum of 6 months and then destroyed. If you are the successful candidate, relevant information will be taken from this form and used as part of your human resources record. All personal information that you supply to us as part of your application will be processed in accordance with prevailing UK Data Protection legislation.

By submitting your completed application form you are consenting to your personal data being used and held as described above.

Please ensure that the information you give to us is correct and that you let us know of any changes immediately.

