A logo with a hand and text

Description automatically generated**Stay Safe East**

**Senior Housing Advocate**

**Job Description and Person Specification**

**Job details**

Salary: £ 32,285 per annum pro rata (£19,372 p.a.)

Hours of work: 21 hours per week (0.6 FTE) – some flexibility possible

Managed by: VAWG Manager

Contract term: Fixed term to March 31st 2025 (may be extended depending on funding)

Place of work Stay Safe East offices, 90 Crownfield Road,

London E15 2BG (accessible premises).

We operate a hybrid working system.

Funded by: MOPAC

Start date: As soon as possible

*Stay Safe East is a ‘by and for’ organisation and particularly welcomes application for this post from disabled people who reflect London’s diverse communities of faith, sexuality, culture, ethnicity and age.*

**Aims of the Post**

As a Senior Housing Advocate you will provide specialist advocacy for victim/survivors of crime, particularly domestic abuse and hate crime; facilitating and advocating for appropriate accommodation.

The post-holder will challenge any obstacles, and will find practical solutions to support victim/survivors and their children to access safe accommodation. This may entail helping victim/survivors to find new accommodation; making sure that temporary accommodation is suitable for the needs of disabled victim/survivors or advocating to increase the safety and suitability of existing accommodation where this is the best option.

The post holder will hold a small caseload of the most complex housing-related cases at Stay Safe East.

The post holder will empower survivors by providing them with practical solutions to accommodation-related issues, providing advocacy with external agencies, and informing women of the full range of housing options available to them. You will be confident in working alongside relevant external agencies and challenging their processes where necessary.

With extensive practical experience of supporting a diverse range of victims of domestic violence and/or other forms of gender-based violence, or abuse against disabled people, you will have excellent knowledge of housing options available. You will be a keen listener, a reflective practitioner and will have a passion for advocacy.

You will utilise your skills to provide training for colleagues, sector and non-sector professionals, to increase their understanding of the issues faced by our clients and share practical ways to dismantle barriers to access. Your work will also feed into Stay Safe East’s policy function, enabling us to feed back issues identified through the housing advocacy role.

Job responsibilities

**Advocating for the housing rights of Stay Safe East’s clients**

1. To advocate both verbally and in writing on behalf of victim/survivors in a range of settings to address blockages to accessing safe accommodation; applying practical measures to enable successful outcomes.
2. Take referrals from Stay Safe East’s IDDVAs, Hate Crime Advocates and IVAs (general crime advocates).
3. Provide guidance and advice to caseworkers on housing-related issues.
4. To provide casework for a small caseload of clients experiencing very complex barriers relating to housing.
5. Source move-on and emergency accommodation funds in association with Benefits Advocates.
6. To advocate, both verbally and in writing, in a range of housing settings.
7. Act as an ambassador for Stay Safe East, working in partnership with other agencies to ensure an effective, coordinated community response to survivors and their children
8. Support Stay Safe East’s policy work in relation to housing issues.
9. Regularly seek out and obtain updated, relevant, information on housing options and government policy relating to housing and homelessness.
10. Contribute to consultations, research and relevant external meetings in relation to issues and barriers for disabled people in terms of accessing safe accommodation.
11. Share knowledge with colleagues within the organisation and more widely – both informally and through structured training.
12. Collate survivor feedback and issues, to share with senior management to enable issues to be raised as appropriate with policy makers.
13. Ensure that any issues in relation to safeguarding children or vulnerable adults are brought to the immediate attention of the VAWG manager, or – if unavailable – another manager or CEO.
14. Recognise, respect and address the diverse needs of each survivor to ensure no-one encounters barriers to accessing support from the service and to take measures to continuously increase access to the service for all survivors including women with disabilities.
15. Report any problems/difficulties/complaints to the line manager and participate in follow up investigations as required
16. Work within Stay Safe East’s quality management system following all policies and procedures
17. Maintain confidentiality and to ensure that professional boundaries are observed when working with clients, staff and external bodies.

