circle
Supporting families in Scotland

JOB DESCRIPTION

UPSIDE COMMUNITY WORKER – Forth Valley
National Voluntary Throughcare Programme (NVTP)

Post Title: Upside Community Worker

Project: Upside

Contract Type: Fixed Term – end 31 March 2027 with possible extension

Funder: Scottish Government

Hours: Full time

Salary Scale: £29,362 – £34,032 per annum (FTE)

Location: Largely community based across Forth Valley with regular travel to prison establishments. Upside office space available in Alloa, and some hybrid working from home.

Hybrid Working Available: Yes

Accountable to: Upside Senior Community Worker

Driving Licence and Own Car Required – Yes

Purpose

Providing relational support to people throughout their journey from prison to the community.

Please see the below **'Partnership Role Description - Upside Community Worker'** for more detail.

Key Responsibilities

- To work with individual's pre and post release from prison, working with the whole family to promote positive change and a safer lifestyle.
- To support parents/carers to develop their parenting capacity and relationships with their children.
- Work collaboratively with prison workers to support pre-release planning alongside individuals.
- Utilise appropriate tools for pre-release engagement (face-to-face contact; email a prisoner (EMAP) correspondence, contribution to multi-agency release planning meetings)
- Supporting on the day of release (meet at prison) responding flexibly to individual and immediate needs e.g. housing, health, benefits.

- To record, monitor and evaluate our work, including PULSE recording and complete partnership risk assessments.
- Promote multiagency working, with a wide-range of statutory and third-sector partners, through relevant and proportionate information sharing.
- Develop and promote partnership working with NVTP and key stakeholders.
- To attend supervision, team meetings, staff development days and in-house training sessions as appropriate
- To liaise with other agencies and work in partnership with them to meet the needs of the whole family.
- To contribute to the promotion and development of Circle's work and services.
- To work within Circle's policies and procedures.
- To work to the key responsibilities outlined in the **Partnership Role Descriptor.**

General

This job description is not exhaustive and may be amended in response to organisational needs. The postholder is expected to undertake any other duties appropriate to the level and nature of the post.

Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential

- A professional qualification in social work, social care, education, health, or another relevant discipline.

Desirable

- Additional training or certification in areas such as counselling, trauma-informed practice, child protection, or group facilitation.
- Continuous professional development relevant to working with vulnerable families.

Knowledge & Experience

Essential

- *Direct experience with children, parents, or families in a supportive capacity.*
- *Knowledge of a variety of evidence-based interventions and approaches for supporting families, particularly where substance use is an issue.*
- *Proven experience of working in partnership with a range of agencies (e.g. schools, health services, social work, community organisations) to meet the needs of children and families.*
- *Demonstrated ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team, contributing to shared goals. Good understanding of child development, attachment, and the impact of trauma and adversity on children and families.*

- *Familiarity with the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) framework and the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.*
- *Commitment to equal opportunities, anti-discriminatory practice, and meaningful involvement of families in shaping support.*

Desirable

- *Direct experience of working in a justice setting.*
- *Experience of facilitating group work with parents or children.*
- *Experience of working with families affected by substance use, poverty, or social exclusion.*
- *Lived experience or deep understanding of the challenges faced by families in similar circumstances.*
- *Knowledge of local services and community resources in Edinburgh.*

Skills & Abilities

Essential

- *Strong communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with both children and adults.*
- *Capacity to support social work students on placement with Circle.*
- *Ability to record, monitor, and evaluate work accurately.*
- *Effective planning, time management, and prioritisation skills.*
- *Ability to support positive change in families.*
- *Ability to work within, and maintain, clear professional boundaries.*
- *Good assessment and analytical skills.*

A Note to Candidates

Don't meet every single requirement? We know that people can be put off applying if they don't tick every box. At Circle, we're committed to building a diverse, inclusive, and authentic workplace—so if you're excited about this role but your experience doesn't align perfectly with every point, we encourage you to apply. You may be exactly the right person for this role or another opportunity with us.

