

Stay Safe East
JOB PACK
INDEPENDENT DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE
ADVOCATE
October 2021



Stay Safe East is one of only two funded Deaf or Disabled People's Organisations in England and Wales working on Domestic Abuse and the only specialist DDPO working across all areas of abuse (domestic and sexual abuse, hate crime, harassment and institutional abuse). From small beginnings in 2010, we have grown into nationally a recognised leader in the field. *More details on our website www.staysafe-east.org.uk and at the end of this job pack.*

We have one vacancy for an Independent Disability Domestic Abuse Advocate at present.

INDEPENDENT DISABILITY AND DOMESTIC ABUSE ADVOCATE

35 hours per week. Salary £27,455 per annum

To support and advocate for disabled survivors in London. *Post funded to 31.3.2023 by MOJ/MOPAC.*

The Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate post is open only to Deaf or disabled women with the relevant skills.

Please note: the post is open to disabled women only for the following reasons:

- 95% of our Domestic Abuse clients are disabled women facing gender based violence, so working with a female IDDVA is essential to our clients' sense of safety, integrity and well-being. *(Schedule 9, Paragraph 1 of the Equality Act 2010)*
- We are a user-led organisation of disabled people. Peer support and positive role models from our disabled staff are essential to building the long term self-confidence and resilience of our clients. We have a positive policy on training and employing disabled people.

We particularly welcome applications from disabled women who reflect London's diverse communities of age, faith, sexuality and ethnicity.

Background

Stay Safe East has been providing support to disabled women (and a small number of disabled men) who are victims/survivors of domestic abuse in Waltham Forest and Newham since 2010. In the past two years, our remit has expanded to cover the whole of London. As well as providing specialist advocacy to disabled survivors, we use our expertise to advise our partner agencies on working with disabled victims and to provide training to domestic violence advisers across England.

Any casework done by the IDDVA and their colleagues in our Domestic Abuse team, will provide evidence for our policy and change work. It will also enable Stay Safe East to increase the number of disabled women working in the domestic violence sector who have expertise around working with disabled survivors.

About the role

We are looking for a 35 hour Independent Disability and Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDDVA) who will work with disabled women survivors. The IDDVA will carry their own caseload; this will include disabled women and men who are victims of abuse by partners, family members, paid or unpaid carers, and disabled mothers who are at risk of child protection or care proceedings following Domestic Abuse. Most clients will be high risk. You will work with clients long-term, as described in our Casework Model on page 7. Your role will cover London.

Requirements

For this post, you may be a disabled woman who is an experienced worker on violence against women and girls (VAWG) as an IDVA, ISVA, caseworker or other role and would like to specialise in working with disabled women, *or* an experienced disability rights advocate who would like to move into specialist domestic abuse work. We recognise that relatively few disabled women are currently employed as Domestic Abuse or Violence against Women and Girls workers, so you may have other relevant experience which would allow you to slot into the role quite quickly. We will leave it to you to persuade us you have the skills and abilities for this post!

You will understand violence against women and the associated risks, and the barriers faced by disabled survivors in society and in the criminal justice system,

and be able to work from a human rights and social model of disability perspective. You will have good organisational skills, be able to work on your own initiative and be passionate about tackling violence against disabled women. You must be a problem solver and an assertive but tactful negotiator, who is able to encourage other professionals to meet the needs of victims. Once established in the post, you will also need to have the skills to explain and resolve complex issues with the clients you advise.

The Stay Safe East Team: Our hard-working team is passionate about getting the best for their clients and bringing about change. We currently have 16 staff and one volunteer, all of whom are disabled people. We employ 15 women and one man. All our staff, volunteers and Board members are disabled people and are from a range of communities across East London and beyond. Amongst us we speak 10 languages. Stay Safe East is a LGBTQ+ positive employer. Flexibility, mutual support and learning from experience are part of our way of working. Most staff work less than 35 hours. Three of our staff also employ their own Personal Assistants. There are currently two service teams and a policy team:

The VAWG Service Manager manages 6 staff (5 Disability and Domestic Violence Advocates, a Benefits and Entitlements Advocate) and volunteer. We have recently recruited a Finance and Operations Manager.

