

Job Description – Criminal Justice IDVA (Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor)

Job Title: Criminal Justice IDVA
Responsible to: Community and Co-locations Manager (Housing and Criminal Justice)
Contract: Permanent
Salary: £26,000 - £30,500pa FTE
Working hours: 28 hours per week (0.8FTE)
Work location: Westminster Magistrates Court and Advance office in Hammersmith

This post is open to female applicants only as being female is deemed to be a genuine occupational requirement under Schedule 9, Paragraph 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

Social Care Project and Job Summary

Advance delivers nationally accredited, quality marked services in Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, Ealing and Brent. We work within a coordinated partnership response to domestic violence to provide independent domestic violence advocacy and support for women, children and young people and community services for women who are involved in the criminal justice system, in anti-social behaviour or are at risk of breaking the law.

The Mentor Court Project is a pilot partnership project in Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea which aims to embed early intervention and domestic violence homicide prevention best practice into multi agency responses to address domestic violence crimes that disproportionately affect women and children. The project seeks to improve integrated working between criminal justice agencies from the point of reporting an incident to court and beyond; to reduce attrition through earlier intervention and improved outcomes for victims/survivors and their children, and to hold more perpetrators to account through the justice system; and to transform the Westminster Specialist Domestic Abuse Court into a mentor court, supporting other courts to build capacity to improve the same outcomes for domestic abuse cases in their areas.

The Criminal Justice IDVA for the Mentor Court Project will work within a dynamic, fast paced, crisis intervention, advocacy and support service to ensure the voice of survivors informs every stage of the criminal justice process. They will work within the team to make proactive contact and provide high quality advocacy and support to women aged 16 and over who access the IDVA service. They will advise women on criminal justice and related matters and support women to attend court where necessary. They will ensure civil justice processes are accessed and mobilised alongside the criminal justice system to maximise safety and coordinate the provision of multi-agency support from the point of reporting, through the court process and beyond.

The post holder will attend the Mentor Court and ensure the service provided is consistent with the local SDAC Protocol and partnership information sharing agreements. They will work closely with our Insights Analyst, the Mentor Courts and Mentor Court Co-ordinators, the Senior IDVA and Co-locations Manager to monitor and report on progress and outcomes, provide institutional advocacy to improve agencies' practice and help support the ongoing development of this project.

The post holder will have an excellent understanding of domestic violence and its effects on women and children and of best practice within the criminal justice system. As an experienced domestic violence worker, the post holder will be skilled in risk management and safety planning, remaining calm in a crisis and in handling sensitive information on a daily basis. Experience of direct work with women survivors of domestic violence, of supporting women involved in criminal and civil justice systems and of working within safeguarding procedures is essential for this post, as is the need to adopt and promote a strong partnership approach to service provision. A key responsibility of this role will be to strengthen multi agency relationships and ensure agency accountability whilst maintaining good communication and working relationships at all levels.

MAIN DUTIES AND REQUIREMENTS:

1. Provide high-quality telephone or face to face crisis intervention, information, advocacy and support to women and young people referred to the service, in respect to risk management and safety planning, criminal and civil remedies, housing, health, welfare rights, and children's legislation.
2. Assess the needs and risks of survivors, carry out short- and longer-term risk management, safety planning and support and identify and refer to services appropriate to their needs, including MARAC.
3. Attend the Mentor Court when required to advise on decisions and represent the needs and wishes of the survivor where known.
4. Provide women with information, advocacy and support as cases progress through the criminal justice system, supporting them to apply for special measures and to give impact statements, maximising their safety to help them give best evidence, reducing barriers to accessing justice and accompanying women to court where necessary.
5. Advise women of their rights and options for seeking help and support from other agencies, making referrals and co-ordinating the provision of multi-agency support where necessary, and proactively advocate to ensure barriers to accessing support and protection are minimised.
6. Work proactively and in co-operation with the police, specialist prosecutor and other criminal justice professionals to keep the client's perspective and safety at the centre of proceedings, maintain referral routes and increase access and earlier intervention, and to promote successful and safe use of the criminal justice system.
7. Attend the Mentor Court when required and work alongside the specialist prosecutor to support efficient case-progression, whilst ensuring opportunities to increase survivor safety are prioritised at every stage.
8. Proactively assess the needs and safety of any children women using the service may have and ensure that any risks/needs identified are addressed directly with the woman.

