



**Stay Safe East**  
**Supporting disabled survivors**  
**JOB PACK June 2023**

**About Stay Safe East**

Stay Safe East is a user-led organisation led by disabled people and supporting disabled survivors. Stay Safe East is one of only four funded Deaf or Disabled People's Organisations (DDPO) in England and Wales working on Domestic Abuse and the only specialist DDPO working across all areas of abuse (domestic and sexual violence, hate crime, harassment and institutional abuse). From small beginnings in 2010, we have grown into a nationally recognised leader in the field. *More details on our website [www.staysafe-east.org.uk](http://www.staysafe-east.org.uk) and at the end of this job pack.*

This is a period of development and growth. From a local organisation with 5 staff in 2018, we are now a London-wide service with 20 staff when fully staffed.

We have a positive policy on training and employing disabled people. We expect commitment and hard work from all our staff; in return we offer an accessible, flexible and welcoming workplace, reasonable adjustment and support in your work and involvement in a team who are passionate about getting the very best for our clients and bringing about change.

### About you

You must be able to manage change. You should be self-organised, motivated, practical and a good communicator. You must be comfortable working in an environment where difference is welcomed, and in ensuring that your work practice meets the needs of your colleagues, including being able to make operational systems accessible to the Board, CEO, managers, staff and volunteers. A good knowledge of IT is required.

Your ethos, values and approach must match those of Stay Safe East. A commitment to human rights and equality is a must. You may meet clients in the course of your work; you must be able to interact with clients with respect and maintain boundaries, and to maintain confidentiality.

Working arrangements: The office core hours are 10am to 5pm, but some flexibility is possible to meet disability or other needs. The postholder may sometimes be required to attend occasional weekend meetings may be required, for example for an organisational event or evening meetings.

We operate a hybrid working system, the usual place of work is our office in Leytonstone, London E15. The postholder will be required to work from the office part of the time

Support: Initial support during the probationary period will be provided by your line manager. Other support and training are available.

Access and inclusion: Our office and building have a good standard of access, with parking within 10 metres of the entrance and an accessible toilet and meeting rooms on the ground floor alongside our offices.

There is a rest room on site. Assistive software can be funded through Access to Work.

We will make reasonable adjustments where possible. Where relevant, we assist our staff to apply for Access to Work support.

Where hybrid working is available, the successful candidate will be provided with appropriate IT and software, duplicate seating or other support to enable them to work from home.

Probationary period: 6 months from start date. By the end of the probationary period, you must be able to exercise all the functions of the post with competence.

**DBS:** This post is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check.

## **APPLYING FOR THE POST**

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If you like what you have read and have the skills, experience and most of all the passion and commitment to lead our organisation, please apply for the post of VAWG Service Manager.

**To apply, please complete the attached application form and monitoring form, and return them no later than by e-mail to:** [recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk). Please head your e-mail 'VAWG Service Manager application'.

**Important: Please ensure you return the application form and diversity monitoring form as a typed word document in 16 point, not as a PDF or handwritten document; this is so all forms are accessible to members of the interview panel.**

A palantypist/STTR reporter will be providing transcription. **Please make sure you inform about any access needs as early as possible.**

If you have any questions or require the application form and job details in a different format, please e-mail [recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk) or call/text 07452 856281.

**Closing date for applications: Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 5pm**

The interview panel will be the CEO and one Board member.

**Interviews: 7<sup>th</sup> & 8th August 2023**

## **ABOUT STAY SAFE EAST**

### **WORKING FOR THE RIGHTS OF DISABLED SURVIVORS**

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For more details of our work, please see our website [www.staysafe-east.org.uk](http://www.staysafe-east.org.uk)

Stay Safe East is a leading agency working with Deaf and disabled survivors of hate crime, Domestic Abuse and other abuse. We are a Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO) staffed and led by disabled people. We offer the only specialist Domestic Abuse service run by disabled women for disabled women (and a small number of men). We offer a specialist support service to victims of hate crime and cuckooing and employ the only specialist Disability Independent Victims Advocate in the UK, who supports victims of financial, institutional and other abuse. All our practice is inclusive and aimed at getting the best for our clients and promoting their human rights.

#### **Our ethos**

Our work is grounded in the social model of disability. We believe that disability is a social condition faced by people with impairments. Our role is to help remove those barriers or minimise their impact, whether for individual clients or in changing wider practice, policy and strategy.