The Hate and General Crime Team Manager manages three part-time Hate Crime Advocates (one of whom is also a secondee who trains other disabled people's organisations to do hate crime advocacy) and a sessional General Advocate/Support Worker.

The Policy Team is made up of a Policy Officer, managed by the Policy and Projects Advisor (the former CEO in a new role from July 2021).

We expect the team to be around 18-20 staff and 6 to 8 volunteers by 2022.

The successful candidate will work as part of our Domestic Abuse Team (a team manager, 6 part-time IDDVA's, a Benefits and Entitlements Worker and one volunteer). It is essential that you are able to work cooperatively and transparently, as the team shares daily in discussions of casework, advising and sometimes challenging each other, in order to help keep clients safe and to improve our practice.

Working arrangements: The office core hours are 10am to 5pm, but some flexibility is possible to meet disability needs. Contracted hours are 35 hours including a half hour lunch break. As all of our current staff and clients are disabled people, the majority of whom have been self-isolating or shielding, we expect remote working to continue in some form through summer 2021, with staff who chose to do so working in the office on day per week from October 2021. Normal place of work is our office in Leytonstone, London E15.

Line Management: This post will be managed by the VAWG Service Manager. We hold regular casework and team meetings. Flexibility, mutual support and learning from experience are part of our way of working.

Access and inclusion: Our office and building have a good standard of access, with parking within 10 metres of the entrance and an accessible toilet and meeting rooms on the same floor. There is a rest room on site. We use a Modus database. Dragon and other software can be funded through Access to Work. We will make reasonable adjustments where possible. Where relevant, we assist our staff to apply for Access to Work support.

Probationary period: 6 months from start date.

Induction and training

Training will be provided in-house, and you will have access to other external training. Formal training for qualification as an IDVA will be available should the funding be continued after March 2023.

You will be supported by the VAWG Service Manager and colleagues. Phone based counselling is available to all advocacy staff.

APPLYING FOR THE POST

To apply, please complete the attached application form and monitoring form, and return them no later than 9th November 2021 at 10.00 am

By e-mail to: recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk. Please head your e-mail 'IDDVA application'.

Or you can upload your application on Charity jobs

Important: Please ensure you return the forms as typed word document in 16 point, not as a PDF or handwritten document; this is so all forms are accessible to members of the interview panel.

Please do not send CVs or testimonials as these will not be read by the Panel.

If you have any questions, or require the application form and job details in a different format, please e-mail recruitment@staysafe-east.org.uk or ring/text Aurora on 07882 973697

Interviews for the IDDVA post will be held on 16th & 18th November 2021

Stay Safe East

Independent Disability and Domestic Abuse Advocate (IDDVA)

JOB DESCRIPTION and PERSON SPECIFICATION

Funded by: MOJ/MOPAC to 31.3.2023

Salary: £27,455 per annum

Hours: **35 hours per week**

Managed by: Stay Safe East VAWG Service Manager

This post is open to Disabled women only.

This post is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check.

1. JOB DESCRIPTION

Aims

1. To provide advocacy and support to Deaf and disabled victims/survivors of Domestic Abuse living in London

Ethos

1. To prioritise the safety and well-being of Stay Safe East clients, their children and dependants
2. To work at all times within the social model of disability and use non-discriminatory practice
3. To work at all times in a way that is sensitive, respectful and accessible to clients and colleagues

Core Tasks

1. To take self-referrals from Domestic Abuse victims and survivors, or third party referrals from interested agencies (domestic abuse and other agencies, MARACs, the police, Adult social care, children's services, etc)
2. To provide one-to-one advocacy support to victims and survivors by:
 - Listening to the person's experiences and offering emotional support
 - Informing the client about their rights
 - Advocating on behalf of each client or supporting them to advocate for themselves with statutory and voluntary agencies
 - Carrying out risk assessments and drawing up a safety and support plan with the client; where needed, helping the client find a place of safety
 - Ensuring clients access and communication needs are met
 - Making home visits where safe, or meeting on a regular basis with the client face-to-face in a safe location
 - Keeping in regular contact with each client to provide reassurance and updates on progress
 - Negotiating with statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure our client's access, communication, support and cultural needs are met in line with the Victim's Code and Equalities law and that other professionals understand their needs e.g. around Deaf culture or communication with people with learning difficulties
 - Referring the client for support relating to benefits/entitlements
 - Supporting them to access social care or mental health support, equipment and other support
 - Supporting the client to make or attend appointments with solicitors, health, housing, adult social care etc.
 - Supporting clients in police interviews and in Court
 - Supporting clients whose children are under Child In Need, Child Protection or Care Proceedings and working with them so their parenting meets expected standards, and ensuring that the client understands child protection processes
 - Liaising with statutory agencies to ensure that action is taken
 - Any other reasonable tasks as required