**Managing security**

1. Ensure that security of sensitive information is maintained and complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation

**Managing health and safety**

1. Promote and ensure safe working for self and others by strict adherence to Health and Safety policy
2. Maintain and support the management of health, safety and security on the workplace premises (where required).

**Managing self**

1. Promote and support equality and empowerment within all areas of work
2. Represent and be an ambassador for Stay Safe East, working in partnership internally and externally with other agencies to ensure an effective coordinated community response to survivors and their children
3. Develop and maintain positive, collaborative working relationships with all Stay Safe East staff, being committed as part of the team to providing a high level of support to survivors
4. Actively participate in Stay Safe East’s performance management processes including regular supervisions and development.

**Ethos**

1. To work to the social model of disability and to implement Stay Safe East’s Equality and Diversity Policy, ensure a non-discriminatory approach to this role; to work within the inclusive ethos of the organisation
2. To work in the best interests of Stay Safe East, its staff, Board and clients and in line within its ethos and values
3. To exercise probity and honesty in all matters

**Other duties**

1. Occasional duty cover
2. Keep accurate records of work done for funder and provide regular updates to the CEO and management team
3. Attend supervision and annual reviews
4. Attend monthly staff meetings and occasional away days
5. Undertake relevant training as agreed with the VAWG Manager
6. Perform other duties appropriate to the post as requested by your line manager
7. Be prepared to work occasional evenings and weekends as required

**Person Specification: Senior Housing Advocate – Stay Safe East**

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|  | **Essential (E)**  **/ Desirable (D)** |
| **Experience** |  |
| 1. Significant proven experience of providing emotional and practical support to survivors of domestic violence and/or other forms of abuse with a track record of providing excellent housing advocacy. | E |
| 1. Experience supporting disabled people with a housing need. | D |
| 1. Experience of identifying and responding to the risks to and needs of survivors of domestic violence and/or other forms of gender-based violence, or other forms of abuse/crime. | E |
| 1. Experience of providing, non-judgmental, non-directive and confidential support to victim/survivors of abuse and of encouraging them to take control of their lives and set realistic objectives and goals. | E |
| 1. Experience of working in a setting where housing advocacy is an element of the role, e.g. in a women’s refuge, hostel, or other form of supported or temporary accommodation. | E |
| 1. Experience in developing and delivering training. | D |
| **Knowledge and skills** |  |
| 1. Up to date working knowledge of homelessness and housing practice and legislation | E |
| 1. Knowledge of the housing needs and rights of disabled people, including the barriers to safe accommodation | E |
| 1. Understanding of issues relating to the safeguarding of children including in relation to adequate, safe accommodation | E |
| 1. Knowledge of the dynamics and impact of domestic violence and/or other forms of gender-based violence and how best to support survivors | E |
| 1. Understanding of how disabled people are particularly impacted by abuse and crime – in particular hate crime and domestic abuse | E |
| 1. Up to date knowledge criminal, civil and welfare rights legislation relating to domestic violence and other forms of abuse against disabled people | D |
| 1. Understand how to maintain boundaries in this specialist role | E |
| 1. Understand confidentiality and data protection in this setting | E |
| 1. Understanding of multi-agency partnership structures, including the MARAC, in responding to domestic abuse and other forms of abuse. | D |
| 1. Understanding of safeguarding, as it relates to children of victim/survivors and adults at risk | E |
| 1. Ability to capture the outcomes the housing advocacy work from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. | E |
| 1. IT proficient including Microsoft Outlook, Word and Excel | E |
| **Qualifications** |  |
| 1. Relevant degree or qualification | D |
| **Other** |  |
| 1. Personal lived experience of disability | D |
| 1. Confidence to advocate effectively on behalf of victim survivors and to impart knowledge to others | E |
| 1. Able to work effectively as part of a team | E |
| 1. Ability to work under own initiative | E |
| 1. Willingness to attend occasional meetings/functions outside of working hours | E |