

Nicola Whitcombe - Curriculum Vitae
10 Silverburn Avenue, Moreton, Wirral, Merseyside, CH46 7TJ
Tel: 077 1333 7572
Email: nickie449@gmail.com

WORK EXPERIENCE

Wirral Borough Council **Homelessness and Assessment Officer** **September 2018- present**

- To provide robust housing advice and assistance in line with current legislation and council policies to anyone with a housing related need.
- To prevent homelessness wherever possible by negotiation with the applicants' family, landlord, solicitor, financial institutions and other housing providers.
- To participate in the duty rota and triage
- Complete Housing Needs Assessments and Personalised Housing Plans for every client on the caseload within timescales set and to a standard that meets the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- To conduct telephone and face to face interviews
- Respond to all enquiries including telephone, email and written with appropriate advice.
- To work with applicants to find solutions that will prevent or relieve homelessness.
- To ensure that individual applicants are kept fully informed of progress with enquiries into their application, of the duties upon them in making their application and of information required of them to assist the Council in resolving their application. To take particular care in fulfilling this function where the applicant is disadvantaged through medical or mental health problems, illiteracy, being reliant on interpreting/translation services or for other reasons.
- To accept, investigate and determine homeless applications
- To issue sound written decisions
- To carry out joint assessments for 16/17 year olds with colleagues from Children's Social Care to establish duties owed under the Children's Act and Homelessness Acts, and agree mutual support plans.
- To conduct income maximisation, benefits check and basic debt assessments for those in financial hardship and advise on appropriate financial solutions.
- To report issues relating to child protection, adult safeguarding and domestic abuse to the appropriate agency and maintain an active involvement to ensure their housing needs are met.
- Construct accurate case notes and record all activity on LOCATA

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- Update and maintain case notes on Housing Jigsaw
- Manage casework in a timely manner, keeping applicants fully informed of progress and likely outcomes.
- Cultivate good relationships with other housing providers, landlords and letting agents.
- Adopt a holistic approach to housing options by working with other colleagues or as a part of a multi agency team.
- Attend internal and external meetings as directed by Housing Options & Advice Team Manager.
- Participate and contribute to team meetings and personal supervision
- Work collectively with colleagues to ensure that sufficient service cover is provided at all times.
- Work within all the council's policies and procedures including Equality & Diversity and Health & Safety.
- To keep up to date with homeless case law and precedence.

Sefton Council
Housing Options Advisor
July 2018- September 2018

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- To participate in the duty rota and triage
- Complete Housing Needs Assessments and Personalised Housing Plans for every client on the caseload within timescales set and to a standard that meets the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
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- To carry duties as directed commensurate with the grade

Hafan Cymru
Support Worker
Jan 2018- July 2018

- Providing homelessness prevention advice to adults and their children fleeing domestic abuse and signposting to appropriate agencies for support with debt and where appropriate, drug and/or alcohol services.
 - Signposting and facilitating service users' access to other services (Medical, legal etc)
 - Supporting the active participation of service users in all areas of their service provision in line with Hafan Cymru's service user participation strategy including facilitating meetings with Service Users as appropriate
 - Feeding back service users' views to support the development and improvement of services
 - Promoting self- advocacy and acting as advocate and/or mediator where appropriate
 - Supporting service users in identifying and addressing key issues relating to their children and promote positive parenting and the welfare of children/young people
 - Supporting service users to manage their finances, budget and make informed choices about their personal finances
 - Supporting service users to maintain tenancy agreements ensuring they fully understand their obligations empowering them to deal with issues relating to housing management, maintenance and repairs
 - Working in partnership with external agencies and organisations and represent the organisation at external meetings, public events, conferences etc
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 - Working flexibly by participating in a rolling rota including working shifts and providing cover as required in the event of staff shortages and ensuring that each service user is provided with an appropriate level of support
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- Maintaining clear and up to date records, preparing reports and correspondence as appropriate in accordance with organisational policies and procedures as required for the local and/or contractual requirements in respect of service user confidentiality and ensuring compliance with the Data protection Act

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Catch 22
Family Support Worker
October 2017-Jan 2018

Delivering interventions to parents and children on Child Protection Plans, managing a caseload of 12 families.

- Taking part in Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings
- Completing Common Assessments (CAFs) and acting as Lead Professional when required
- Attending safeguarding Core Group meetings and Case Conference, reporting verbally and in writing on case progress and observations
- Information sharing and networking with statutory agencies
- Delivering parenting programmes such as PPP, the Nurture Programme and Domestic Violence Gateway Programme as directed in individual Child Protection Plans.

