



ADVOCACY AND BEFREINDING CO-ORDINATOR (Welfare Benefits)

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Advocacy and Befriending Coordinator (Welfare Benefits)

RESPONSIBLE TO: Chief Executive

LOCATION: THFN offices in Bethnal Green, and out in the community

Salary: £25,225 (including pension)

Fixed term contract: October 2026

Hours: 28 hours per week

Appointment: Subject to references and enhanced DBS check

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Tower Hamlets Friends and Neighbours is a small charity that provides befriending and advocacy support to older people in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. Annually we support over 200 older people. We are looking for a fourth Befriending Advocate. The post holder will maintain a case load of between 20-30 older people at any one time, (levels of engagement with individual older people can range from weekly home-visits to a phone call every two weeks). Each older person's needs are unique, and our engagement is dependent on the needs and interests of the befriended.

The postholder will also lead on developing a specialism around social welfare advice on behalf of the organisation. You will be the internal point of contact for peers on advice work, as well as holding your own caseload which involves befriending older people and supporting them in a variety of practical ways to alleviate loneliness through companionship. The overall aim of the post is to provide a social outlet for older people, to give them the support and information that they need and to help them develop greater independence, increase their social networks and enable them to lead a more fulfilling life.

Main Responsibilities

- 1 Provide a befriending service to vulnerable and socially isolated older men and women through regular home visits. This will include visits to people's homes, residential and sheltered care homes, hospitals and anywhere else deemed appropriate.
- 2 Undertake telephone befriending and maintain regular phone contact with users, particularly giving additional phone support in times of personal crisis.

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- 3 Carry out needs and risk assessments of older people newly referred to the service, finding out what their basic needs are in areas where a volunteer Befriender could help and what other agencies are already involved as well as identifying potential hazards/risks.
- 4 Support clients to improve their health and well being and provide support in dealing with issues including depression, dementia and other health conditions through a combination of practical support and advice including accompanying users to events which will improve their health and well being.
- 5 Provide one to one advocacy support in line with our quality standards, promote self advocacy and support users to address issues in areas such as housing, social care, health services, benefits, leisure, volunteering, education, access, and transport and any other relevant issue. Provide information and signpost users to services which could be beneficial to them and where necessary liaise with other agencies/services on the user's behalf and with their understanding and consent, e.g. Housing, Social Services etc.
- 6 Escort users to GP, hospital, and other agreed appointments or on short walks as required.
- 7 Organise outings, shopping trips and events, as well as escorting users on these occasions.
- 8 Lead on the development of organisational knowledge around changes in social welfare provision, ensuring colleagues are kept informed and supporting colleagues on complex casework.
- 9 Support volunteers through mentoring, and shadowing and any other means as required, and record all information.
- 10 Support the CEO and Administrative Assistant in the recruitment, induction, support and supervision of volunteers as required.
- 11 Work within existing THFN quality standard frameworks and assist CEO in the development and improvement of these on an ongoing basis.
- 12 Participate in training, supervision meetings and performance appraisal interviews and attend meetings (including team meetings), as determined by the organisation.



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- 13 Ensure case file management procedures are maintained and records are accurate and up to date and for administrative, statistical, monitoring and evaluating purposes, e.g. Health and Well Being Plans - record the number and frequency of visits made, report significant issues as they arise etc.
- 14 Report back to the Administrative Assistant and CEO on the progress of visits, including raising any concerns in a timely manner, e.g. regarding health and safety.
- 15 With the assistance of the CEO, maintain familiarity with and an understanding of issues effecting older people, particularly those living in the borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 16 Adhere to the THFN Equal Opportunities and Safeguarding Policy at all times.
- 17 Have a clear understanding of and work to all THFN policies and procedures, e.g. Health & Safety, Confidentiality, claiming of expenses, Lone Working etc.
- 18 Carry out any other similar duties as appropriate and as required from time-to-time by the organisation.
- 19 Maintain client confidentiality

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

ASPECT OF ROLE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Work/Voluntary experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of six months' experience working with older people in a caring/welfare capacity • Minimum of six months' experience working in a voluntary or statutory agency on a paid/unpaid basis 	<p>Experience of working with people living with dementia, or Alzheimer's</p> <p>Experience of working in a busy office;</p>
Knowledge/qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the issues currently affecting older people • Understanding of service provision for older people • Understanding of social welfare advice provision as it impacts older people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualification in social care or social work • Knowledge of Health & Safety issues • A qualification in advocacy • Knowledge issues affecting those living with dementia • Knowledge of the impact of loneliness and social isolation on people • Knowledge of the Tower Hamlets area
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good spoken and written English including the ability to produce short reports, letters to other agencies etc. • Good communication skills and the ability to communicate with people in different settings, e.g. social workers and GPs. • Good listening skills and ability to understand difficulties faced by Older people • Ability to assess the needs of older people • IT skills: knowledge and experience of using Microsoft Office • Good administration skills, including the ability to keep statistical and other records; 	
Personal and Interpersonal Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physically fit • An enthusiastic and "can-do" positive attitude • Able to work sensitively in a multi-cultural environment' • Committed to meeting the needs of older people • Committed to the principles of equal opportunities 	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Good organisational and time management skills• Ability to respond and communicate sensitively to service users, secondary beneficiaries and other stakeholders by telephone and in writing;• Ability to work as part of a team;• Experience of working under pressure and to tight deadlines• Able to balance completing work priorities;• Be pro-active, self-motivated and can motivate and encourage others;• A collaborative team player willing to share knowledge and learning openly to create understanding and support	
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Next steps

To apply please send a full CV, (explaining any gaps in your work history), and statement addressing the person specification of not more than 3 pages. Please apply through our Charity Job portal <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/tower-hamlets-friends-and-neighbours/advocacy-and-befriending-coordinator-specialist-in-welfare-benefits-/979007?tsId=36>

Closing date

Thursday 29th August 2024.

For an informal discussion about the role, please email rit@thfn.org.uk