We take a feminist and intersectional approach to all forms of abuse against disabled people, and in particular a gender-based approach to violence against disabled women and girls. We also recognise that disabled men and non-binary people may also be at risk. We recognise that supporting our clients means addressing the way their experiences and opportunities have been impacted by structural racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and disablism.

We promote the human rights of disabled survivors of abuse.

We see disabled people as the experts on our lives; we champion the voices of disabled survivors.

We respect and aim to understand the cultures, lives and choices made by our clients.

We prioritise the safety and well-being of Stay Safe East clients, their children and dependants.

We offer employment and volunteering opportunities to disabled people from all communities and take a positive approach to inclusion, training and developing the skills of staff and volunteers; we find innovative ways to enable our teams to work well and safely.

### **The Board**

The Board has responsibility for strategic oversight of the organisation. Day to day responsibilities are delegated to the CEO, who manages the two service managers and the Finance and Operations Manager. There are currently six Board members, all of whom are disabled people, and come from a wide range of backgrounds. Two Board members are current or former users of our services. The Board meets 5 to 6 times per year.

### **The Stay Safe East Team**

Our hard-working team is passionate about getting the best for their clients and bringing about change.

All our staff, volunteers and Board members are disabled people and are from a range of communities across East London and beyond. Amongst us we speak 11 languages. Flexibility, mutual support and learning from experience are part of our way of working. Most staff work less than 35 hours. Some staff also employ their own Personal Assistants. There is currently a Finance and Operations team, two service teams and a policy team:

- The Finance and Operations Team consists of an Operations Manager, the Finance Office, HR Support Officer and an Administrator. The team is managed by the CEO and has responsibility for ensuring the organisation runs efficiently.
- The Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) team is currently a Manager, 2 team leaders, 7 Independent Disability and Domestic Violence Advocates (IDDVAs) and one volunteer

- The Hate and General Crime Team, comprises of a Manager, two part-time Hate Crime Advocates and two part-time Benefits Advocates.
  - The Policy Team is managed by the Policy and Projects Advisor; and includes Policy Officer.
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## **Stay Safe East organisational structure June 2023**

*(This is a pictorial representation of the staff structure outlined on the previous page)*

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## **OUR WORK**

### **Policy and change work: abuse against disabled people**

From the outset, the evidence from our casework has helped us influence policy and practice, first at a local level, then at a London and national level. In 2019, we launched the Disability and Domestic Abuse Project which focuses on policy and practice change and on building capacity of service providers and policy makers to tackle Domestic Abuse against disabled survivors. The work has an overarching intersectional approach and has now become a Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) project. The funding from Three Guineas for this work is allowing Stay Safe East to develop our national policy work and increase our impact as a leading voice working for the rights of disabled women, men and non-binary people to live free from violence and abuse. We influence national policy and strategies. We have commented on the impact of lockdown on disabled survivors, put forward amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill, which though unsuccessful have led to the Government setting up a review of abuse against disabled people by non-family carers. We have made a significant contribution to the Violence against Women and Girls strategy, as well as offering advice on accessible information for survivors and are currently working on amendments to the Victims Bill. The work is supported by an Advisory Group of disabled survivors and representatives from VAWG agencies. We are members of a London wide partnerships to produce a coordinated approach to hate crime.

### **Training, capacity building and research**

As part of the London Deaf and Disabled People's Hate Crime partnership, our Hate Crime advocate is seconded two days a week to other Deaf and disabled people's organisations (DDPOs) to train them and help them develop their capacity to advocate for disabled victims of hate crime. We have over ten years experience of providing training on domestic abuse, sexual violence and on hate crime to a wide range of organisations from



DDPOs and the Violence against Women and Girls sector to the police and local authorities. We aim to develop our training capacity over the next few years, training a new generation of disabled people to deliver good practice to our partners.

Training and consultancy bring in unrestricted income which has allowed us to continue some of our hate crime work which is more difficult to get funding for.

### **Our clients**

Our clients are the core of everything we do. They are from across London, and from all communities, faiths and backgrounds. They may self-define as disabled people, or due to a lifetime of abuse because they are disabled people, they may reject that identity when they first come into contact with Stay Safe East. 85% of our clients are disabled women. They may have a learning disability, mental health issues, physical or sensory impairments, be Deaf sign language users, identify as neuro-diverse or be living with a long-term health condition. They may come to us without a diagnosis and just have been told they are 'stupid' or 'odd'.