Adullam Homes
Floating Support Worker
August 2017-October 2017 (temporary post)

Providing housing related support in the Wirral area to people with mental health problems.

- Providing and developing an effective housing action and risk management plan with each customer, which meets outcomes as identified within the plan.
- Liaising with any relevant agencies as detailed or identified within a customers' housing action plan.
- Maintaining efficient administrative system to ensure the accuracy of information and records relating to service/service users and ensuring that the central call centre was notified of any changes to information held about service and service users, including tenant absences.
- Reviewing housing action and risk management
- Supplying scheme Performance Indicator information and statistics when required.
- Ensuring that data information is lawfully gathered, accurate and up to date and only divulged in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Referring serious antisocial cases to the relevant agencies
- Advising tenants and customers regarding the organisation's policies and procedures.
- Contributing to the development of the service by attending focus groups/staff meetings, as required.
- Preparing reports as required.
- Liaising with external agencies, other departments, key stakeholders and community organisations as necessary to ensure effective service delivery.
- Attending case conferences and problem solving groups, as required.
- Completing and reviewing risk assessments as required.

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One Vision Housing
Independent Living Coordinator
February 2017-June 2017 (temporary post)

Managing an Independent Living Service in a designated area, including low level housing management and to provide an effective housing action planning service to all customers.

- Providing and developing an effective housing action and risk management plan with each customer, which meets outcomes as identified within the plan.
- Liaising with any relevant agencies as detailed or identified within a customers' housing action plan.
- Testing dispersed alarm equipment/hard wired equipment on a regular basis. When necessary report, investigate and rectify issues.
- Maintaining efficient administrative system to ensure the accuracy of information and records relating to service/service users and ensuring that the central call centre was notified of any changes to information held about service and service users, including tenant absences.
- Reviewing housing action and risk management plans at 12 monthly intervals. In accordance with policy and service standard.
- Supplying scheme Performance Indicator information and statistics when required.
- Ensuring that data information is lawfully gathered, accurate and up to date and only divulged in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Referring serious antisocial cases to the Antisocial Behaviour Team and dealing low level cases of ASB and recording these on case management systems.
- Monitoring the status of all void properties in the area, ensuring key information is up to date and reporting any variances to the Independent Living Manager and/or Maintenance Manager.
- Advising tenants and customers regarding the organisation's policies and procedures.
- Contributing to the development of the service by attending focus groups/staff meetings, as required.
- Liaising with Tenancy Support Officers in the management of furniture packages by monitoring that furniture is not damaged/ removed from the tenancy.
- Recommending improvements to estates and carrying out estate management functions.
- Carrying out Estate Walkabouts and patrols with the NHO for the service as designated by the Independent Living Manager or the Team Leader.
- Dealing with routine enquiries and correspondence within corporate time scales.
- Preparing reports to Independent Living Manager/senior staff as required.
- Liaising with external agencies, other departments, key stakeholders and community organisations as necessary to ensure effective service delivery.
- Attending case conferences and problem solving groups, as required.
- Completing health and safety checks/risk assessments as required.
- Meeting appraisal targets and support the delivery and achievement of overall business objectives
- Developing the organisation's commitment to equality and diversity and to promoting non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work undertaken

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Johnnie Johnson Housing Trust
Service Manager
September 2016-February 2017 (temporary post)

Managing an Independent Living Service in a sheltered housing setting, including low level housing management providing an effective housing action planning service to all customers.

- Providing and developing an effective housing action and risk management plan with each customer, that meets outcomes as identified within the plan.
- Liaising with any relevant agencies as detailed or identified within a customers' housing action plan.
- Testing dispersed alarm equipment/hard wired equipment on a regular basis. When necessary report, investigate and rectify issues.
- Maintaining efficient administrative system to ensure the accuracy of information and records relating to service/service users and ensuring that the central call centre was notified of any changes to information held about service and service users, including tenant absences.
- Reviewing housing action and risk management plans at 12 monthly intervals. In accordance with policy and service standard.
- Supplying scheme Performance Indicator information and statistics when required.
- Ensuring that data information is lawfully gathered, accurate and up to date and only divulged in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- Referring serious antisocial cases to the Antisocial Behaviour Team and dealing low level cases of ASB and recording these on case management systems.
- Monitoring the status of all void properties in the area, ensuring key information is up to date and reporting any variances to the Independent Living Manager and/or Maintenance Manager.
- Advising tenants and customers regarding the organisation's policies and procedures.
- Contributing to the development of the service by attending focus groups/staff meetings, as required.
- Liaising with Tenancy Support Officers in the management of furniture packages by monitoring that furniture is not damaged/ removed from the tenancy.
- Recommending improvements to estates and carrying out estate management functions.
- Carrying out Estate Walkabouts and patrols with the NHO for the service as designated by the Independent Living Manager or the Team Leader.
- Dealing with routine enquiries and correspondence within corporate time scales.
- Preparing reports to Independent Living Manager/senior staff as required.
- Liaising with external agencies, other departments, key stakeholders and community organisations as necessary to ensure effective service. To use creative ways of ensuring that service users are supported in such a way that their potential for independence is maximised and that they are enabled to achieve outcomes which are appropriate to their needs and wishes

