TASK DESCRIPTION

Volunteer Role: Volunteer Children’s Therapeutic Counsellor

Section: Therapeutic Services (From Surviving to Thriving Project)

Location: Birmingham

Reports to: Project Coordinator in region

Time Commitment: For a minimum of six months to 1 year volunteering one day per week

The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with refugees and people seeking asylum. We not only give help and support, but also work with clients to ensure their needs and concerns are voiced and addressed. Volunteers are a key part of many of the services that support our clients and work alongside paid staff across the organisation.

Context:

To volunteer alongside the other therapists to develop a gender and culturally sensitive service and deliver individual and/or group therapeutic services to rehabilitate and meet the holistic needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and to support them throughout their journey towards psychological healing and practical empowerment.

Aims and Objectives of the Therapeutic Services:

- To provide a cultural and gender sensitive Therapeutic Counselling Service to unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
- To create a safe and nurturing environment based on trust and non-judgement for clients to work through past traumatic experiences and embrace their strengths and resilience in developing new positive ways to help re-build their lives.
- To apply our Therapeutic case model in offering practical orientation, crisis intervention, one to one or group work in order to empower clients to regain control over their own lives and become the agents of their own change.
Knowledge, skills and abilities for Volunteer Counsellors

- To be qualified or in the final year of a recognised counselling diploma level 4 or above and have at least 100 clinical supervised hours
- To have good knowledge and understanding of the multiple levels of needs and the complexity of issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees
- To deliver high quality therapeutic support to unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been victims of sexual violence, persecution, torture and other and recognising and working within their particular needs and diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds in accordance with the Refugee Council’s operational policies and procedures
- Good understanding and awareness of the needs of asylum seekers from different cultures, sexual orientation and religious beliefs in order to provide cultural and sensitive services and working with children
- To provide holistic assessments and carry a time limited caseload for individuals and possibly groups using the Refugee Council Therapeutic Services Model framework (practical, emotional and symbolic)
- To oversee the safeguarding of clients and staff to ensure Safeguarding Policy is followed
- To make effective referrals or signpost service users to specialist services which will help and support them on a long-term/more intensive basis where appropriate
- To ensure the provision of services is sensitive and responsive to the particular needs of clients by systematically gathering, recording and acting upon client feedback and ensuring that Refugee Council policies, procedures and philosophy are followed
- To comply with Refugee Council’s policies and procedures. Ensure confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding and any others deemed necessary to the counsellor role
- To have a good level of IT competence to write up assessments, reports and record data on our client database.
- Be a registered member or student member of BACP or UKCP and adhere to the relevant ethical guidelines for Counselling and Psychotherapy

Expectations from the volunteers:

- To comply with all relevant Refugee Council policies and procedures
- To engage with training and learn how to use our IT and client database
• To attend group clinical supervision as part of their self care and working safely with clients (this is in addition to the volunteering hours and is a half day twice monthly and will be arranged in location)
• Volunteers can claim travel allowance and lunch expenses
• Adhere to the principles of equal opportunities, for example by providing appropriate, sensitive and impartial services and being accessible to all asylum seekers and refugees, regardless of their personal circumstances
• Adhere to clear boundaries, for example do not give out your telephone number; do not give any gifts however small or second hand they may be; and never lend, give or accept any money

How we support our volunteers

Volunteers are valued members of our teams and we provide them with support and development opportunities. Volunteers will receive regular planned support sessions with their supervisors.

Refugee Council allows volunteers to attend our professional training courses when possible, free of charge.

Volunteers will be given IT access and a Refugee Council email address whilst volunteering on this project.

Through sponsorship from the Marsh Trust, Refugee Council also provides volunteers with the opportunity to design and set-up a new service for new clients. There will be an opportunity to discuss this with your supervisor.

Volunteer roles are unpaid, but we can reimburse volunteers for lunch and travel costs.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as ‘spent’, must be declared at the application stage. Any offer of engagement is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service check. Repeat checks are initiated every two years.

Health & Safety

The volunteer is responsible for:

Cooperating with the Refugee Council in delivering all legal responsibilities in respect of your own and your colleagues, volunteers, clients and others health and safety whilst at work.
Becoming familiar with the Refugee Council’s Health & Safety Policy and procedures including evacuation procedures at your workplace.

Carrying out risk assessments of your own work and especially of your own workstation to ensure that you do not expose yourself or others to unnecessary risk.

**Equal Opportunities Statement**

As part of its recruitment policy, the Refugee Council intends to ensure that no prospective or actual employee or volunteer is discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, employment status, class, disability, age, religious belief or political persuasion, or is disadvantaged by any condition or requirement which is not demonstrably justifiable.