

Midlothian Carer Support Practitioner (Finance and Future Planning)

POST	Midlothian Carer Support Practitioner (Finance & Future Planning)
EMPLOYER	VOCAL – Voice of Carers Across Lothian
SALARY	SJC scale SCP50, £15.21 - £28,549 per annum (pro rata) VOCAL will match up to 6% pension contribution 32 days paid leave plus six fixed public holidays (pro rata)
HOURS	30 hours per week (with regular evening and occasional weekend work)
LOCATION	The postholder will be working across Midlothian from VOCAL's Carers Centre at Eskbank, with occasional meetings in Edinburgh

Purpose of the post

The postholder will support unpaid carers to access person-centred information, advice and support with a specific focus on income maximisation, welfare benefits and planning for the future. In addition, the postholder will also support carers to access a range of additional interventions and services to achieve agreed personal outcomes.

Improved outcomes for carers

The postholder will be part of the VOCAL Midlothian team and contribute to the following outcomes for carers:

- Maintaining my health and wellbeing
- A life of my own
- Changing relationships
- Feeling financially secure
- My choices in caring, including the limits of caring
- Feeling informed, equipped and safe in my caring role
- Feeling confident and able to continue in my caring role
- Feeling actively involved in shaping support
- Quality of life for the person I care for
- Plans for the future care of the person I care for

VOCAL's approach to carer support

VOCAL supports carers using conversational techniques and an asset based approach. This supports carers to identify and build on their skills and knowledge and the connections and resources within families and communities, rather than focusing on problems and deficits.

VOCAL applies solution focussed and outcomes based practice across all carer support and interventions. This supports carers to reflect and identify areas for improvement, change and prioritisation. This approach recognises that carers are the experts in their situation and places them 'in the driving seat'. It allows carers to shape the content and nature of the support provided, with VOCAL staff acting as knowledgeable facilitators.

Practice expectations

Carer support is offered on a flexible, person-centred basis through personal contact by appointment, telephone, video, email and web-based tools. Staff are required to manage their own caseload, ensuring that client support is structured, with baseline assessment, support, outcome review and closure.

SMART outcomes are identified at the beginning of carer support. Personalised solution-focussed support and information follow. The conclusion of support is planned, includes a review of personal outcomes and leaves the carer empowered to move forward independently.

Staff are responsible for ensuring their work with carers is methodically and accurately recorded. All contact with carers is recorded in real time, electronically on a web based case management system.

VOCAL has defined essential data which is captured and includes demographic information and baseline, key actions and review information indicating the carer's progress to their self-defined outcomes.

Building carers' digital confidence and skills is an integral part of supporting carers to continue in their caring role, and to build and maintain a life outside the caring role. Digital tools also offer flexible and creative options when tailoring and delivering person-centred support for carers. VOCAL staff are expected to use a range of web based tools and social media to support and engage with carers, and to encourage carers to develop new skills.

Person Specification

The postholder is expected to evidence:

Knowledge

- A sound knowledge of health and social care issues, the impact caring can have on individuals, the needs and situation of carers and a demonstrated commitment to supporting carers
- Extensive knowledge of welfare rights and benefits entitlements for carers, older people, children and people with disabilities or long term conditions
- Experience of welfare rights work and supporting the completion of applications in order to access a wide range of benefits and funds, this should include paper and online applications
- A good understanding of the range of future planning opportunities available to carers such as Power of Attorney and Emergency Planning in order to build carer confidence and resilience

- A good knowledge of how the statutory, voluntary and private sectors work and an ability to undertake outcome-focused networking with other agencies and professionals
- A good understanding of equality and diversity issues and a commitment to supporting people from marginalised groups
- Knowledge of the key priorities of Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and the Social Care (Self - directed Support)(Scotland) Act 2013

Skills

- Excellent interpersonal and conversational skills that allow effective communication with all
- The ability to listen effectively, understand needs, research and present options
- Ability to deal with carers, professionals and members of the public in a sensitive and person-centred manner
- Good literacy and writing skills with ability to write accurate case notes and reports
- Ability to work collaboratively to coproduce positive outcomes in a timely manner
- Experience of working with eligibility criteria
- Ability and willingness to use social media and web-based tools
- Proven ability of organising, prioritising and managing own work
- Effective research skills and ability to effectively disseminate learning

