

Job Description

Post:	Independent Domestic & Sexual Violence Advocate
Location:	Knowsley, Merseyside
Responsible to:	IDSVA Manager
Hours:	35 per week, Monday - Friday
Salary:	£29,984.10 - Rising to £33,100 dependent upon IDVA qualification and experience + 6% pension contribution

Purpose

The IDSVA Service provides support and advocacy to clients who have been assessed as high risk of serious harm or murder from a current partner, ex-partner, or family member. IDSVA's work directly with a client to identify their risk factors and create a safety plan to address, manage and reduce their risks whilst increasing their safety. IDSVA's provide information, advice and support based on the individual's needs on a short to medium term basis. Support is provided on variety of issues such as addressing the safety of the client and any children (personal and environmental), support through the Civil and Criminal Court process, Child Protection and Safeguarding and Housing. IDSVA's also attend Knowsley MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and advocate on behalf of the client with other agencies and organisation; Police, Social Services, Housing Providers, Probation/Prisons, Education, Health Practitioners, and others including voluntary sector organisations.

Key Responsibilities

1. Provide a pro-active service offering information, support, advice, and advocacy to victim/survivors of domestic abuse to increase their safety.
2. Assess the level of risk using the Merseyside Risk Indicator Toolkit (MeRIT)
3. Refer cases to MARAC, represent and advocate for clients at bi-monthly MARAC meetings.
4. Work in partnership with MARAC partner agencies and other relevant agencies to complete actions agreed and keep clients informed of progress. Including making referrals and signposting to other agencies as needed.
5. Keep relevant agencies updated about any important/ significant changes to the client's situation. Also liaising with partner agencies and advocating on behalf of the client with any feedback or barriers to accessing support.
6. Ensure clients are aware of their full range of options and resources available to them with an emphasis on civil, criminal, legal and housing options so they can make informed choices.
7. Agree an individual safety plan with clients and ensure actions are completed.
8. Accompany clients to meeting and appointments as and when they require support.
9. Support clients through the Criminal Justice System; explaining procedures and support available such as special measures and updating on outcome of court hearings/cases.
10. Support clients through the Civil Courts process.

11. Manage a caseload and ensure accurate records of client contact, information/advice provided, support offered and referral to other services/agencies are maintained. This includes preparing reports, letters, email and all administration needs.
12. Assist the IDSVAs Manager with completing monitoring and evaluation requirements of The First Step.
13. To be aware of the legal framework relating to the protection of children and safeguarding adults including the policy and procedures of The First Step and The Local Safeguarding Children and Adults Boards.
14. Be responsible for and keep up to date records of petty cash transactions.

Specific Duties

Service Delivery

1. Ensure that risk assessment and risk management procedures are followed at all times, prioritising those most at risk.
2. Within the IDSVAs service to be the lead professional for child protection and information sharing ensuring staff understand and comply with the services safeguarding framework.
3. Manage a caseload focusing on high-risk victims to provide a proactive, short to medium term service, based on thorough individual, safety planning and personal support incorporating risk assessment.
4. Ensure that case files and records are accurate and complete, and that both are kept and in compliance with the Data Protection Act.
5. Remain up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation connected to your work, including organisational procedures and policies in order to uphold standards of best practice.
6. Ensure compliance with monitoring and evaluation requirements including internal/external and annual service reviews.
7. Respect and value the diversity of the community in which the service works in, providing a service that recognises the diverse needs of survivors, ensuring the service is accessible to all.
8. Understand the legal framework relating to the protection of vulnerable adults including the policy and procedure of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board
9. Understand the legal framework relating to the protection of children including the policy and procedure of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

10. Ensure clients are kept informed about actions/support offered by MARAC and the IDSVAs service.
11. Ensure other relevant agencies are kept informed about important changes to a client's situation.
12. Ensure empowerment of the client is supported, they are assisted in recognising the features and dynamics of domestic abuse present in their situation and helped to regain control of their lives.
13. In consultation with the senior officer to produce policies and procedures relevant to the agencies work and to have positive input into review, development, and production of all The First Step policies and procedures.
14. To use the agency database for case management.

Participation in Multi-Agency Partnerships

1. Develop and maintain positive working relationships with other agencies, working in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to tackle the issue of domestic abuse.
2. Represent the service at operational multi-agency meetings, feeding back initiatives and outcomes to the IDSVAs team and contribute to the evaluation of the quality of activities these services offer.
3. Represent the service at local and national events.
4. Ensure the involvement of the IDSVAs service in the MARAC.
5. Influence and develop responses to improve services to victims of domestic abuse ensuring that the experience of service users and other agencies inform this process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Maintain effective monitoring and evaluation systems and databases which assess intake, outputs, performance, outcomes, and effectiveness of the service.
2. To keep up to date with domestic abuse issues and participate in relevant training as required.
3. To monitor budget and be aware of any financial limitations. Record all financial transactions and ensure the safe keeping of petty cash. To provide monthly petty cash report to the finance officer.

Service Development

1. To attend regular team meetings, encourage team participation and promote staff development through training opportunities.
2. Develop positive working relationships with external agencies and relevant professionals to support the delivery and development of quality services that meet the needs of service users, ensuring the interests of The First Step are protected.
3. Promote service user empowerment by working with service users to develop appropriate methods and techniques to enable them to express their views and inform decisions. The victim/survivors voice should be at the forefront of the work.

