

Job Description - Support Worker

Role	Support Worker
Agency	Wollongong Emergency Family Housing Inc.
Project	Wollongong Homeless Hub
Location	Wollongong
Award	SCHADS 3.1 – 3.4
Agency Website	www.wefh.org.au

Agency Overview

Wollongong Emergency Family Housing Inc. (WEFH) provides assistance to the homeless and those at imminent risk of homelessness. The 'Homeless Hub' is a vibrant busy service providing drop in assistance to the homeless in the Wollongong area. Wollongong Homeless Hub is funded by Family and Community Services and the role of the organisation is to fill gaps in the current homelessness sector. WEFH also provides limited transitional accommodation for families and individuals in crisis. Housing Support and Case Management is provided by Support Workers to assist families and individuals address their needs and support them in the transition to secure housing options.

The position of Support Worker is employed by Wollongong Emergency Family Housing Inc. and is responsible to the General Manager through the Team Leader who provides supervision and direction. Working collaboratively with other staff of the service, this position takes a case management approach to the practical and emotional support needs of families accommodated by the Service.

Primary purpose of this role

The primary objective of the position is to provide support to both accommodated and non-accommodated clients of the service by undertaking tasks which support case planning and documentation, referrals and appointments, and day-to-day team priorities.

Key accountabilities

- Comply with relevant policy and legislation in relation to work health and safety, equity and diversity, NSW Community Services Act, child protection, government legislation and mandatory reporting.
- Contribute to collaborative casework by maintaining timely client and casework records, including information system records, appropriate information sharing.
- Working collaboratively with other service delivery teams within the district to enhance access, effectiveness and quality of service delivery and client outcomes.
- Coordinate logistical arrangements for meetings including case management and family meetings, appointments and other activities which directly support case planning and decision-making for clients.
- Contribute to continuous learning, professional networks and relationships through the co-ordination of meetings and other information sharing activities.
- Actively participate as a team member with workers and administrative staff to address team priorities and directly support workers on a day-to-day basis.

- Promote and participate in programs to strengthen communities and enhance opportunities for community participation, collaboratively with the General Manager and Team Leader.
- Establish and maintain relationships with key partners including police, area health, local members, other government and non-government service providers to better meet client needs.
- Record relevant information for referrals received for the services of Wollongong Homeless Hub to the Community Information Management System (CIMS).
- Support work delivered by the team using a holistic person centred approach.
- Perform office duties.
- Other duties as required.

Case management

Referral

- To process referrals to the service according to the intake procedures and record relevant statistics for the National Data Collection Agency and the service.
- To assist families and individuals in crisis by providing information and referral to other service providers, advocacy and support where appropriate.
- Inform families of the services provided by WEFH, their rights and responsibilities and the availability of other community services.

Assessment

- Conduct assessment for clients to determine circumstances and perception of need and process through the allocation criteria procedure for housing. Assessment will include a thorough exploration of a client's history, identifying the factors that have contributed to homelessness and what coping mechanisms exist.
- Assessment will be an ongoing process, through support planning, to identify factors such as health (physical, psychological and emotional), self-esteem, support networks, cultural needs etc that may be preventing the client from moving forward to achieve their goals.

Support Plans

- Each person will be given an opportunity to develop a support plan which includes identifying needs, goal setting and outlining tasks to be undertaken by the client, support worker and relevant service providers.
- The worker will be responsible for informing clients of the services obligations in relation to child protection, confidentiality and the Privacy Act.
- Where appropriate the Team Leader will work collaboratively with other service providers who are working with clients to develop support plans across services to alleviate duplication of work and or stress on the family.
- The worker will be responsible for keeping concise and complete records on file for each family adhering to WEFH policy regarding confidentiality and the Privacy Act.
- The worker has a responsibility to advocate on behalf of families and individuals with other agencies and Government Departments to achieve positive outcomes.
- Provide practical assistance where necessary eg transport, court support and assisting in the development of life skills through encouraging clients to participate in workshops offered by the service.

- The key part of any support plan is to assist the family to explore alternative accommodation options, identifying barriers and assisting them to develop strategies to overcome them, developing an exit plan to ensure the family is able to make the transition from emergency housing to medium/long term accommodation options.

Training and education

- The worker will be responsible for identifying any training needs, skills or knowledge gaps and developing strategies for meeting their own professional development needs, in conjunction with the Team Leader and Manager.
- The worker will keep up-to-date with legislation and current affairs affecting their role through participating in workshops, training, reading relevant journals etc as may be directed from time-to-time by the General Manager.

Work, Health, Welfare and Safety

- The worker will be responsible for contributing to ensure a safe working environment is maintained and to take reasonable care of self and others in the workplace.
- The worker will cooperate with all reasonable requests made by staff and management relating to any WH&S matters and will familiarise themselves with the WEFH WH&S and Risk Management Policies and Procedures
- The worker is required to report any unsafe conditions and or identified hazards, risks or concerns as per the WEFH WH&S Policy and Procedures.
- The worker is not to bypass or misuse systems or equipment provided for WH & S purposes.
- The worker must participate in WH&S training as required and contribute to the identification of hazards and assessment of risks as required.

Accountability and team work

- The worker is directly accountable to the Team Leader of WEFH.
- The worker will participate in regular staff meetings and facilitate at times as requested by the General Manager
- The worker will attend and participate in Supervision with the Team Leader and performance reviews annually with the General Manager.

Key challenges

- Working across a team/s of workers where competing priorities and urgent matters requires regular review and re-prioritisation
- Supporting the case plan and understanding the complex and challenging situations where the majority of families and individuals are at significant disadvantage due to factors such as prior history of trauma, poverty and violence.
- Balancing the completion of work related tasks which directly support caseworkers to see more children, young people and families with the need to personally build supporting relationships with families and individuals.

Community Development

All staff are expected to participate in community development, raising the profile of WEFH and representing the service in a positive and appropriate manner. Such activity may involve attending interagency meetings, representing the client group on relevant

committees or participation in community events such as Homeless Persons Week. These duties will be negotiated with the General Manager.

Role dimensions

Decision making

The primary focus of decision making for a Support Worker is organising daily priorities which directly support clients. The role also requires some discretionary decision making in relation to observing and reporting behaviours of children, young people and families in activities where risk and safety are an issue.

Reporting line

- Reports to Team Leader

Essential requirements

- A TAFE Diploma in a relevant field, welfare/ community services and relevant work experience deemed to be the equivalent.
- Current drivers licence

Appointments are subject to reference checks and the following pre-employment checks: Working with Children Check clearance in accordance with the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012.