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- To ensure that service users' needs are assessed regularly and to work with them to develop, and adhere to, a task orientated personal support plan in line with Supporting People or other regulatory requirements and within the timescales required
- To undertake safety planning within a Domestic abuse refuge / safe house environment when appropriate
- To carry out risk assessments on each applicant and agree a risk management plan.
- To use good practice in managing risk and lone working.

P3 Charity**Service Manager****September 2015-September 2016**

- Ensuring that staff provide a safe, sound and supportive service within policies and procedures.
- Coordinate, develop and supervise the work of the support team. · Ensure good practice in the support of people who use our services.
- Develop, promote and maintain good relationships with external agencies. · To take overall responsibility for coordinating outcomes information
- Coordinate the work of Support Workers/Assessment Planning and Review Workers in their role as key workers to clients, ensuring that all clients have an allocated key worker and up to date Support Plan.
- Coordinate the work of Assistant Support Workers in their co-worker roles in providing day to day support for clients.
- Ensure that all staff receive Support and Supervision sessions, at least every six weeks in accordance with policy and procedure
- Review, develop and monitor the formal support coordination, support planning and client risk assessment procedures.
- Ensure that comprehensive and up to date risk assessments are carried out and appropriate management plans are in place.
- Ensure that comprehensive and up to date needs assessments are carried out and reflected in support contracts.
- Ensure that up-to-date records are kept of all on-going work, importance incidents, and developments in the client's life, and that this information is passed on appropriately.
- Ensure that clients are fully consulted and involved in the planning and revision of their support.
- Ensure that support plans are relevant to the current needs, preferences and situation of each client.
- Ensure that key workers promote a healthy and active lifestyle for all clients. 11) Carry out, as appropriate to the post, day to day tasks in the absence of support staff, to ensure a continuity of service to the clients.
- Ensure that all referrals are fairly dealt with and assessed as appropriate, and that communication is clear and comprehensive at each stage of the process. Ensure that visits are arranged as per policy and procedure.
- Liaise with external agencies including local statutory and voluntary services and ensure information is available to support staff and clients relating to these services.
- Raise awareness of P3 services with relevant external agencies and in the community.

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- Be aware of developments within the external environment in relation to current thinking and good practice in relevant areas of practice. Find ways to share these with the team; e.g. training, seminars, written reports.
- Ensure that all clients understand the nature of their tenure and the rights and responsibilities that are associated with it.
- Participate in the development of policies within the service and take an active role in those policies relevant to support work.
- Assist in the recruitment and induction of new staff and volunteers.
- Liaise with those promoting and providing meaningful occupation to ensure that support staff can promote the optimum level of activity for each client.
- To promote effective client involvement in P3 activities wherever possible and appropriate.
- Provide reports on a monthly basis to the Operations Manager/ Director of Operations.
- Share responsibility for good health and safety practices, including participating in fire drills and risk assessments, and reporting to line-management any matters of concern.
- Take a lead role in evidencing the Quality Assessment Framework.
- Participate in and coordinate staff meetings, supervision meetings, training, team development sessions and other meetings as required, reporting back to the team as appropriate.
- Facilitate and lead staff discussions on individual client progress within the team meeting structure to encourage all staff to think creatively and constructively about the work they are doing. In doing this, therefore also facilitating the development of support work skills through discussion and demonstration
- Deal with complaints in accordance with agreed procedures
- Ensure service meets the quality agenda as set out by Supporting People and continually strive to improve service delivery.
- Develop and maintain training opportunities for Support staff and clients and liaise with the Human Resources Department and others as appropriate to ensure that training needs of Support staff are being met.
- Conduct annual appraisals in accordance with P3's Policy and Procedures to inform the training plan.
- Undertake development activities as necessary and appropriate to the role.
- Foster the equality, diversity and rights of others by ensuring people are respected and valued as individuals.
- Promote the rights and needs of people who use P3 services in the community.
- Work within the framework of P3's equality and diversity policy at all times.
- Participate in a 24-hour on-call system to provide emergency advice and support to clients, and/or back-up support to staff carrying out these duties.