3. To work in partnership with other agencies and where appropriate refer disabled people to other Domestic Abuse agencies, disability and other specialist support services
4. To attend professionals' meetings on behalf of clients
5. To support clients to speak out for themselves at safeguarding and other meetings
6. To make client referrals to and present cases at MARACs and to adult or children's safeguarding

Casework procedures

7. To implement Stay Safe East casework procedures and ensure casework meets required Quality Standards; to keep clear, accurate and up-to-date case notes and enter data and supporting documents into our database; to file back-up documents in paper files according to casework procedures
8. To respond appropriately and in a timely fashion to file reviews and quality checks by the line manager
9. To share relevant information with colleagues relating to client safety and support needs
10. To attend team casework review meetings, participate in quarterly casework reviews and full annual reviews
11. To produce quarterly and annual monitoring records in a timely manner for funding reports, funding bids etc. and meet with monitoring officers as required
12. To report to the line manager issues and trends raised by casework

Other

13. To ensure confidentiality and sensitivity in line with GDPR, Community Legal Service and other guidelines
14. To answer phone and e-mails enquiries
15. To work as a team member
16. To attend occasional evening or weekend meetings and make visits to clients
17. To attend training as appropriate

2. PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential criteria

1. At least one year's experience of working as a caseworker, IDVA, ISVA, refuge worker or other post providing support to survivors of gender-based violence or disability related abuse, trafficking or other related abuse

OR

2. At least two year's experience of working with clients as a disability rights advocate in a disabled people's organisation or similar

Knowledge and experience

1. Personal experience of disability
2. Knowledge and understanding of gender based violence against women and girls, of the causes and consequences of Domestic Abuse and of the issues faced by victims/survivors, including disabled survivors
3. Understanding of the social model of disability, intersectionality and of the needs of diverse communities, and ability to apply this knowledge to Domestic Abuse advocacy work
4. Experience of liaising with statutory and voluntary agencies
5. Strong and demonstrable commitment to diversity and inclusion including a willingness to learn and develop
6. Experience of advocacy, casework or advice work, and of liaising with statutory services
7. Knowledge of safeguarding issues and procedures

Skills and abilities

8. Proven ability to manage own casework, and to set up and keep clear casework files
9. Ability to write clear factual evidence reports about clients
10. Ability to work flexibly, sensitively and in partnership with Deaf and disabled people from all backgrounds experiencing difficult situations
11. Assertiveness, a problem-solving and partnership approach when dealing with other professionals to address barriers faced by our clients

12. Ability to offer considered advice sensitively to other agencies
13. Ability to show empathy but maintain objectivity when faced with people in distress
14. Ability to maintain confidentiality

Other

15. Ability to work collaboratively as a part of a team
16. Ability to manage own workload and use Windows software (reasonable adjustments can be provided)
17. Willingness to attend some evening or weekend meetings, and make home visits (subject to risk assessment and access issues)

Desirable

1. Fluency in Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi, Bengali, British Sign Language or another spoken community language other than English
2. Safe Lives or Women's Aid accredited qualification as an IDVA, or relevant ISVA qualification

STAY SAFE EAST : WORKING WITH DISABLED SURVIVORS

For more details of our work, please see our website www.staysafe-east.org.uk

Stay Safe East is a leading agency working with Deaf and disabled survivors of hate crime, Domestic Abuse and other abuse. We are a Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO) staffed and led by disabled people. All our practice is inclusive and aimed at getting the best for our clients and promoting their human rights.