9. Participate in multi-agency conferences in respect of children and adults at risk as required, providing reports and undertaking actions as necessary.
10. Keep the Senior IDVA and Manager informed of any issues and successes.
11. Work in partnership with the Mentor Court key agencies.
12. Ensure that agreed case recording and monitoring systems are kept up to date and secure.
13. Participate in multi-agency working and focus groups when requested to do so, and follow through on agreed appropriate actions that arise from the Mentor Court Steering Group meetings
14. Where requested, work with the Senior IDVA and Manager to conduct regular reviews of the project and compile ad-hoc reports if necessary.

General duties:

15. At all times protect the safety and security of ADVANCE service users, staff, volunteers and buildings, and the confidentiality of records and other information in line with data protection requirements.
16. Proactively assess the needs and safety of children and women to ensure that any risks/needs identified are addressed, having full regard to ADVANCE's Safeguarding Children's policy and Safeguarding Adults at Risk policy and complying with the Local Safeguarding Children and Adults requirements.
17. Be responsible for personal learning development and keep up to date on research, relevant legislation, policy and practice, and other literature relevant to the project.
18. Participate in supervision, training and meetings as required and work as a member of the team to ensure effective delivery of service and individual work plans.
19. Ensure the effective implementation of ADVANCE's Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and other policies and procedures and uphold the core values of ADVANCE.
20. Uphold the right of women, children and young people who have experienced domestic violence, advocating vigorously for them while offering protective strategies, and appropriate safe services.
21. Work across teams and undertake such other duties, appropriate to the grade and character of the work, as may reasonably be expected with the agreement of the Manager.

This job description sets out the duties of the post at the time when it was drawn up and will be reviewed from time to time. Duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot of themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IDVA - PERSON SPECIFICATION

A = Application Form I = Interview

KNOWLEDGE AND QUALIFICATIONS:

1.	A relevant qualification, for example in domestic violence, criminal justice, law, social work or related area.	A
2.	A thorough understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence (physical, emotional and sexual violence, coercive control so-called 'honour-based violence', forced marriage, stalking and harassment) and its impact on women, children, families and communities.	A/I
3.	An excellent understanding of the criminal justice system and relevant legislation with particular regard to legal and civil options, housing, benefits, matrimonial law and children.	A/I
4.	Thorough knowledge of safeguarding practice, procedures and legislation.	A/I

EXPERIENCE:

5.	Sound experience of supporting women who have experienced domestic violence, forced marriage or 'honour-based violence'.	A
6.	Experience of risk and needs assessment, and safety and support planning, particularly with clients with complex/multiple needs.	A/I
7.	Experience of partnership working and of maintaining excellent working relationships with a range of stakeholders.	A/I
8.	Experience of working with criminal justice agencies or in a criminal justice setting.	A/I

SKILLS:

9.	Excellent listening skills and the ability to communicate well with a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds.	A/I
10.	Excellent risk assessment, support and advocacy skills and the ability to advocate successfully using evidence and professional experience.	A/I
11.	Ability to network, influence, problem solve and apply solution focused approaches to increase access and safety and facilitate positive outcomes for women and children.	A/I
12.	Ability to work well within a team and responsibly on your own initiative, and of maintaining professional boundaries with clients and partner agencies.	A/I
13.	Flexible, proactive approach and a good ability to prioritise work.	A/I
14.	Good crisis management skills and the ability to work effectively under pressure and to deadlines.	A/I
15.	Good data collection, monitoring and IT skills, including word processing and using databases and spreadsheets.	A/I
16.	Good report writing skills, including preparing reports for courts, case conference and information for Multi agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACS).	A/I

GENERAL:

17.	Work co-operatively with colleagues, in statutory and non-statutory agencies.	A/I
18.	Clear boundaries and a willingness to accept line management and make effective use of supervision.	A/I
19.	A good understanding of the importance of confidentiality and anti-discriminatory practice; safe practice and health and safety procedures.	A/I
20.	A good understanding of cultural issues and equality, diversity and inclusion;	A/I



21.	A firm commitment to women, children's and young people's rights and to work within ADVANCE's framework and its core values.	A/I
22.	Willingness to carry out the policies and procedures of ADVANCE, and to work to agreed guidelines and codes of conduct.	A/I

This job description is a guide and not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities the post holder may have over time.

Please note that any offer of employment will be made subject to references and confirmation of the right to work in the UK and satisfactory enhanced DBS check and police vetting