Richmond Fellowship

May 2015-August 2015

Project Worker

Providing housing related support to service users with mental health problems within a supported housing context to facilitate their development and maintenance of independent living skills.

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Raw Iron Gym Wear
June 2014-May 2015
Business Manager

I am responsible for all aspects of a new business set up. This has included business planning and the creation of a cloud based shared point of access to enable others involved in the business to work remotely. The creation of spreadsheets to enable accurate record keeping with regards to stock availability, accounting and customer orders is another area for which I am responsible. I am also responsible for updating the company's website, sourcing new suppliers, organising and directing photo shoots and marketing via social media. I am also required to coordinate the digital alteration of images used for hard copy marketing materials such as brochures and flyers and liaise with graphic designers to ensure that designs stay contemporary and represent the company's brand. I am required to negotiate prices with suppliers and oversee the order process to ensure its efficiency and that customers receive the highest standard of customer service and receive their goods within the time stated

Housing Support Gateway Coordinator
May 2012 – June 2014
Cheshire West and Chester Council | Ellesmere Port

In this role, I was responsible for the development and co-ordination of a web-based single point of access/ Housing Support Gateway into supported housing. I was required to ensure that Housing Providers, and other relevant service areas were familiar with, and made effective use of the Housing Support Gateway and, where necessary, provide training to staff and managers. I was also responsible for monitoring referral outcomes from housing providers and will provide guidance when appropriate. My role requires the regular production of quantitative and qualitative reports. This role was also focused upon homeless prevention and section 184 homelessness decisions and I was also required to provide comprehensive, accurate and impartial advice and assistance to those households in housing need or at risk of losing their home on the following: rent and mortgage arrears/repossession, income maximisation/benefits advice, disrepair and housing conditions, harassment and illegal eviction, domestic violence, parental eviction, family mediation, landlord and tenant law, choice based letting, signposting to welfare advice agencies, referrals to specialist housing support agencies and Supporting People funded services e.g. hostels and floating support. Assisting clients to find affordable sustainable housing solutions in a targeted environment to ensure service performance indicators were met. I was also required to prepare and present written, verbal and statistical reports to senior management.

Senior Project Worker- Supported Housing
September 2010 - May 2012
Stonham, HomeGroup | Chester

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Providing housing related support to women and children fleeing domestic abuse within a supported housing context:

In this role, I was responsible for the provision of housing-related support to women fleeing domestic abuse, to facilitate their development and maintenance of independent living skills. I was also responsible for the supervision of a staff team and was required to manage and co-ordinate referrals made into the service. I was also required to write and oversee the implementation of support plans, providing advice and guidance to staff where appropriate. This role involved significant liaison with a range of services to ensure that clients were receiving an appropriate service enabling the best possible outcome.

Project Worker

April 2010 - September 2010

Stonham Housing Association Ltd | Wirral

Providing housing related support to offenders and people at risk of offending within a supported housing context:

Managing a caseload of twelve, I was responsible for the development and rehabilitation of ex-offenders with a wide range of presenting issues including offending, mental health, substance misuse, family breakdown, neighbourhood disputes, behavioural problems and anti-social behaviour. Using the Outcome Star to assess need and review progress, I conducted weekly linkwork sessions with clients to assist with their reintegration into the local community and reduce the risk of reoffending. This role also included assisting clients to find paid employment, sourcing affordable sustainable housing, ensuring compliance with licence conditions and the development of life skills.

EDUCATION

NVQ Level 3 Management

September 2010 - March 2011

TBG Learning | Chester

HND Public Health

October 2001 - January 2003

Liverpool John Moores University | Liverpool

HNC Care Practice

October 2000 - May 2001

Wirral Metropolitan College | Wirral

St Mary's College, Wallasey | Wirral

September 1985 - May 1990

HONORS & AWARDS

Most improved current rent arrears performance (Stonham, Cheshire Women's Services)

INTERESTS

Genealogy, IT, web design, graphic design and SEO