Partnership Role Descriptor

Upside - The Voluntary Throughcare Programme

This Scottish Government funded programme will deliver inclusive voluntary throughcare services across Scotland for men, women and young people serving a short-term sentence or following a period on remand. Eight organisations formed a partnership to deliver the Voluntary Throughcare Programme with the aim to achieve positive outcomes for people and wider communities.

Service Descriptor

Our approach is holistic, focusing not just on the individual being supported but also on ensuring the people providing support are cared for and continuously improving. It creates a framework where the person at the centre of the service feels seen, heard, and empowered, while also acknowledging that effective support takes time, flexibility, and trust.

The programme is a balance of respect, autonomy, and flexibility, with an understanding of the complexity of engagement and the need for a tailored, person-centred service. Below are key themes that show the expectations people supported can expect of the service across the country regardless of partner or geographical area.

1. **Respect and Trust**: The emphasis on building rapport and creating a space where individuals feel respected and able to be open and honest about their needs. This is key for maintaining long-term engagement.

2. **Voluntary Participation**: Acknowledging that individuals stay engaged because they feel it is their choice, and they're not coerced. This autonomy is crucial for a successful engagement.

3. **Understanding Engagement**: Recognizing that engagement is not linear and can vary throughout the individual's journey. It's important to be responsive to when someone disengages and find ways to re-engage them, understanding the reasons behind their disconnection.

4. **Flexibility and Tailored Support**: The service needs to be flexible, adapting to the unique needs of each individual, and recognizing that the duration of support should be individualized rather than one-size-fits-all.

5. **Visibility and Accessibility**: Ensuring the service is visible and accessible at every stage of the journey—especially for cohorts that may be more vulnerable to disengagement, like those on remand.

6. **One-to-One Relationships**: The importance of 1:1 support in building trusting, respectful relationships that form the foundation for any other intervention.

7. **Trauma-Informed Practices**: Aligning with trauma-informed frameworks to minimize harm, prevent re-traumatization, and respond with empathy and understanding.

8. **Partnerships and Continuous Improvement**: Working in partnership with other organizations and networks to share knowledge and ensure ongoing development of staff skills and wellbeing. The inclusion of a specific budget for staff reflection and wellbeing is also an investment in sustaining a healthy, resilient workforce.

Role Descriptor: Community Worker

The list outlines key responsibilities for a role focused on supporting individuals transitioning from prison to the community. Overall, the role focuses on ensuring effective support for individuals post-release through collaboration, personalized engagement, and continuous communication with all involved parties.

The role involves:

- Working with prison staff, families, and community partners for effective pre-release planning and ensuring smooth handovers.
- Utilizing appropriate engagement methods, including face-to-face contact and correspondence, providing comprehensive gate liberation support, and offering tailored, person-centered services.
- Conducting dynamic risk assessments, using appropriate tools for needs evaluation, and ensuring regular reviews.
- Maintaining accurate records, ensuring timely information sharing, and conducting assertive outreach to promote engagement in the community.
- Advocating for and promoting collaboration with statutory and third-sector partners, facilitating effective service delivery.
- Committing to ongoing training, flexible service delivery across regions, and responding to service demands.
- Managing transitions carefully, making suitable referrals, and building trauma-informed, trusting relationships with individuals.

Expectations of people we support

People supported on our programme can expect the same level of engagement and support regardless of where they live across the country and what partner is supporting them. This partnership approach to deliver a national throughcare service was formed out of values built on trust, honesty, equitability and consistency.

The programme is voluntary, and a needs led service. People have complete control over how they engage and length of engagement. As the programme is built around equitability, we would expect that people engaging and being supported would communicate with their worker to verbalise their thoughts and feelings and plan their engagement.

We aim to have a dedicated community worker, working 1:1 with people to build a trusting relationship and to support with all aspects of their journey and understanding that the journey is not linear.

Our staff across the partnership are trained in trauma informed practice and take a strength based approach in engagement with all people supported through the programme. Our values based underpins approach, ensuring staff are authentic and do what they say they will, helping people to understand the value and that they can determine what that means for them.