

Person Specification and Job Description for the post of
Carer Support Practitioner (Self Directed Support)

POST	Carer Support Practitioner (SDS)
EMPLOYER	VOCAL – Voice of Carers Across Lothian
SALARY	SJC scale SCP52, £17.78 per hour - £33,399 per annum (pro rata) VOCAL will match up to 6% pension contribution 33 days paid leave plus 6 public holidays (pro rata)
HOURS	30 hours per week with some evening and weekend work
LOCATION	The postholder will be working across Midlothian from VOCAL's Carer Centre at Hardengreen Estate, with regular meetings in other Midlothian locality areas
CONTRACT	Permanent

Purpose of the Post

The postholder will support carers to identify their personal outcomes and needs and the plan, broker and access person-centred support for their caring situation, their health and wellbeing and their personal development.

The postholder will support at least 180 carers a year, enabling carers to be well informed and supported to consider self-directed support options and broker appropriate supports for themselves and the people they care for.

Improved Outcomes for Carers

As part of VOCAL's Carer Support Team, the postholder will contribute to the following outcomes for carers, and undertake carer evaluations to ensure carers report ...

- improved knowledge and information about issues linked to their caring role
- improved confidence in their ability to shape services and support
- improved confidence in managing their caring role
- improved physical and mental wellbeing
- improved confidence in their ability to deal with the changing relationships resulting from the caring role
- improved social wellbeing
- improved economic wellbeing
- improved personal safety in relation to their caring role

VOCAL's approach to carer support

VOCAL supports carers using conversational techniques that support an asset based approach and build resilience. We support 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, supporting 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 time limited and offered on a flexible, person-centred basis through personal contact by appointment, telephone, 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.

Personal 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 needs and situation of carers and a demonstrated commitment to supporting carers
- An understanding of SDS legislation and local implementation
- A good knowledge of how the statutory, voluntary and private sectors work and an ability to work collaboratively with other agencies and professionals
- A good understanding of equality and diversity issues and a commitment to supporting people from marginalised groups

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
- Skills and 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 of supporting individuals to use SDS options to manage a social care package
- Experience of brokering support from a range of sources
- Experience of maintaining detailed electronic client records
- Experience of working effectively in a team
- Experience of working with eligibility criteria
- Experience using Outlook, Word and Excel and web browsers on both desktop and mobile devices

Qualifications

- 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.

Desirable experience

- solution focussed client practice
- use of person centred tools for care planning
- planning/organising or facilitating breaks for carers
- supporting people to manage social care budgets or being an employer
- group work or training

Job Description

Carer identification

- To receive referrals from primary and acute health care staff, community care staff and from any local agencies, including self-referrals.
- To participate in a number of activities to raise awareness around both carers and SDS in a wide variety of settings e.g. SDS roadshows, surgeries and presentations.

Carer support

The postholder is required to support a minimum of 180 carers per annum with a case load of up to 35 carers at any given time, supporting carers to:

- access person centred information, advice and support which is outcome-focused and sensitive to their particular caring situation through one to one case work and through the duty system
- establish personal outcomes, understand options and identify their preferred and access their preferred option
- identify SDS options, brokering appropriate supports and manage allocated budgets
- build own resilience and plan to prevent crisis
- identify, plan and broker person-centred solutions by navigating the statutory systems, Third Sector support and through applications to trusts
- contribute to the planning, promotion and facilitation of training and peer support groups.

Carer engagement

- To support carers to participate in consultation and planning structures.
- To support carers to participant 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 'Carers News' and other publications.

Monitoring and evaluating carer outcomes

- Comply with VOCAL's casework model and outcomes focused working, specifically the use of the Carer Outcomes Evaluation tool 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 reports for funding bodies.

General Duties

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

- to work with and support any volunteers assigned to facilitate the work of the post holder/team
- participate in carers support duty rota
- comply with VOCAL's 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 planning meetings
- comply with VOCAL's casework model and outcomes focused working, specifically the use of the Carer Outcomes Evaluation tool used to shape casework and measure impact
- be responsible for the accurate and timely recording of enquiries and casework records including use of VOCAL's bespoke database
- 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.

Accountability, Management and Development

The post holder will benefit from a structured induction programme within the first month of appointment, followed by a three months' probation period.

The post holder will ultimately be accountable to the Board of Directors.

For line management, supervision and support the post holder will be answerable to a Senior Carer Support Practitioner.

The Board of Directors acknowledges its responsibility to help identify training needs of staff members 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's Carer Centre but will be expected to carry out a range of duties at different locations across Midlothian.

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 advertised initially at 30 hours per week (worked over 4/5 days). There may be some flexibility over the distribution of hours that will form the normal working week. Occasional evening and weekend work may be required. VOCAL operates a 36-hour week for full-time staff.

VOCAL offers a range of contractual benefits, including:

- generous annual leave entitlement of 33 days plus six public holidays (pro rata for part-time staff). This increases with length of service.
- a 6% pension contribution which increases with length of service
- enhanced maternity, paternity and adoption pay
- paid Carer's Leave
- enhanced sick pay
- a Cycle to Work Scheme.

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

