

HOMELINK SUPPORT WORKER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Homelink is a supported living scheme for people with learning difficulties who are living in their own accommodation or with carers. Each Homelink service user will have agreed to some or all of their needs being met by Homelink and the day and times when this support is to be given. An average length of shift is 3-4 hours. The support will normally take place in the service user's own home or local community. Homelink's main work is in Islington but we are gradually expanding into other London boroughs. Staff may be asked to work in different areas of London.

WORK WITH SERVICE USERS

The support worker will meet each individual service users needs by doing all or some of the following:

- Teach a specific skill and keep a record of how that skill is being taught and on progress and/or difficulties.
- Encourage/enable the service user to pursue a leisure activity.
- Encourage/enable the service user to find employment.
- Encourage/enable the service user to build up links with the community by meeting new people and using ordinary services.

Support workers may also be required to assist in personal care and domestic tasks. Support workers may also work at times with parents with learning difficulties. It should be emphasised, however, that one of the aims of Homelink is for service users to learn to do as much as possible for themselves, gradually decreasing their dependence on paid staff.

ADMINISTRATION

As far as possible, any records which are required for a service user will be written up by the support worker with the service user and kept in the service user's own home. These may include records of skills teaching, the service user's personal finances, handover information and diary of events. Any information, which requires to be kept in the Homelink office, must be delivered/communicated by the support worker to the Homelink Manager.

As and when required, the support worker will write progress reports and records of incidents.

MEETINGS

Service users will have regular reviews and, when required, support staff will be expected to attend and contribute.

Support staff will be expected to attend regular Homelink staff meetings.

Support staff will be expected to attend regular supervision sessions with the Homelink Manager.

ACCOUNTABILITY

For the period of time the support worker is employed they are accountable to the Homelink Manager at 34 Islington Park Street. The Homelink Manager reports to the Assistant Director who in turn reports to the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive is accountable to an elected Board of Trustees.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

There is no guarantee of work. Staff will be advised by phone by the Homelink Manager when regular work can be offered. Which staff member ends up doing shifts will depend on availability, how many shifts are available and how soon they can be covered.

The hourly rate is £8.87 (gross). Which includes 38 days annual leave (pro rata) and sick leave entitlement.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Previous experience of working with adults with learning difficulties.
2. An understanding of the needs of adults with learning difficulties.
3. Commitment to good practice, and in particular to John O'Brien's Five Accomplishments.
4. Commitment to equal opportunities.
5. Experience of teaching independent living skills using a variety of different forms of communication.
6. Demonstrable ability to relate respectfully to people with learning difficulties.
7. Ability to keep clear and accurate records.

DESIRABLE

1. Experience of working with people with emotional and behavioural difficulties
2. Experience of working with parents with learning difficulties.
3. Experience of working or living in a multicultural setting.

JOHN O'BRIEN'S 'FIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS'

In 1987 John O'Brien, an American who works for better lives for people with learning difficulties, identified five important things to look for when judging whether a service provision was of a good standard. These 'five accomplishments' have been rewritten in a variety of ways ever since, but essentially they are as follows:

1. Informed **choice** defines and expresses individual identity. People with learning difficulties should be empowered to make informed choices and to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions.
2. Dignity and **respect** gives people with learning difficulties the experience of being a valued member of society.
3. Community **presence** means having access to those places which define community life, taking into account a person's cultural, social and sexual needs.
4. Community **participation** is the experience of being part of a network of personal **relationships** including close personal friends.
5. People with learning difficulties should be enabled to develop **competence** in a variety of independent living skills, social skills and in pursuit of any chosen activity.

Ref: London Borough of Islington - Policy Statement: People with Learning Difficulties 1990

SUPPORTED LIVING

The National Development Team has defined Supported Living as follows:

- * Separating housing and support
- * Focusing on one person at a time
- * Full user choice and control
- * Rejecting no-one
- * Focusing on relationships; making use of informal supports and community resources.

Ref: Supported Living - A New Paradigm - Peter Kinsella, National Development Team 1993