Experience

- Experience of person centred support work
- Experience of working with carers
- Experience in welfare rights and benefits work, including completing benefit checks
- Experience in supporting individuals to access future planning tools and supports
- Experience of brokering support from a range of sources
- Experience of maintaining detailed electronic client records
- Experience using Microsoft 365 and web browsers on both desktop and mobile devices

Desirable

- Knowledge and experience of wider income maximisation issues
- Knowledge and/or experience of supporting clients to appeal decisions
- Experience of supporting clients to access hardship/ welfare grants and loans
- Experience of solution focussed client practice
- Experience of using person centred tools or tools for care planning
- Some experience in group work or training
- Educational qualifications which may include qualifications in counselling or person-centred training, community development, adult education, social work, education to university degree level, or other relevant qualifications.
- Given the geography of Midlothian a current driving license and access to a car are desirable

Job Description

Carer identification

- To assist VOCAL with the identification of carers by working with and promoting VOCAL to a range of partner agencies
- To receive referrals for carers from health and social care staff, third sector agencies and local community agencies, including self-referrals
- To participate in activities to raise awareness of carer support in a wide variety of settings e.g. roadshows, surgeries and presentations.

Carer support

- The postholder is required to support a minimum of 150 carers per annum and have a case load of up to 35 carers at any given time – case load will be a blend of all caring situations and will include parent carers through to carers of older adults
- Support carers to maximise their income by accessing the full range of welfare benefits available to them and people they care for
- Provide one to one income maximisation and future planning support to carers through the delivery of weekly surgeries
- Keep VOCAL staff informed of any changes to the welfare rights system
- Participate in a Duty rota as part of the wider Carer Support Team
- Support carers to access person centred information, advice and support which is outcome-focused and sensitive to their particular caring situation
- Support carers to identify personal outcomes and needs through an Adult Carer Support Plan, and assist them in identifying solutions and interventions to address identified needs.
- Support carers to build resilience and to prevent crisis
- A sound understanding of the principles of Self-Directed Support and an ability to identify, plan and broker person-centred solutions by navigating the statutory systems, third sector support and through applications to grants and trusts

Carer engagement

- To support carers to participate in consultation and planning structures
- Support carers to participate in regular or one off focus groups
- To support local developments of carer support services
- To inform and consult carers on relevant issues by assisting in the organisation of carer events and the production of 'Midlothian Carers News' and other publications

Monitoring and evaluating carer outcomes

- Comply with VOCAL's casework model and outcomes focused working, specifically the use of an Adult Carer Support Plan used to shape casework and measure impact
- Be responsible for the accurate and timely recording of all carer contact and casework on VOCAL's web based case management system

- Assist in producing statistical information on carer support and income maximisation

General Duties

As a member of the Carer Support Team, the postholder will be expected to consistently and effectively perform a number of general duties:

- Work with and support any volunteers assigned to facilitate the work of the postholder
- Comply with Carer Centre policies and procedures such as confidentiality policy, telephone and recording procedures, lone working policies, etc
- Comply with and contribute to VOCAL's work of continuous quality improvement
- Participate in VOCAL staff team meetings and local planning groups as required
- Carry out other non-recurring duties as arise from time to time, and occasionally help cover carer centre duties during the absence of team members
- Participate in the Duty rota as part of the wider Carer Support Team

Accountability, Management and Development

The postholder will benefit from a structured induction programme within the first month of appointment, followed by a six months probation period.

The post holder will ultimately be accountable to the Board of Directors. For line management, supervision and support the postholders will be answerable to the Senior Carer Support Practitioner, VOCAL Midlothian.

VOCAL acknowledges its responsibility to help identify training needs of staff and to allow reasonable time and resources for staff training, where such training furthers the duties and responsibilities of the post.

Emphasis is placed on team accountability and mutual support.

The post holder will be based at the VOCAL Midlothian Carers Centre, but will be expected to carry out a range of duties at different locations in Midlothian, with occasional meetings in Edinburgh.

The post holder will be expected to carry out the duties of this post with due regard to Equal Opportunities and non-discriminatory practice.

Conditions of Service

The post is initially advertised at 30 hours per week over 4 days. There may be some flexibility over the distribution of hours which will form the normal working week.

The post holder qualifies for 32 days annual leave plus 6 fixed public holidays on a pro rata basis.

The employer is committed to meet a 6% pension contribution.

VOCAL offers childcare vouchers and a Cycle to Work Scheme.

The postholder will be expected to become a member of the Protection for Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme (Adults).