Most of our clients are not in paid work and live on a minimum income. Our clients may identify as male, female or non-binary; their heritage may be Black British, Black African, South Asian, East Asian, White British, Traveller or another identity; their faith may be the most important thing in their life, or they may have other beliefs that sustain them. They may or may not have had the space to realise their sexuality. We do our best to respect difference and work in the way the client needs.

Most people referred to Stay Safe East have experienced multiple forms of abuse – be it coercive control, emotional, sexual or physical abuse at the hands of family, partners, ‘trusted’ care workers, or racist, transphobic, disablist, homophobic or faith-based hate crime by neighbours or strangers, financial abuse, sexual exploitation, cuckooing or other targeting by criminals or others. The list may be long, but our clients do not remain victims for ever. They have sought help because they want to do more than survive; they want a life of their own free from abuse, to make their own decisions, take risks and enjoy safe relationships. We don’t promise our clients miracles, but we do offer to ‘hold’ them on this journey and to do everything we can to help them take back control.

In return, our clients have developed a community of ‘Stay Safe women’, forging friendships through our Women’s Group; two clients have joined our Board. Others refer disabled people to us as the place to get help if you are not safe.

Our clients may challenge us, and sometimes be frustrated because we can’t make everything happen. We may cry with them about the harshness of their lives. We may also share in the laughter when our clients learn to laugh again. We celebrate with them when they are rehoused in an accessible flat, or the court decides a mother’s children can live with her; we cheer when a client reports an incident to the police themselves, or simply tells a social worker that they need to stop using jargon because ‘I have a learning disability and I don’t understand what you are saying’.

## **Casework and casework advice**

We have been successfully providing advocacy and support to disabled victims/survivors for the past 12 years. We currently have over 140 clients open to our services. The support we provide includes:

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- An accessible place of safety to report all forms of targeted harassment and violence, and to get support
  - Long-term, holistic advocacy and support for disabled and Deaf victims
  - Help with getting action from the police, housing, the local authority and other agencies
  - Ongoing help with practical issues e.g. accessing benefits, housing, social care, health, etc. Signposting to other services such as counselling (or our own service which supports a few clients who cannot access other services)
  - Helping our clients to develop a positive self-regard and confidence as Deaf or disabled people
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### **The Stay Safe East casework model**

Stay Safe has developed a casework model that aims to meet the needs of our clients.

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- We offer an accessible service, with voice, SMS and e-mail contact, Easy Read and large print information, accessible premises and facilities. We offer home visits to all but a few of our clients (i.e. where there is a safety issues for staff) and will pay for transport for someone to come to the office. (We have adapted this approach during Covid). We arrange BSL and spoken community language interpreters. The team has an awareness of Deaf culture. We respond to clients' individual needs and ways of thinking and understanding, and work at their pace and as much as possible on their terms.
- We work in partnership with our clients and help them make their own decisions. We help clients understand their rights to be free from abuse and to live independently in the community of their choice.

- We work holistically, offering emotional support, regular contact, advocacy and other support as required. We might for example help a client get a care package or mental health support, apply for rehousing, and rather than referring people to another service, we help with benefit applications, or get Dial-a-Ride membership, or will ring utility companies on their behalf, or attend appointments with clients.
- We promote the client's right to independent living and the resources to live independently in the community of their choice.
- We work to ensure that other agencies understand the emotional, practical and cultural needs of our Deaf and disabled clients. We focus on addressing barriers for our clients, rather than on impairment, and on rights rather than on 'vulnerability'. We fight for our clients' access and communication needs to be met, and for their human rights to be respected.
- We recognise that our clients may have suffered abuse directly linked to their impairment or other aspects of their identity, and may have a very negative experience of impairment and disability. Many of our clients have had a lifetime of institutional abuse, hate crime and domestic abuse. We try to promote Disability Pride and self-respect through advocacy and peer support.
- Stay Safe East support may involve intensive one-to-one work with new clients until they feel able to do things for themselves, or only need more 'light touch' support. We have found that at first many of our clients need us to 'hold' them emotionally and sometimes practically until they are strong enough to do this with less support.
- We gather evidence for hate crime and harassment cases, for example where there are other victims of the same perpetrators – disabled people and others in the community are more likely to speak to us as an independent grassroots organisation than to the police or their landlord.

- We work in partnership with the Police, local authorities, housing landlords, Social Services and other agencies, but are not afraid to act as 'critical friends' and to push for action where none is forthcoming. We have learnt to be persistent and persuasive.
  - As active citizens who are also disabled people, our staff, volunteers and Board can be positive role models for our clients.
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