We work to the social model of disability, and support our clients to address the barriers they face. We take a feminist and intersectional approach to gender-based violence against disabled women and girls, whilst recognising that disabled men and non-binary people may also be at risk. We currently work with disabled people from London's diverse communities and respect and understand their life choices. We are an LGBTQ positive organisation.

We have been successfully providing advocacy and support to disabled victims/survivors for the past 11 years. This includes:

- An accessible place of safety to report all forms of targeted harassment and violence, and to get support
- Long-term, holistic advocacy and support for disabled and Deaf victims
- Help with getting action from the police, housing, the local authority and other agencies
- Ongoing help with practical issues e.g. accessing benefits, housing, social care, health, etc.
- Signposting to other services such as counselling (or our own service which supports a few clients who cannot access other services)
- Helping our clients to develop a positive self-regard and confidence as Deaf or disabled people
- Safe women's spaces, and peer support through our women's group
- Training for disabled women survivors of abuse

Our casework informs our policy and partnership work with the police, Mayor's Office on policing, government departments and other agencies.

We are members of two London-wide partnerships working to ensure a coordinated response to victims of hate crime, of a London wide partnership to support victims of crime and of a partnership of organisations working on violence against women and girls (VAWG). We are the only specialist Domestic Abuse service in London run by disabled women working with disabled women (and a small number of men) across all communities and impairment groups.

We are becoming established as an authority on good practice and policy on addressing violence against disabled women and girls and on hate and other crimes against disabled people.

The Stay Safe East casework model

Stay Safe has developed a casework model that aims to meet the needs of our Deaf and disabled clients.

- We offer an accessible service, with voice, SMS and e-mail contact, Easy Read and large print information, accessible premises and facilities. We offer home visits to all but a few of our clients (i.e. where there is a safety issues for staff) and will pay for transport for someone to come to the office. We arrange BSL and spoken community language interpreters. The team has a strong awareness of Deaf culture. We respond to clients' individual needs and ways of thinking and understanding, and work at their pace and as much as possible on their terms.

- We work in partnership with our clients and help them make their own decisions. We help clients understand their rights to be free from abuse and to live independently in the community of their choice.
- We work holistically, offering emotional support, regular contact, advocacy and other support as required.
- Promote the client's right to independent living and the resources to live independently in the community of their choice.
- Work to ensure that other agencies understand the emotional, practical and cultural needs of our Deaf and disabled clients.
- We focus on addressing barriers for our clients, rather than on impairment, and on rights rather than on 'vulnerability'. We spend a lot of our time fighting for our clients' access and communication needs to be met, and for their human rights as e.g. people with learning difficulties to be respected. This sometimes brings us into conflict with statutory providers and requires persistence and determination.
- We also recognise that our clients may have suffered abuse directly linked to their impairment and have a very negative experience of impairment and disability. Many of our clients have had a lifetime of institutional abuse, hate crime and domestic abuse. We try to promote Disability Pride and self-respect as well as Deaf Pride through advocacy and peer support, including by encouraging female clients to join our women's group.
- As active citizens who are also disabled people, our staff, volunteers and Board can be positive role models for our clients.
- Stay Safe East support may involve intensive one-to-one work with new clients until they feel able to do things for themselves, or only need more 'light touch' support. We have found that at first many of our clients need us to 'hold' them emotionally and sometimes practically until they are strong enough to do this with less support. We do our best to provide a holistic service – for example we will help a client get a care package or mental health support, and rather than referring people to another service, we help some clients with benefit applications, or get Dial-a-Ride membership, or will ring utility companies on their behalf, or attend appointments with them.
- We keep extensive case records for all our clients and often look after their paperwork for them. We gather evidence for hate crime and harassment cases, for example where there are other victims of the same perpetrators –

disabled people and others in the community are more likely to speak to us as an independent grassroots organisation than to the police or their landlord.

- We work in partnership with the Police, local authorities, housing landlords, Social Services and other agencies, but are not afraid to act as 'critical friends' and to push for action where none is forthcoming. We have learnt to be persistent and persuasive.

Stay Safe East October 2021