Other

1. To conduct all work in a way that reflects the values of TFS and its policies and procedures.
2. To undertake other duties as reasonably requested.
3. To keep up to date with domestic abuse issues and participate in relevant training as required.
4. To maintain up to date information on legal, housing and welfare issues relevant to domestic abuse.
5. To contribute to the production of statistical and other reports on work done with victim/survivors to meet the requirements of TFS, funding bodies, Local Authority.
6. To comply with monitoring and evaluation requirements of appropriate bodies e.g., TFS, KMBC. Including Quarterly/ Annual reports for The First Step, Board of Trustees, and funders.
7. To be self-servicing in terms of word processing, reports, letters, e-mails, and all administration needs.
8. To undertake evaluation questionnaires with clients using TFS services and co-operate in the ongoing evaluation of TFS services.
9. To assist with general cover of TFS office.

General Duties

1. To participate in training courses, internal and external, relevant to the post, or to The First Step's commitment to providing a quality service to its service users and stakeholders.
2. To input and maintain accurate information to the Charity's database systems.
3. To attend internal meetings as required.
4. To carry out any other reasonable duties that may be required by the CEO.
5. To fully comply with the charity's policies e.g., Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Lone Working, Health & Safety, etc.

General

The person appointed will be expected to work flexibly and the exact nature of the duties described above is subject to periodic review and is liable to change. The job description is a representative document. Other reasonably similar duties may be allocated from time to time commensurate with the general character of the post and its grading. All staff are responsible for the implementation of the Health & Safety Policy as far as it affects them, colleagues and others who may be affected by their work. Since confidential information is involved with the duties of this post, the post holder will be required to exercise discretion at all times and to observe relevant codes of practice and legislation in relation to data protection and personal information.

This post is **exempt** from the provisions of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 by virtue of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. You are therefore **not** entitled to withhold information about convictions which for any other purposes are 'spent' under the provisions of the ACT and any failures to disclose such convictions could result in dismissal or disciplinary action by The First Step. Any information given will be completely confidential and will be considered only in relation to the positions to which the Order applies.

Principal Terms & Conditions

- Salary paid monthly.
- Employer pension contribution of 6%.
- 35 hours per week.
- Business mileage allowance of 45p per mile.
- 25 days annual holiday pro rata for part time plus statutory bank holidays.
- 365-day access to an Employee Assistance Programme.
- Clinical Supervision.
- Enhanced DBS.
- Death in Service Benefit.
- This position is funded for 3 years (plus possibility of further two years)

IDSVA - Person Specification

This person specification states the essential experience, knowledge, skills and attitudes which the selection panel will use to draw up a shortlist of applicants to be interviewed. When filling out your application form, please think carefully about how you can demonstrate that you meet each of the criteria in the person specification and give examples wherever you can. It is insufficient simply to repeat what it says in the person specification. We are aware that we are asking for a wide range of skills and experience and will consider applications from people who would be prepared to build their experience, skills, and knowledge to acquire what is required.

Criteria	Education/Qualifications
Essential (at least two years' experience)	

- Domestic Abuse Training.
- Sexual Abuse Training.

Desirable

- Safelives IDSV A Accreditation (or willing to work towards)
- Women’s Aid Qualification (or willing to work towards)

Criteria

Experience

Essential

- Knowledge of the impact of domestic and sexual abuse on women and children and the healing process.
- Proven track record of advocacy and supporting adults in crisis.
- Knowledge & understanding of risk factors and experience of risk assessment/safety planning.
- An understanding of legislation and good practice relating to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Experience of recording and documenting information in client files and for monitoring and statistical purposes.
- Knowledge of Child Protection and the processes involved.
- Experience of using databases, Excel, and Word processing.

Desirable

- Knowledge and understanding of the Criminal and Civil Justice Systems.
- Knowledge and understanding of confidentiality.

Criteria

Abilities/Skills/Knowledge

Essential

- Ability to work to strict timescales, meet challenging deadlines and balance completing priorities successfully when working under pressure.
- Self-Motivation with an ability to work on own initiative.
- Analytical Skills and problem solving.
- Ability to develop collaborative working relationships with staff, other teams, and partner agencies.
- A flexible and adaptable approach to work.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both in writing and verbally, with a wide range of people.
- Ability to make decisions quickly and independently, sometimes with limited information.
- Commitment to continuous professional development.

Desirable

- Skills in group work, or the ability to develop these skills.

Criteria

Personal/Attitudes/Qualities

Essential

- Demonstrate empathy.
- Be non-judgemental in your approach to clients and other professionals.
- Flexible attitude towards day-to-day tasks and be able to move from one task to another easily.
- Courteous and professional manner at all times.
- Be able to keep things in perspective.
- Sensible and level-headed.

Criteria

General

Essential

- This post is registered as exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and in accordance with The First Step recruitment procedures the successful candidate will be required to satisfactorily complete the Enhanced Disclosure and Barring process in order to be appointed for the post.
- To work outside of normal working hours as required.
- A full clean driving licence and use of a car during working hours.