Housing First Practitioner

Location: Kings Court Bristol

Salary: £37,478

Contract: Permanent - 35 hours per week

Department: Intensive Services

Role Purpose

The role of Ara's Housing First Practitioners is to provide specialist support to people who have histories of entrenched or repeat rough sleeping, often experiencing multiple disadvantage, for whom traditional homelessness approaches have not been successful.

Housing First Approach Overview

Housing First is an approach that looks to do things differently for those facing multiple disadvantages, prioritising the provision of independent and stable accommodation above all else.

There are seven principles of a Housing First approach, which Ara align closely with on this project:

1. People have a right to a home

2. Flexible support is provided for as long as is needed

3. Housing and support are separated

4. Individuals have choice and control

5. An active engagement approach is used

6. People are supported to identify their strengths, goals and aspirations

7. A harm reduction approach is used

These principles require the Housing First Practitioner to be flexible and innovative in their support and engagement methods. The trusting relationship established between the Ara

Worker and the client is key to that person engaging with the service, accepting support when needed and considering making positive changes to other aspects of their life.

The location of support will be adaptable, depending on clients' individual needs, preferences, and best interests. Flexibility over location will also facilitate joined up working with external support providers and statutory services, to address the full range of client support needs.

Key responsibilities/accountabilities

Reporting to the Intensive Services Manager, the Housing First Practitioners are responsible for coordinating and providing a personalised, trauma informed support service to people facing multiple disadvantage, in line with Housing First Principles. The successful candidate will have a caseload of five clients, reflecting the increased time and resources required to have successful outcomes with this cohort.

The Ara Housing First Practitioners are responsible for adhering to all organisational and service policies and procedures, performing at their best, and providing high quality support services to clients at all stages of Ara's services.

They must ensure clients receive the highest quality services that meet their individual needs, managing risk and focusing on building recovery capital and positive outcomes.

They will ensure that quality is built into every aspect of Ara services and be pro-active and forward thinking. They will ensure that the requirements of commissioning bodies are exceeded, and that Ara continues to be considered a thought leader in the field of housing support.

Specific duties

Referral, Assessment and Admissions

- Support the Manager, and Client Nomination panel with identifying eligible Housing First clients, ensuring that candidates are right for the service and have the desire to/understand what's involved with taking on a property.

- Ensure the Housing Support Register (HSR) is used, and client records are up to date for Ara Housing First clients.
- Provide comprehensive initial assessment of support needs, ensuring all client needs are identified.
- Undertake pre-tenancy work with clients before they enter a tenancy.
- Ensure client has an opportunity to view the property at least 2 weeks before they move in.
- Support clients with admission to properties, ensuring that clients understand their licence/tenancy agreement, explaining health and safety information, completing benefit claims and other admissions processes.

Support Ara Housing First Clients

- Deliver wrap-around intensive, trauma informed support to people with multiple and complex issues within their own independent tenancies in the community.
- Work with Ara clients to help them clarify their goals and aspirations, offering personalised support and promoting choice and wellbeing.
- Ensure that client health is a focus of support, promoting engagement with primary care and other NHS colleagues as appropriate.
- Build relationships with other agencies that are supporting the client (including the police). Wraparound support is essential; work with the client on who they want to work with.
- Ensure early intervention with client tenancy issues, however small.
- Build and maintain positive networks with staff from other agencies to ensure the Housing First pilot is widely known and promoted.
- Facilitate access to Ara Community Engagement work, including access to social inclusion opportunities and 5 ways to well-being initiatives.
- Complete safety and inclusion assessments and maintain own safety by following lone working procedures.
- Be part of a rota providing out of hours access to telephone support to people using the service.
- Work flexibly and participate in a rota of duties to ensure that service delivery is available in the morning/ evenings, at weekends and on bank holidays when required, including temporary cover for colleagues when required.
- Adhere to good practice safeguarding procedures with a positive risk-taking approach to ensure the wellbeing of vulnerable people.

Support Housing First Clients to maintain accommodation

- Work with the Ara estates team to ensure weekly/monthly/quarterly checks completed.
- Give clients information and support to keep their home, including financial aspects and how to be a good neighbour in order to reduce conflict.
- Work with Ara estates team to assist the person living in accommodation with choosing how to make their flat a home, including practical help with furniture and other similar.

Risk Management

- Develop risk management plans and share information as appropriate in the best interest of the client, and the organisation.
- Undertake safeguarding actions to protect young people and adults at risk as appropriate, share information internally and externally as appropriate.
- Ensure client is safe from 'cuckooing' and report any suspicions to police immediately.
- Regularly review risk plans and amend plans as appropriate when circumstances change.

Other Activities

- Undertake administration tasks as required to maintain client records, organisational outcomes and any other reporting required.
- Participate in on-call rota, assessing and acting upon immediate risk of danger to Service Users and property.
- Develop your own knowledge and practice by undertaking training, supervision and team meetings. Estates management activities as required.
- Observe the organisation's health and safety at work policy.
- Observe all organisation's HR policies, including, but not limited to equal opportunities, confidentiality, data protection, inclusion and diversity policies.
- Participate in the out of hours rota to meet the needs of the service and undertake other duties and responsibilities in keeping with the nature of this post as may be required and instructed.

Skills, Experience & Knowledge

- Extensive Support Worker experience.
- An understanding of the complex interdependencies of mental health, substance use and offending behaviour.
- A creative and solution focused approach to problem solving and overcoming challenges.
- The ability to engage people, build rapport, demonstrate empathy and to understand the importance of empowering them. Excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills.
- Promote the rights, responsibilities and informed choice of the people receiving the service, acting as an advocate to promote independence.
- Know when to seek assistance or supervision and how to engage meaningfully in planned supervision.
- Good knowledge of health and safety, safeguarding and data protection policies.
- Good organisational and time management skills.
- ICT literate, with knowledge of MS Office Suite (Word, Excel) and other commonly used office packages.
- Experience of and ability to work with a range of commissioner CRMs (e.g. Theseus, HSR, NOMIS etc.).
- Full UK drivers' licence and use of a car.

In return we offer:

- A competitive and benchmarked salary.
- A 35-hour working week to promote a healthy work-life balance, with flexible working.
- Up to 32 days annual leave, as well as all UK bank holidays.
- A pension scheme, comprehensive training, and a 24hr Employee Assistance Programme.
- Meaningful and fulfilling work that makes a real difference to some of the most vulnerable people in our society.